

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers

**Tuesday, February 23, 2016**

**6:30 p.m.**

**RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES**

The Regular Meeting of the Wallingford Town Council was called to order at 6:36 P.M. The Opening Prayer was given by Pastor Douglas Valentine, First Baptist Church of Wallingford. The Pledge of Allegiance was said. Councilors in attendance were: Chairman Vincent Cervoni; Vice-Chairman Tom Laffin; Craig Fishbein; John LeTourneau; Christopher Shortell; Jason Zandri (arrived at 7:49 p.m.); Joseph Marrone; and Vincent F. Testa.

Mayor William W. Dickinson, Jr., Town Attorney G.E. Farrell, Sr. was also at the Meeting.

Councilor John Sullivan and Comptroller Jim Bowes were not at the Meeting.

**3. Consent Agenda**

3. Consider and Approve Tax Refund totaling \$7,616.03 (#481-#555) Acct. # 1001-41020 – Tax Collector

3b. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the Amount of \$8,000 from Regular Salaries Wages #10020050-51000 to Vehicle & Property Damage #10020050-55979 – Police Department

3c. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$9,000 from Salaries #1001055-51000 to Microfilm #10010550-5660 – Building

3d. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$4,500 from Salaries #10010550-51000 to PC's, Printers & Accessories #TBD – Building

3e. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$1,572 from Contingency #10019000-58820 to Regular Salaries & Wages – Town Clerk #10010650-51000 –Vincent Cervoni, Council Chairman

3f. Acceptance of a Grant from the National Education Foundation in the amount of \$500 and Appropriation of Funds to Revenue #2264001-47152 and to Expenditures #322640150-58830 – Y&SS

3g. Consider and Approve Appointment of Christina Tatta as an Alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a three-year term effective immediately and expiring January 8, 2019 – Vincent Cervoni-Council Chairman

3h. Approve Town Council Minutes, February 9, 2016 – **WITHDRAWN**

**Motion: Approve Consent Agenda items 3a through 3G**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

**Vote: 8 ayes**

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

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD**

Paul Ciardullo, 2 Bayberry Drive, said he wanted to remind everyone that he believes for quite a while that the Town of Wallingford is overtaxing its residents. He said he has made this point a number of times and demonstrated at the last meeting that in 2015 the audit report reflected a \$5.4 million surplus on the revenue side and believed 2.7% of this was a tax increase. He said it is now known the 2.7 was not needed and is an example of the fact that the Town is overtaxing and is a concrete example.

Mr. Ciardullo said as a result of the lateness of the audit, the Council did their regular budget review for this year and because the forecast they were provided apparently by the Town did not reflect the \$5.4 million excess and as a result, the Town passed another tax increase, which he believed was 2.1% last year. He said these are two examples of over taxation. He said if one takes another look at this, the 2.7% is actually \$3 million. He said in the 14/15 budget year, there was a \$3 million over taxation and if carried over to this year, it is \$3 million this year, adding the 2.1 which is another \$2.5 million. He said at the last meeting, he didn't see that unless the Council does something different, there is a risk of this continuing to occur.

Mr. Ciardullo made a proposal to the Council on how this can be avoided in the future. He said within a month or so, the Council will receive a budget book which will contain this year's forecast for FY 15/16, and then there will be a proposal. He said he proposes the Council consider and implement an ordinance which basically allows the Council to implement a mid-year correction in the mill rate. He said the Council will do the budget this year in May, and in June the first invoice will go out for taxes which will reflect the current mill rate. He said it will be another six months before the next invoice goes out. He suggested during that period, there will be an opportunity to see what the fiscal year actual performance is. He said the Council won't have to rely on the forecast because they will have actual performance and if there is a substantial deviation, the Council can take action at that point and have it reflected in the next tax invoice. He said this eliminates inaccuracies and will move the Town in the direction it needs to be in.

Chairman Cervoni said he will send this to the Ordinance Committee and when will ask the Law Dept. to research the legality of this. He pointed out much of the Town's budgeting process is also governed by State Statutes.

Donald Kennedy, 2 Bull Avenue, said he sent Chairman Cervoni a letter relating to the amended expenditure budget. \$2.6 million which he said he had no idea how it was put together. He asked if Chairman Cervoni had an answer. Chairman Cervoni said he sent Mr. Kennedy an email

response last week indicating this is fact intensive and will require research which will be worked on and noted that there will hopefully be an answer before the next Council meeting.

