

**MINUTES OF WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 26, 2009 LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER AGENDA No. 33**

President Scott Slifka called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

President Slifka: Okay, we will call the Council Meeting to order and begin with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #2: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Slifka: Can we have a roll call, please, Ms. Labrot?

ITEM #3: ROLL CALL

Present were Councilors Steven Adler, Tim Brennan, Shari Cantor, Chuck Coursey, Leon Davidoff, Scott Slifka, Carolyn Thornberry and Joe Visconti.

Councilor Joe Verrengia was absent.

President Slifka: Thank you, Ms. Labrot. Welcome everybody. That gets us to #4, Mr. Brennan.

**ITEM #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING 5-12-09
PUBLIC HEARING ON 5-12-09 ON 40 SOUTH MAIN STREET, 15 NEW
STREET, 65 AND 85 MEMORIAL ROAD, AND 75 ISHAM ROAD
PUBLIC HEARING ON 5-12-09 ON 1128 NEW BRITAIN AVENUE
PUBLIC HEARING ON 5-12-09 ON ORDINANCE REVISING MAILING
REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTAIN ZONING APPLICATIONS**

RECEIVED

Vice President Brennan: I move that we receive.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Being none, all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. Number 5, the Public Forum, Mr. O'Brien the sign-up sheet please.

ITEM #5: PUBLIC FORUM

President Slifka: Is there anybody who did not sign up who wishes to speak to an item on the agenda this evening? Okay. Seeing none we go to #6, Reports from the Town Manger. Mr. Van Winkle?

ITEM #6: REPORTS OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Mr. Van Winkle: Good evening and Memorial week here remembering all the veterans and everything. We had a fabulous parade the other day. I am always impressed by West Hartford's parade. I just wanted to read to you a memo that I got from Dana yesterday. It's about his resignation cause he's going on to a third career.

“It is with bittersweet emotion that I submit to you my resignation from the position of Director of Public Works effective July 18, 2009. I have been employed by the Town of West Hartford for 33 years, serving 18 years in the Police Department, 15 years in the Department of Public Works. I am deeply indebted to the town for the blessings of education, training and experience that have been received during that time, but most of all for the treasured friendships. As you know, I am leaving town service not because of my desire or willingness not to work here, or my willingness to work here has been diminished, but rather because I have been called to a higher, more joyful area of service. I commend to your care a department full of leaders who are principled, ethical, committed to the service excellence and who care deeply about this town and the people who live, visit and work here. I am honored to have served them as well as my beloved Town of West Hartford.”

Dana is about to enter his third career, police officer, Director of Public Works and now minister, retiring July 18, spending a little time with his family this summer before he takes over in the fall at a church in Manchester so he has been fabulous and a go-getter in every instance. And we'll still see him cause he lives in West Hartford.

I just wanted to note, you know, we cut out of the budget lots of things...tried to make sure that all of our spending was appropriate in our budget in this difficult time and one of the items we cut out was flowers. Richard Patrissi, who is zoning alternate here often, donated nine flats of marigolds to be planted around the Buena Vista Complex and golf course. He plays golf out there so apparently he did not think it was pretty enough for him.

The last thing I have is just to note that West Hartford is receiving \$294,000 in ERA money from the federal government stimulus money. It's called CDBG money. The Community Development Block Grant is a grant that we receive every year. This is an additional \$294,000 that is allocated to the town of West Hartford. We need to make an application for this money and get it approved. We are going to make an application for housing rehab., which is what we primarily use CDBG money. It is also something that we can get into place...into construction quickly. These small projects that we do for eligible homeowners who might need a roof and can't afford to do it right now or might need some improvement to their homes. Sometimes it's in energy conservation. Sometime's it's security. Sometimes just the roof on the house. This is a very successful program in West Hartford and having the addition \$294,000 will help us do more homes this year so that project will be coming out, um, that project will be going to HUD for their final approval which should occur because this is a program that they have funded in the past and it won't be anything new to them and then we'll be out talking to residents

about energy conservation and security and taking care of their homes with these funds. That's really all I have this evening.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle and please send our regards to Mr. Hallenbeck. I'm sure we'll be seeing him before he goes. Are there any questions for Mr. Van Winkle? Yes, Mr. Adler?

