

TOWN OF WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Robert F. Parisi Council Chambers
April 9, 2024
6:30 P.M.
RECORD OF VOTES & MINUTES

The Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 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 Autumn Allinson Craig Fishbein, Thomas Laffin, Christina Tatta, Samuel Carmody, Christopher Regan (video called in), Jesse Reynolds and Chairman Joseph A. Marrone III. Mayor Vincent Cervoni, Town Attorney Gerald E Farrell Sr., Assistant Comptroller Brian Naples and Town Clerk Kristen Panzo were also present. Councilor Vincent Testa was absent.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call
3. Consent Agenda
 - 3a. Consider and approve Tax Refunds totaling \$7,957.31 (#700-#715)
Acct. #1001001- 41020 - Tax Collector
 - 3b. Acceptance of donation from Dorothea Rooney and consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$200 to Revenue Donations-Police, Acct. #2502002-47152 and to Expense Donations-Police, Acct. #25020050-58830-10127 – Police Dept.
 - 3c. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$2,000 from Regular Salaries & Wages, Acct. #10050050-51000 to Capital Acct. Park Signs, Acct. #10050050-57000-01232 - Recreation
 - 3d. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$3,000 from Exp. - Salaries & Wages, Acct. #10010400-51000 to Exp. - PS - Software Support, Acct. #10010400-56718 - Finance
 - 3e. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$60,000 from General Plant-Structures and Improvements, Acct. #390 to General Plant-Office Furniture and Equipment, Acct. #391 – Electric Div.
 - 3f. Consider and approve Appropriation of funds in the amount of \$20,210 from Retained Earnings, Acct. #NA to Transportation Equipment, Acct. #46300392 – Sewer Div.
 - 3g. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$21,335 – Public Works

\$21,335 From: Regular Salaries & Wages Acct. #10030000-51000
\$ 6,585 To: Fire Alarm Control Panel Recreation Acct. #TBD
\$14,750 To: Fire Alarm Control Panel Town Hall Acct. #TBD

- 3h. Consider and approve a Resolution authorizing Mayor Vincent Cervoni of the Town of Wallingford to deliver to the State of Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection any and all documents necessary for the FFY 2023 Homeland Security Grant Program – Fire
- 3i. Consider and approve bid waiver extension request for Vancord to establish IT networks and to purchase components to build the new IT infrastructure at 100 Barnes Road – Police
- 3j. Approve Town Council Minutes of November 28, 2023 and March 26, 2024 Regular Town Council Meetings.

MOTION WAS MADE to approve Consent items 3a-3i, 3j as amended and remove the November 28, 2023 minutes.

MADE BY: TATTA

SECONDED BY: FISHBEIN

MOTION: PASSED

- 4. **Items Removed from the Consent Agenda:** Item #10 on the agenda was removed.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD**

Bob Gross of Long Hill Road noted that when someone goes onto the Town of Wallingford website there are five buttons on the left hand side telling you all about Wallingford and when these buttons appear, there are advertisements for businesses and organizations that appear. He wanted to know when this came about. The Mayor stated that a brand new program and it was developed by the Economic Development Commission. The question then by Mr. Gross was how did the Economic Development Commission pick those businesses or organizations to advertise over other businesses or organizations in town. The Mayor stated that the vendor the town uses to update the website were the ones who contacted the businesses or organizations for the website. The question as to be, is the Town of Wallingford being paid to have businesses or organizations advertise on the town website. Another question that was asked was how one gets their business or organization on the town website.

Eddie Garlick of Vumboco Drive wanted an update about the questions he had submitted. Chairman Marrone stated that Town Council wanted to invite the Fire Chief to this Meeting but he was unable to make it so this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Discussion of old business – Chairman Marrone
 - (a) Update on Technology
Mayor Cervoni stated that he meet with the Consultant last week. They are all done with the meeting of departments. They will be preparing their assessment. He also mentioned that an offer was made for the IT Director.
 - (b) Update on Train Station RFP
Mayor Cervoni stated that the RFP has been circulated around once more for comments from administrative staff.