Mr. Kennedy said he wanted the public to understand that he has identified \$2.6 million that is in the budget he didn't believe was authorized by the Council and this was the request which was sent to the Council Chairman requesting he be shown when and how the expenditure was authorized. Chairman Cervoni said this typically occurs in May after the next year's budget is adopted. He said the Charter allows certain transfers to be made and he suspects that is when the time period this will be found in the Minutes. Mr. Kennedy said he researched those Minutes and didn't see any mention of them and why he brought this issue to the Chairman's attention because he honestly believes this money was put in there. He cited the sweeper for Public Works as an example noting this was nowhere to be found in the budget and then suddenly there was \$275,000 set aside for this.

James Hine, 342 S. Elm Street, said that on Dec. 31, 2015, the Town issued the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and in conjunction with that report, Mayor Dickinson issued a press release in which it was stated that the revenues for the 2014/15 FY exceeded the expenditures by \$974,000. Mr. Hine said he assumed before the Mayor issued the Press Release, he took a look at the annual report and went over the numbers. He said in reviewing the numbers, he assumed the Mayor also reviewed the revenues and the expenditures. Mayor Dickinson said he went over all of the materials with the Comptroller.

Mr. Hine asked the Mayor if he was aware that the report indicates there was \$2.7 million surplus not a \$974,000 surplus. Mayor Dickinson said it has been clearly stated there were two reports involved with the audit, one is the year-end balance and one is the accumulated balance. He said in addition, there are differences between budgetary, the GAP accounting and budgetary ways of dealing with things as well as the balance sheet accounting the auditors use. He said a person can't take one figure out of there and know what it refers to because there are two accounting methods involved.

Mr. Hine asked the Mayor again if he agreed that the report showed a surplus for the 14/15 FY of \$2.7 million based upon GAP principals. Mayor Dickinson noted that he didn't have the report in hand but stood by the report. He said he believes it's accurate and that Mr. Bowes is accomplished in his work. Mr. Hine asked why the report wasn't posted on the website for everyone to review. Mayor Dickinson said the report can be posted on the website but there is no deliberate decision one way or the other. Mr. Hine suggested that the report be posted on the Town's website. He said he took a half hour out of his day to travel to the Town Hall to review the report. Mayor Dickinson pointed out that a similar report is put out every year, but this is the first year there is significant discussion about the report.

Bob Gross, Long Hill Road, told Chairman Cervoni that he needs to be conscience of the establishment clause of the Constitution. He said there are a lot of numbers coming up, and from the \$5 million and change from the surplus, the way he understand it, there was a surplus of \$2.7 million additional revenues, and expenditures approximately the same number was under budgeted so this is where the \$5 million comes from because the \$2.7 was spent and another approximate \$2 million in revenue was brought in. He asked if this was agreeable based on the numbers in the books. Mayor Dickinson said he didn't have the figures in front of him. He stressed that the Town's budget is over \$150 million and we are talking about \$2

million and \$974,000 saying this amount was a small part of a very large budget. He noted that when one tries to hit zero, one is flirting with what happens in too many communities who have deficits. He said the Town's track record is solid and get good reports from the Credit Agencies and Auditors. Mr. Gross said the \$2.7 million and the \$2.8 million falls on the government side of the budget; it's not the Board of Education budget being talked about. Mayor Dickinson said the Board of Ed budget or the money appropriated for them is influencing this because not there is a 1% account which expands the reserves that get accounted for as part of the surplus.

Mr. Gross pointed out the Town's budget is approximately \$50 million and what he believes is being said, is by the time the budget is prepared, one is looking at a variance of 8%, 9% and 10% on those numbers. He said by April or May and new tax rates of being set, the Mayor is aware of some of these millions of dollars of additional revenues that may have come in or because positions haven't been filled and are under budgeted. He said some of these additional revenues could be used to offset the tax increase. He said the Mayor should pay conscience attention to this.