Councilor Adler: Through you, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Van Winkle, now that we're talking about Mr. Hallenbeck's departure have we...do we have an idea of the candidates...and typically the Council... It's not within our authority for the hiring and the review of those candidates but can you give us an idea as to where we are with the placement of a new or replacement of Dana if we can replace him, that is?

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes. Through you, Mr. Mayor. Well, Dana won't be replaceable. We'll find somebody to do the job down there but he brought a unique approach to public works. We have, in an effort to again cut spending, reduce spending in West Hartford I have done an internal promotion which means that I'm going to find a candidate within the workforce of the Town of West Hartford – Public Works maybe, the Police Department - who knows? And when we get that candidate we will backfill that position. We need a Director of Public Works. They're the man in charge or the woman in charge of our snowstorms, of our street projects and all so we're going to fill that position but we won't backfill the position that replaces him. That advertisement for an internal promotional, which means a West Hartford...you have to be a West Hartford employee, is already out there and within two weeks we'll be closing that and interviewing candidates for the job.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Adler. Mr. Visconti?

Councilor Visconti: Yes. Through you, Mr. Mayor. Could you... Mr. Van Winkle, could you explain to me and the public why we're not looking outside of town departments for Dana's replacement?

Mr. Van Winkle: Well, I sort of talked about that before. The effort was to save money. The Director of Public Works is a well-paid job and being able to get an internal candidate and promote is obviously good for employee morale and good for the organization. I've got a significant number of talented people. Dana noted in his letter of resignation the talented people that he works with everyday. This will allow me to reduce the workforce by one, save significant dollars and, again, I think we have excellent candidates in-house without question.

Councilor Visconti: But if we reduce the workforce by one will that affect performance of the department? Especially if it's a higher up person who, you know, is most likely in a manager's position already in order to be qualified?

Mr. Van Winkle: Through you, Mr. Mayor. If we reduce the workforce by one we will have to reorganize, decide some things that we're not going to do or do differently. We're

going to have to change the way we operate. Right now we have shrunk our Public Works workforce of the years quite substantially. We probably have the smallest Public Works force of any community of our size but I think with reorganization and that team that Dana has built down there pulling together we'll be fine with this change. The Director of Public works might be doing some new things, not just being the director but doing some of the supervisory things that he was carrying in his old job.

Councilor Visconti: Okay. One more question. Well, not question, a statement. Can you address the tree that came down...we pulled down today that I'm sure people have been calling, emailing... I got the email that it was rotted but maybe you can elaborate on that?

Mr. Van Winkle: Well, right there used to be a sizable maple tree. It was up against the building. I sent you all a notice just to let you know that we were taking it down. It was a very large tree. It was rotted through the center. When you can... If it was still there you'd look at it and the crown of the tree had been broken out by a storm and when the arborist went up and looked there was a tunnel right down through the tree. We have Celebrate West Hartford coming up in two weeks and he was worried that one of those branches on the tree were going to come down so it was our town workforce that took it down. Our Public Works employees came out here, took down what was a huge tree, and by the end of the morning it was gone so unfortunately we've lost a tree of stature on our front lawn but we're going to replace it, putting two trees in its place.

President Slifka: Mr. Coursey?

Councilor Coursey: Yes, thank you, Mr. Mayor. I just wanted to respond to an earlier question and give folks an example of actually how this works very well in terms of not backfilling these positions. This will not be the first time and it's worked pretty well in the past. The most recent example is Mr. Van Winkle, when you ascended to the Interim Town Manager and Mr. Rowlson, Rob Rowlson, filled your job as Director of Community Services and what we have now is Rob is doing his new job and also a lot of the duties of before but most importantly to the taxpayers is we're saving a ton of money and I commend you for anyway we can save taxpayer money without having to increase town staff. I'm all for it and just another example of, you know, I feel the excellent oversight that you've been bringing to the town.