7. Executive Session pursuant to CGS Section 1-200(6)(B) with respect to the Workers' Compensation claim settlement of Patricia Gennings – Human Resources

**MOTION WAS MADE to go into Executive Session at 6:39pm.
MADE BY: TATTA
SECONDED BY: FISHBEIN
MOTION: PASSED**

Motion was unanimous

All Town Council members were present including Mayor Cervoni, Town Attonery Gerald E. Farrell Sr. and Deputy Comprtoller Brian Naples

8. Discussion and possible action regarding the Workers' Compensation claim settlement of Patricia Gennings – Human Resources

**MOTION WAS MADE to come out of Executive Session at 6:51pm.
MADE BY: TATTA
SECONDED BY: FISHBEIN
MOTION: PASSED
Motion was unanimous**

**MOTION WAS MADE to go back to the regular meeting at 6:51pm.
MADE BY: MARRONE
SECONDED BY: TATTA
MOTION: PASSED
Motion was unanimous**

9. Consider and approve a Transfer in the amount of \$8,200 to Contingency - Misc. Exp., Acct. #10019000-58820 and to Exp. - Salaries & Wages, Acct. #10010150-51000 – Mayor

**MOTION WAS MADE to approve item #9.
MADE BY: TATTA**

SECONDED BY: LAFFIN
MOTION: PASSED

Mayor Cervoni discussed with Jim Hutt, Human Resources Director the possible creation of a Communication Specialist, part time. Mayor Cervoni and Mr. Hutt came up with a job description. Mayor Cervoni is asking for \$8,200 for the rest of the funding for this position for the rest of the year. The person who was hired is John Sullivan. He has been working in this position for a couple of weeks now. Mayor Cervoni feels this position is needed because there has been a lot of change going on. Mr. Sullivan is in charge of the Town of Wallingford government Facebook page. Mayor Cervoni discussed the possibilities of certain departments needing their own Facebook pages. The Communication Specialist has created the Town's facebook page and is monitoring it.

Councilor Tatta wanted to know if the reason the Town Council did not have to approve the Job description is because of the part time status. Mayor Cervoni stated that yes that is the case. He stated that any job below 20 hours does not need Town Council to approve the job description. She wanted to know how the 19.5 hours would work if this person has to attend events at night and weekends per the job description. Mayor Cervoni said the hours would be calculated accordingly between the office and events to equal the 19.5 per week. She is concerned about the image of the Town of Wallingford and how it will be portrayed.

Councilor Carmody stated that so far the new administration and Town Council have been working well together as a whole. He mentioned that the Town Council should have been made aware of this position before some was hired.

Councilor Fishbein asked what this individual's role would be with the entire departments Facebook pages. Mayor Cervoni stated that this person may be available in some capacity to help with their Facebook pages and that the department Facebook pages are to get out information about that department to the public. Councilor Fishbein wanted to know how would be responsible for editing the content on the departments Facebook pages to make sure that grammatical errors and such are addressed if any. He asked if the mayor's office reviews the content of the Wallingford Facebook page. There is a concern about the content already posted on the Facebook page.

Councilor Laffin discussed how the new administration is trying to get information out to the public via Facebook pages. He stated that this agenda item is about a transfer of funds and nothing else. He thinks it would be beneficial for the Town of Wallingford to fund this position for the remainder of the year.

Councilor Reynolds stated that he thinks this position is a good idea. He wants to make sure that whatever is put on the Town of Wallingford's Facebook page is not political in any sense.

Councilor Allinson stated that having a new Mayor in office, she can see why Mayor Cervoni chose the individual that he did. She is in agreement that businesses should not have reviews on the Town's Facebook page. She stated that the town departments should be in charge of

the content that will be going on their own Facebook pages and not the Mayor's Office. Councilor Regan thinks that the individual for this job and the political party should be separate from the actual job. He thinks there is a great need for this position to get information out about the Town of Wallingford to everyone. Because Mayor Cervoni has to work closely with this person, it should be his decision on who he hires Councilor Regan mentioned.

Councilor Marrone stated that he struggled with this agenda item. He thinks the need for this position is important.

Riley O'Connell of Edgertown Road opposes funding this position.

Bob Gross of Long Hill Road asked if the same person who is hired to update our website capable of handling the town's Facebook page. He agrees that the town departments should create their own posts.

Leslie Williams of Woodhouse Avenue stated that the hiring of this position should have been handled differently. She does not think that the ads on the town website should be there.