Mayor Dickinson said every year special attention is paid to how much of a tax increase will be necessary and said he disagreed with Mr. Gross that the money can't be included for education which is 90 plus million dollars out of the budget. He said if education doesn't receive the anticipated grants, the Town is at risk. He said in the past when the grant money hasn't been received, that is money that gets held against the Education Cost Sharing grant which means the Town receives less on the ECS. He said there is risk associated throughout the budget when one is estimating what money will be coming in. He noted the way the State is functioning; Wallingford can't be sure what they may be receiving. He noted that historically, the Town has put over \$4 million from reserves to offset tax increases.

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, asked Vice-Chair Laffin about the GIS system stating it has been approximately two years since it was passed by the Council. He cited a December article in the Record-Journal about the EDC and the Tech Committee speaking about implementing the GIS system. Mr. Morgenstein asked for an update. Vice-Chair Laffin said there is nothing new to report. He said the EDC and Program Planner Don Rowe have been discussing details. He said the Council has no authority over the Tech Committee. Mr. Morgenstein asked Mayor Dickinson about the GIS system and where he stood on this issue. Mayor Dickinson said privacy is a significant concern stating it is possible some of this could be opened up. He said much has been developed by the Council of Governments noting they had not received the grant they applied for last year, so nothing has progressed. Mayor Dickinson said some of the Town offices use the product that has been developed, and emphasized the Town will entertain thoughts about what should or should not be put on line.

Mr. Morgenstein said other towns have the GIS open to business and the public. He asked the Mayor if he was aware of any security breaches. Mayor Dickinson said he is aware that security is breached on the Internet every day. He said there is nothing secure on the Internet so to the degree which information is put out and the owner of that information may be in jeopardy, is a concern. Mayor Dickinson said it is possible to utilize something with less vulnerability.

Mr. Morgenstein talked about the medical drop boxes at the Police station noting when he brought this up several years ago, there were approximately 20 Police Stations with the drop boxes. He said the Mayor at that time, had concerns about bombs possibly being left in the

drop boxes. Mr. Morgenstein noted that currently there are over 60 communities with drop boxes in their police stations across CT and there has been no security breach. He encouraged the Mayor to keep an open mind noting the Mayor has a legitimate concern about the safety of Wallingford. He wondered if the Mayor's concerns close his mind to what people are saying and the Town is losing opportunities. He said we are talking about budgetary issues and every dollar counts. He said the Town can be made more business friendly and convenient so people don't have to come to Town Hall to look at documents, and noted these are opportunities. Mayor Dickinson asked if we have to wait for a bomb to go off at a Police Station to then determine it was inappropriate to install a drop box there.

**End of Public Comment – 7:08 p.m.**

**6.** Acceptance of Donation from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dwyer in the amount of \$8,500 for purchase of canine and 12 week training program and Consider and Approve appropriation in the amount of \$8,500 to Revenue Donations #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations #25020050-58830-10124 – Police Department

**Motion to accept a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dwyer in the amount of \$8,500 for the purchase of a canine and a 12 week training program.**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

Appearing in front of the Council was Chief William J. Wright. Chief Wright said several months ago the Dept. researched whether a canine program would be advantageous to the Dept. and the Community. He said the conclusion that a Labrador retriever trained in narcotics detection and passive tracking of people would be the best application for the people of Wallingford.

Chief Wright said several prices were sought and determined for a fee of \$8,500 for purchase and training by a Certified Trainer in CT was the best route to take. He said he requested the funds to come before the Council a few weeks ago and said he forgot to request a bid waiver for the purchase and training of the canine, so he pulled the item from the agenda. The Chief said the next day he received a call from Mr. Dwyer who made a full donation of \$8,500 for the purchase and training of the canine.

Councilor Fishbein said he was very appreciative of the Dwyer family donation and asked if there was a plaque being considered. Chief Wright said once the training is complete Mr. Dwyer will be formally recognized. Councilor Zandri said he was very appreciative of the Dwyer donation.

**Public Comment**

Larry Morgenstein, S. Main Street, said the dog a positive thing and asked the Chief how the drug dog will be deployed. Chief Wright said the dog will be deployed through the Patrol Division and assigned to handler 24/7 and will be folded into a shift deemed to be for the best use of the dog and will work at the discretion of the administration. He said the dog can be used in specialty applications.

Vice-Chair Laffin asked what would happen if the handler was injured or had to retire. The Chief said the dog has a work life between 9 to 11 years. He said the dog would be reassigned to another handler and go through the training.