Mr. Van Winkle: Through you, Mr. Mayor, if I may?

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Coursey. Mr. Van Winkle.

Mr. Van Winkle: Thank you, Mr. Coursey. I would not only note Mr. Rowlson who was promoted in my position. We didn't backfill on that. Susan Halstead left maybe two years ago. When she left Mr. Capodiece took a portion of that, the Social Services job. The Community Services Director took a portion of that job. We didn't fill that job. When Ed Smith left the schools we didn't fill that job. That again came to Community Services so we've got a history of sort of trying to do that. I'm not sure if there's a whole

lot more of that to do cause there's a point at which you can't do the job that you're assigned to but I think we're ready for one more round. Thank you.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Coursey. Mr. Adler?

Councilor Adler: Though you, Mr...Mr. Mayor. To...to agree with Councilman Coursey I agree as well. I mean, I think it's smart that we're doing cross-functional positions, absorbing one position into two or two into one. I was just... I just want to make sure that any potential candidates are really seriously considered within public works. You know, Councilman Verrengia gave us the opportunity a few months ago to tour Public Works and there's just a lot of talent there and there's a lot of critical skills that are needed there in terms of resource planning and in terms of procurement and other things like that and I think...I think we have a lot of talent...bench strength there I think. I would just like to see potentially some candidates out of there.

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes. Through you, Mr. Mayor. Actually Dana has been talking about this for some time and was getting serious about it this spring. I sat and talked to a number of supervisors at the Public Works about the job, about their interest in the job, about their perspective on the job so I could understand some of the issues that I might want to think about when we were filling that job so we did that already and I'm certain that we're going to see this. I need to make one more correction on a couple more things. When Jim Francis became Town Manager, Chris Johnson, who was director of Administrative Services kept Administrative Services and kept...and took over the job of Finance and when the schools were losing a Human Services...Employee Services position we hired one person, Rick Ledwith, who works for both the schools and the town rather than having two so there's been a whole history of doing this. I think we're working well at right-sizing this organization.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Adler. Mr. Visconti?

Councilor Visconti: Yes, on that thought line you did mention, Mr. Van Winkle, that you were thinking of possibly someone from the police force. What qualifications would a police officer have for Director of Public Works and do we have standards for how we're going to qualify them? Also, what is the pay scale for the new person? Will they step right into the pay scale of Mr. Hallenbeck if they're not as trained or as they absorb functions? How are you going to address looking at this...the combination of jobs, the pay, compensation and also going outside of an expertise in public works due to a police officer? And I'm not saying it's a police officer. It could be education but being a Director of Public Works is snow removal and all the learning curve. I'd just like to know what kind of criteria for the hiring.

Mr. Van Winkle: Through you, Mr. Mayor. I didn't say I was going to go to the Police Department. What I was talking about was Dana worked for the Police Department...was a police officer in this community for 15 years before he did become the Director of Public Works and I think Dana would be the first one to admit that your point is well-taken. It's not an easy transition going from great cop on the beat who loved

the town and worked hard for the town to becoming Director of Public Works. You need some basic knowledge and I think Dana did pick that up but it took him awhile to really get into the saddle and do that job well. The job has a job description as each of the jobs in West Hartford. It discusses the skills and responsibilities, the expectations of what that job entails. It's for every job that we have. It describes the skills, you know? You must be able to drive a car. All the things you might think is obvious but that's in our job description and the director's job has a salary range which is set by the Town Council so it will be within that salary range obviously set by the Town Council.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Anything else for Mr. Van Winkle? Okay. With that we will move to #7, Mr. Brennan.