ROLL CALL

ALLINSON: AYE

CARMODY: NAY

FISHBEIN: NAY

LAFFIN: AYE

REGAN: AYE

REYNOLDS: NAY

TATTA: NAY

TESTA: ABSENT

MARRONE: AYE

MOTION: FAILED

10. Discussion and possible action to fund production fee for "Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid" on Public Television, and Transfer in the amount of \$25,900 from Contingency - Misc. Exp., Acct. #10019000-58820 to Exp. - Office Expenses, Acct. #10010150-56100 – Mayor
11. Discussion and possible action regarding the possible expansion of the site at Mark T. Sheehan High School to accommodate (in addition to high school students): BOE central offices, the adult education program, the transitional educational program, as well as Park and Rec. - Councilor Fishbein

Councilor Fishbein stated that BOE came to the Town Council a year ago about merging the tow high schools. He mentioned how a traffic study was never done to figure out how long it would take to get a child from Sheehan to Lyman Hall. He states that the decision to merge the two high schools does not fall on the Town Council. He mentioned that the Adult Education Program and the Transition Program also need a place to go. He discussed how Sheehan High School has extra space. He wants the Town Council and BOE to have the

discussion now before it is too late and a quick decision has to be made. He talked about the VOAG program.

Chairman Marrone read a statement from the BOE Chair who was unable to make the meeting.

Vice Chair Tatta asked if BOE Central Offices was ever located at Sheehan and they were at one point. She also asked if Adult Education was ever located at Sheehan. It was not but there was at one point some classes that were there. She likes the idea of possibly using property that the Town already owns. She said that the first decision is to find a location for the Adult Education program.

Councilor Reynolds mentioned that one of the issues with the two schools vs. one school debt is that Sheehan is a newer school then Lyman Hall and did not know if the Town would get any reimbursement from the State if both schools were not completely renovated.

Mike Votto of North Elm Street, who is a BOE member, spoke. He stated that the BOE has decided to build one brand new high school. He does not know if expanding Sheehan would work because of the parking lot, fields and wetlands behind it. He mentioned that to get the State reimbursement, there has to be a certain amount of space in a school per student. Sheehan as of right now has too much space and not enough students so the reimbursement would be low about 35%. He stated that moving the students from Sheehan to Lyman Hall is not a possibility. He talked about the education at both schools. He talked about not having enough students to play sports at Sheehan. He mentioned that there is no central location for the new high school and so a transportation study cannot be done because no one knows where the school will be going.

Leslie Williams of Woodhouse Ave asked about the transitional program. She wanted to know what that was.

Ray Ross of Center Street agrees with everything that Mr. Votto had discussed. The BOE hired an architect to look at Lyman Hall site to see if it was possible to use for the high school. He mentioned that the BOE is actively looking for sites for the new high school to be built. He talked about the 10 year program to update all schools. He mentioned that the State requires so much acreage for the school and also so much acreage per 50 students. Right now there is nothing with that much acreage in Wallingford to build the new high school.

Mayor Cervoni stated that he attended a meeting at the Train Station and noticed that the BOE Adult Education is outgrowing the space they currently occupy there.

Al Barrone stated that the 10 year Capital Plan is for all schools to be renovated. He said once the BOE gets the specs for the one high school it will be easier to see why one high school is better.

12. Discussion and possible action regarding ARPA Funds – Councilor Marrone

Chairman Marrone discussed that Councilor Testa mentioned having a plan for the rest of the ARPA money so that the Town Council knows what to spend the money on. He wanted to open up a discussion to the council and hear their ideas of what they would like the rest of the ARPA money spent on.

Councilor Allinson had a chance to meet with the old and new Library Directors to discuss the site plan and project or having a courtyard for gatherings, to sit at tables, have music playing etc. It would be located in front of the library facing North Main Street.

Councilor Tatta had a list of items she would like to see ARPA money spent on.

Mayor Cervoni mentioned that the Capital ARPA projects will be using \$1,091,000 and leaving \$1,357,269 in ARPA funds.

Councilor Laffin wants to wait till after the budget to figure out how to use the remaining ARPA money. He mentioned either holding a workshop or public hearing to discuss possible uses for the money would be beneficial.

Councilor Fishbein talked about the \$1,000,000 set aside for the pool project. He wanted to know if the town still had the money. Mayor Cervoni said it has its own line item and yes, the town still has that money allocated. There was a discussion about using \$10,000 of the \$1,000,000 for a construction estimate for the pool. The construction estimate is out and being worked on Mayor Cervoni stated. There was a discussion that if the pool project does not happen that the money can be used for something else with Town Council approval.

Councilor Reynolds had some of the same ideas for using the ARPA money that were on Councilor Tatt's list she presented. He presented outdoor dining as an option.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Panzo
Town Clerk

Meeting digitally recorded

Joseph A. Marrone III, Chairman

Date

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.