Vice-Chair Laffin asked if a handler who could work through the life of the dog would be chosen. The Chief said a team of handlers is coming to the Police Dept. on Wednesday to conduct an oral examination of the officers interested in handling. He said he hopes to assign a handler for the working life of the dog. Councilor Fishbein asked about the budgetary impact of the dog on the force. The Chief said rough estimates for the care and welfare of the dog is between \$1,200 and \$1,500 a year. He said one of the older patrol cars will be outfitted to handle the dog.

**Roll Call Vote: Fishbein-yes; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Marrone-yes; Shortell-yes; Testa-yes; Zandri-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes**

**Motion carries.**

**7. Consider and Approve a Bid Waiver in the amount of \$8,500 for purchase of canine and 12 week training program from Superior Canine Services – Police Department**

**Motion to approve a bid waiver in the amount of \$8,500 for the purchase of canine and 12 week training program from Superior Canine Services**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

Chief Wright said Superior Canine Services based in Milford, handpicked the canine that comes with a one-year health guarantee. The Chief said the canine will be imprinted with marijuana, heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine and methamphetamine before being given to the handler. The Chief said the training program is 400 hours or 12 weeks. Councilor Fishbein asked if the sole use of the dog would be for narcotics detection but now heard the dog will engage in passive tracking which means the dog is not a patrol dog and the dog will need cover from a second officer and will not bite and hold. Councilor Fishbein asked about explosive detection. Chief Wright said the dog will not be trained in that area.

No Public Comments

Councilor Fishbein asked why not train the dog to be a super dog. The Chief said this wasn't considered at the time. Councilor Fishbein asked the Chief if this would make sense for the Dept. and if there is a need, this would be the point to deal with this. The Chief said he would explore this option. Chairman Cervoni asked about mutual aid between departments with other dogs. The Chief said the Department would have access to this. Councilor Testa asked if there was a situation with explosives, could other agencies be deployed. The Chief said this has been done in the past.

**Roll Call Vote: Fishbein-yes; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Marrone-yes; Shortell-yes; Testa-yes; Zandri-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes**

**Motion carries**

**8. Consider and Approve a Transfer in the amount of \$16,200 from Regular Salaries & Wages #10020050-51000 to Maintenance of Equipment #10020050-54325 – Police Department**

**Motion to approve a transfer of \$16,200 from Regular Salaries & Wages to Maintenance of Equipment – Police Department**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

Chief Wright explained that several months ago the Police Administrator position became vacant when the employee resigned. He said the Personnel Dept.'s applicant was deemed to have fabricated some qualifications which then left the Dept. without coverage. He said between the time the employee resigned and today, a bid waiver has been put into place with the business network group for coverage. He said the position has been re-posted and won't close until the first or second week in March.

Chief Wright said the business network group which he is looking for a transfer to, specializes in many things including network administrations in Police Depts. He said they are in CT and Rhode Island and versed in Police applications and are the architects of the Depts. current structure. He said he is down to a few hours left with the current vendor and is in need of another block of time.

Councilor Fishbein asked about the 120 hours mentioned in the Chief's memorandum. Chief Wright explained the Dept. tries to limit the time to between 12 to 15 hours a week, and noted this block of time will get the Dept. approximately three months' worth of time. Councilor Fishbein asked if there was some reason why a proposal wasn't made to the outside service. The Chief explained this option was explored and believes the value of what would be paid employees at top rate, this company could be employed for less.

Councilor Zandri asked about the reason the transfer was being made from regular salaries & wages to the maintenance of equipment noting a consultant is being paid. Chief Wright said he didn't have a specific reason, noting the salary line would have paid the employee if he had worked with the Town. He said the Dept. generally call contracted services in this manner, maintenance of computers. Councilor Zandri noted approximately one month ago, there was a Consent Agenda item for a transfer of \$15,000 for a network switch replacement and wants to ensure this is something different. The Chief said he will be returning to the Council with this agenda item to purchase these switches. He said he has gone the competitive bid route and added he desperately needs one of these switches.