ITEM #7: CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT CALENDAR: ITEMS 11 AND 13 TO RECEIVE

Vice President Brennan: Mr. Mayor, for the Consent Calendar I move that we place Items 11 and 13 on the Consent Calendar.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. Number 8, Mr. Brennan.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

ITEM #8: RESOLUTION (VAN WINKLE) AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION (PUBLIC HEARING 5-26-09).

ADOPTED

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut, Department of Revenue Services, provides tax credits to businesses making donations to programs sponsored by non-profit agencies through the Neighborhood Assistance Act; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council wishes to nominate certain programs for eligibility and consideration but, in order for a community program to qualify for the Neighborhood Assistance Act, it must first be approved by the Town Council; and

WHEREAS, the Act requires the Town Council to submit a list of approved programs eligible for business investments to the State of Connecticut, Department of Revenue Services by July 1, 2009; and

WHEREAS, before the Town submits such a list, it is first required to conduct a public hearing for the purpose of hearing eligible proposals for the Neighborhood Assistance Act;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL that the Town Manager is hereby authorized to submit the Neighborhood Assistance Act Grant Application; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED; that the Town Manager is directed to publicize the availability of this program and solicit proposals from community groups prior to this hearing.

Vice President Brennan: I move that we adopt.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion has been made and seconded. This is the subject of a Public Hearing just a short while ago this evening. Is there any discussion? Okay, seeing none all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. We're into New Business. Number 9, Mr. Brennan.

ITEM #9: RESOLUTION (SLIFKA) SETTING TOWN COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR JULY AND AUGUST

ADOPTED JULY 14, 2009 AND AUGUST 11, 2009

WHEREAS, the Town Council rules call for a single Council meeting in July and August; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the July meeting is set for July 14, 2009 and the August meeting for August 11, 2009 both at 7:30 p.m. in the Legislative Chamber, Room 314.

Vice President Brennan: I move that we adopt.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion has been made and seconded. This resolution is as basic as they get. The Town Council rules state that we have two meetings throughout every month of the year with the exception of July and August when we just have one so we have to pick dates that meet with everybody's respective schedules. This resolution would set the one meeting for July and one meeting for August to be on July 14 and August 11, both of them as usual at 7:30 P.M. here in this room. Any further discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. Number 10, Mr. Brennan.

ITEM #10: RESOLUTION (VAN WINKLE) TO CLOSE COMPLETED CAPITAL PROJECTS IN THE CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND

ADOPTED

WHEREAS, various capital projects in the Capital Projects Fund have been completed, and

WHEREAS, some of the Town-funded projects have remaining unexpended balances that must be transferred to the Capital Reserve Account of the Capital and Non-recurring Expenditure Fund, and

WHEREAS, some of the projects have no remaining balances but must be formally closed,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of West Hartford does hereby close the following project and transfer the total of \$1.07 to the Capital Reserve Account of the Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditure Fund:

<u>PROJECT</u>		<u>AMOUNT</u>
830650	UCONN Campus Improvements	\$ 1.07

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of West Hartford does hereby close the following capital projects which are fully expended:

<u>PROJECT</u>	
810520	Police Station Improvements
810610	Town Building Improvements
830440	Westmoor Park Improvements
830634	Outdoor Pool Improvements
830741	Westmoor Park
850759	Furniture & Equipment
850873	School Building Improvements
850882	Stage & Auditorium Renovations
850959	Furniture & Equipment
850965	Roofing & Masonry
850990	Portable Classrooms
860672	Heating & Ventilation Systems
860700	Lockers
860900	Lockers
870850	Guardrails
870925	Town Center Improvements
870945	Commercial Center Improvements

NOW BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of West Hartford does hereby close the following projects that are completed and were funded by grant monies or donations:

<u>PROJECT</u>	
810740	Library Renovations - CDBG
810742	Library Renovations - State Grant
810746	Library Renovations - Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Vice President Brennan: I move that we adopt.

Councilor Coursey: I second.