Public Comments-None

**Roll Call Vote**

**Fishbein-yes; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Marrone-yes; Shortell-yes; Testa-yes; Zandri-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes**

**Motion carries**

**9.** Consider and Approve a Transfer of \$6,369 from Contingency #1001900-58820 to Police Purchase Services Dispatch Feasibility Study #10020050 - #TBD

**Motion to approve a transfer of \$6,369 from Contingency to Police Purchase Services Dispatch Feasibility Study**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

Mayor Dickinson said the Town received quotes from an Architect regarding the combined feasibility study to determine the cost of using several locations. He said Wallingford's share will be \$6,369 and the other three towns, Cheshire, North Haven and North Branford have indicated their interest and said they would participate. He said nothing will proceed until the financial contribution is received from these other Towns.

Councilor LeTourneau said he believed the Mayor's letter had an error in listing the Wallace Avenue, Cook Hill and an unspecified new construction site. Mayor Dickinson said the letter is correct noting that currently, the use of the Cook Hill Fire Station for Civil Preparedness would be moved to Yalesville allowing Cook Hill to become available. He said the Architect doesn't see a real difference noting that Cook Hill may be a better site because of its elevation.

Chief Wright said the Dept. current has radio equipment and a tower located on Cook Hill Road. He said the apparatus floor is the same size as Yalesville, but noted the Administration floor is smaller. He noted there would only be a handful of employees on site anyhow. He said the Cook Hill site also helps Cheshire and North Haven noting that Cheshire is exploring a radio infrastructure improvement and has a dead area in the Cook Hill Road location. He said this site also has a generator and believes this is an adequate facility to consider.

Councilor LeTourneau said he is beyond thrilled to see this (Cook Hill) site being considered. Councilor Fishbein spoke about the Wallace Avenue site. He said the former Town Engineer had looked at that structure and the possibility of locating the dispatch on Wallace Avenue was a possibility noting that additional work would have to be performed at this site. Councilor Fishbein asked if work has been done and was a report issued.

Chief Wright said the former Building Official went through the site with the Police and determined the structure is sound but needs complete renovation. The Chief said the building is over 5,000 sq. ft. and noted the Dept. would probably need half this space. Councilor Fishbein said he was concerned noting the building has been vacant for an extended period of time and to his knowledge no testing was done. He asked if any testing was done regarding the soundness of the building.

Chief Wright said these requested monies on tonight's agenda will handle this. Councilor Fishbein asked if the Yalesville site is not feasible. Chief Wright said the Yalesville site would be a better fit for the Medical Reserve Corp. Councilor Fishbein asked why the experts couldn't make this decision. He said he understood Yalesville would be in the mix. He asked about the unspecified new construction site. He said he understood a parcel of land owned by the Town or yet to be required, would be considered. The Chief said this is a potential. He said it's hard to say where the piece of property would be, noting it could be Town owned or private. Councilor Fishbein commented that the "ground up" facility would be a lot of money and believed the



Town didn't have to go down that road. He said a feasibility study wasn't needed to construct a new building on an open parcel of land and would make more sense to consider Wallace Ave, Cook Hill or Yalesville for a feasibility study.

Mayor Dickinson said a comparison was wanted with new construction. He said it is a guess, but the use of an existing building compared with an existing construction site; the Architect believes he can give the Town this information. Mayor Dickinson stressed the reserving of one of the sites for existing use is important because the Medical Reserve Corp is an important use. Mayor Dickinson said it needs to be looked at whether this will be an operational savings for all of the involved towns. Councilor Fishbein asked if the Feasibility Study will reflect the operational costs going down the road. Mayor Dickinson said this study is for the use of a given site and the transition costs. Councilor Fishbein said he believes everyone will agree starting from the ground up is the most expensive situation.

Chairman Cervoni noted he didn't agree with Councilor Fishbein's statement. He said he has seen retrofitting older buildings for modern usage has cost more than constructing from the ground up. Councilor Fishbein said he was disappointed that Yalesville is not being considered.

#### Public Comments

Gina Morgenstein, S. Main Street, said he didn't get a clear amount from the Mayor who mentioned \$6,000 and some figure coming from Wallingford. She asked the total estimated cost and what amount would be gotten from the other towns once the project moved forward. Chairman Cervoni said the Town of Wallingford's contribution would \$6,369; North Haven would contribute \$3,377; North Branford \$2,022 and Cheshire \$4,132 to cover the total bid of \$15,900 adding this was a per-population cost.

Ms. Morgenstein asked if there was a ball park figure. She asked if we would be talking millions. Mayor Dickinson said there is no way to estimate at this point.

Donald Kennedy, 2 Bull Avenue, asked why the Town is looking at buildings when it hasn't been determined how much space will be needed. He said this should be determined first. Mayor Dickinson said part of the Architect's duties is to provide this information, i.e., the space, the employee's necessary with the population being served. Mr. Kennedy said the last time the Architect did a survey for a communications center as part of the new police headquarters building, there was an estimate for 925 sq. ft. He said if a few towns are added to this, there should be possibly another 50% or 1,500 sq. ft. He said the Town should be looking at a facility in the 1,500 sq. ft. range. He said the buildings being considered are huge and asked why space requirements are being looked at first. Mr. Kennedy said the Town should look at the once piece of the puzzle which is important, space. He said once the space requirement is known, then the building size can be considered. He said now, everything is being thrown together. He said this doesn't make sense to him and hates to see money going out the window for something which is not needed at this point.

Mayor Dickinson said the people involved with this project don't feel comfortable and don't have expertise in this area, and is why the Town has gone outside to obtain this information. Mr. Kennedy suggested a two-phase approach, using the Architect to determine how much space is needed and then do the second part of the project. He noted that right now, the Town is doing

the entire thing and doesn't even know if a building is needed. He said more thought has to go into this rather than hiring someone to do everything when it's not known what is needed.

Gina Morgenstein, S. Main Street, said the POCD is being completed and one of the beginning processes of the implementation is to take a survey of all the Town-owned properties and what they are being used for, along with all of the spaces and what they are being used for. She said perhaps the cart is being put in front of the horse

Public Comment ended at 7:49 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote: Fishbein-yes; Laffin-yes; LeTourneau-yes; Marrone-yes; Shortell-yes; Testa-yes; Zandri-yes; Chairman Cervoni-yes**

### **Motion carries**

#### **10. Presentation by Wallingford Emergency Shelter - Mayor**

Appearing in front of the Council was Alison Cunningham, Executive Director, Columbus House; Matt Cammarota, President of the Board of the Wallingford Emergency Shelter and Volunteer and Carl Rodenhizer, Director of Facilities, Columbus House.

Mr. Cammarota presented a slide show and said the WES has continued to have the strong support of the Town. He went over the organizational changes. He said approximately 12 months ago the WES Board looked at changing or modifying their long-term strategy entitled "WES 20/20" which would be a vision of what the year 2020 would look like as services are improved. He said they began researching industry best practices and began working with Columbus House. He said discussions centered around rapid re-housing programs and permanent supportive housing programs which are not done currently.

He said Columbus House is an industry leader in the care of the homeless. Mr. Cammarota told the Council that WES and Columbus House have mutually agreed to an acquisition by Columbus House Inc., and as a result both organizations and the community will benefit.

Ms. Cunningham said the services, system and capacity that Columbus House has to offer will benefit Wallingford. She said the current Wallingford shelter capacity is for four families at two on-site buildings and 15 people in the single adult shelter. She said over the past six months, Columbus House has been engaging with the people in the shelter through an expansion of services located in the Wallingford area. She spoke about "Critical Time Intervention Plus" which involves case managers working with clients in the Wallingford shelter in an attempt to secure housing for them through the rapid re-housing programs. She said there is also a street outreach team for people who live in the Meriden, Wallingford and Middletown areas that don't come into the shelters. Ms. Cunningham said there is also a support services for veteran's families project which she said is nearly state wide with the headquarters in Middlesex County. She said this program assists veterans in regaining their housing and offers support.

Mr. Rodenhizer said Columbus House in an effort to continue a link with Wallingford, the Columbus House Board of Directors will reserve two seats on a permanent basis and have an advisory committee which will be a liaison with staff. Mr. Cammarota said the shelter is in a

strong position and was not done out of necessity, noting it is all about the clients. He said WES could pursue its goals on its own, but becomes a stronger entity by partnering with Columbus House. He said it is critical to both organizations that strong support be maintained with the Wallingford Community and the Town. He said there will also be a new advisory committee representing the Town of Wallingford. In answer to Councilor Testa's question, Mr. Cammarota said there will be a transfer of assets from WES to the Columbus House and with that the Wallingford Community gets a significant improvement to services and two board seats. Councilor Testa asked about guarantees that Wallingford Emergency Shelters would not be closed and remain in place.

Ms. Cunningham explained it would be a shame to let the facilities slip away and did not get this sense from Wallingford. She said Columbus House's committee is very strong to continue these shelters in operation and keep the names of the buildings the same. Councilor Testa asked if Columbus House programs would be offered to Wallingford clients wherever this would be as opposed to bringing things to Wallingford. Mr. Cammarota said the clients would have more access to services in Wallingford, not necessarily located in Wallingford, but the support, i.e., case management, would be located in Wallingford. Councilor Testa asked if this would open the opportunity to bring people outside of Wallingford into the Town.

Ms. Cunningham said homeless people are transient but the intent is not the intent to bring people from New Haven to Wallingford. She said this shelter serves the people of Wallingford. Vice-Chair Laffin asked what would happen to the existing leadership structure at WES. Mr. Cammarota explained the full-time Director will be retained for 12 months and the other seasonal part-time staff will be released in April. He said the Board of Directors would be actively involved in the new advisory committee and expand participation will be expanded. Ms. Cunningham said CHI has 17 people on their Board of Directions and there will be space for two people from Wallingford in answer to Vice-Chair Laffin's question. She said Columbus House receives funding from New Haven, Hamden and West Haven and are heavily funded by the Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Dept. of Corrections and the Dept. of Housing and substantial grants from the Federal VA and HUD and privately raise approximately \$1 million a year.

Councilor Fishbein noted the majority of the clients were not from Wallingford and concern was expressed that there was no funding from those other towns for the services. He asked if things had changed. Ms. Cunningham said she has approached the cities of Hamden and West Haven requesting support for the people who come from that area. Councilor Fishbein asked about the possible expansion of services. Mr. Cammarota said there are two programs WES had been looking to build such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing. Mr. Rodenhizer said this would eventually become a year-round operation. Mr. Cammarota said there is a cold weather protocol where the shelter does stay open.

Councilor Fishbein asked if the longer term housing had been completed. Mr. Cammarota said there are four family units presently. He said there are no approvals for future units. Councilor Fishbein said the CHI Board that Wallingford will have two individuals on, potentially ends up with 22 people from outside Wallingford and two from Wallingford. Ms. Cunningham said some of the Board members live in North Haven, Hamden, Shelton. She said it has been agreed to have two people on the board from Middletown and are trying to get representation from the communities served.

Councilor Zandri asked if heat index protocols would be implemented as what is done with the cold weather. Ms. Cunningham said this has been done in New Haven running a winter shelter only and a summer shelter. Councilor Zandri asked if there was a mechanism of notifying people that the shelter is open. Mr. Rodenhizer said people who are in the shelter are told this and said the Governor usually issues a statewide call for the shelters to remain open. He said social media is also utilized. Ms. Cunningham said that everyone needs to remember that people live outside and noted there is a street outreach team which contacts these people.

Mr. Rodenhizer noted that one way to end homelessness is to have affordable housing. He said there is no need for a homeless shelter in Wallingford because enough affordable housing has been created. Mr. Cammarota said this merger should be finalized by April 2016. Ms. Cunningham went over the history of Columbus House which she said has been in existence since 1982.

Councilor Marrone asked about the volunteers. Mr. Cammarota said the volunteers help with intake, volunteer and cook meals. He said they also rely on Choate Rosemary Hall.

No public comments.

Chairman Cervoni recognized Eric Vo, Record Journal Wallingford reporter who will be accepting another position. He, on behalf of the Council wished him luck on his new endeavor.

**11.** 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

**Motion to go into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m.**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

**Vote: Unanimous**

In attendance at the Executive Session was Chairman Cervoni; Vice-Chair Laffin; Councilors Fishbein; LeTourneau; Shortell; Marrone; Testa; Zandri; Mayor Dickinson and Town Atty Gerald Farrell. Councilor Sullivan was not in attendance.

**Motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:54 p.m.**

**Made by: Laffin**

**Seconded by: Fishbein**

**Vote: Unanimous**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Fishbein made a motion to adjourn the Meeting at 8:54 p.m. Councilor LeTourneau seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia A. Kleist

Acting Recording Secretary

RECEIVED FOR RECORD 2-26-16  
AT 2:00 AND RECEIVED BY  
Barbara Thompson TOWN CLERK