President Slifka: A motion is made and seconded. Mr. Van Winkle, to you.

Mr. Van Winkle: This is something we do from time to time. As a capital project is completed we close the project out. Sometimes there's balances. Most of these are generic projects. For example, a heating and ventilation project, although we might have an allocation of \$300,000, spend \$270,000 in one year. That \$30,000 rolls over and we spend it in the next year and so most of these accounts generally have zero balances and, in fact, we are closing out accounts that are primarily in zero balance, returning a \$1.07 to the Capital Reserve Fund. Thank you.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Is there any further discussion? Okay, seeing none, all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. We are up to #12, Mr. Brennan.

ITEM # 12: RESOLUTION (VAN WINKLE) TO MODIFY PARKING HOURS OF OPERATION FOR MUNICIPAL SURFACE LOTS

ADOPTED

WHEREAS, the Town operates surface parking lots, two parking garages and on-street parking meters for residents and visitors to West Hartford, and

WHEREAS, there is a desire to coordinate the hours of operation and parking rates for all of the Town's parking facilities in order to meet the goals of the parking operation program, and

WHEREAS, currently the two parking garages are operational on Sundays and charge for parking but the two surface lots are not operational and, in effect, provide free parking which negatively impacts garage revenue, and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to amend the hours of operation in the municipal surface lots to include Sundays, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of West Hartford has the authority to set parking hours and parking rates for Town parking facilities,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD that effective July 1, 2009, the municipal surface parking lots will be operational on Sundays for the same hours as they currently operate on Saturdays (11am-12am) and will charge for parking at the existing rate structure.

Vice President Brennan: I move that we adopt.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion has been made and seconded. Mr. Van Winkle? If we were using the parlance of the legislature this would be called an implementer as we voted to adopt this as part of the budget but formally execute it this evening. So, over to you.

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes, we have a... This is Community Development Block Grants. These are federal monies which are allocated to the Town of West Hartford on a...

President Slifka: We're on 12. Eleven was on consent.

Mr. Van Winkle: Oh, sorry. I should listen to what you're doing. Twelve. Yes.

President Slifka: My colleagues agree with you.

Mr. Van Winkle: This is an implementer on 12. During our discussions of the 09-10 budget we had to make a lot of decisions which we probably wouldn't have made in better times. We had to make a lot of choices in order to get our spending down and increase or get the revenues that we could out of...out of our community. In this case a proposal that has been around awhile was to take away the free parking which is now in the center on Sunday. Parking in the center is from 11:00 to midnight on Saturday, and free on Sunday. This resolution would implement what we recommended in the budget and charge for parking from 11:00 to midnight on Sunday. It generates \$121,000 in additional revenue to us and that revenue is offsetting costs from the general fund. We're transferring to the...what is called a parking fund costs related to operations in the center. We're taking street lights and allocating the cost for each of those street lights...to run those street lights and putting them into the parking fund...other things like that. So we're able to transfer from the general fund to the parking lot fund and use this additional funding to pay for those costs and reduce the spending on the general fund side by about \$121,000.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Could you just address something that you did during your presentation to us during the budget process? That although this is generating additional income for the town and we're in a tough budget year the motive was not just the money associated with it. It was really to correct an imbalance that we had intended...we created on purpose in the parking structure going back to when we

opened Blue Back Square and that we had purposely left it intact and free in those lots sort of in the traditional part of the center or the older part of the center so that we would not have a...maintain an incentive for people to go there in case there was sort of a flood to go to the new part of the center. Now that we're some time into that period if I recall your recommendation was it's time to balance that out and that's in effect what we're doing today.

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes, Mr. Mayor. What we're finding on Sunday is that everybody has realized you can park in those lots for free and so people shopping in Blue Back Square instead of going into the garages and paying for their parking in the garages are going into those lots and parking in those lots for free. We're also finding employees that are going into those lots and parking for free so in order to reduce the impact of that on the garages and revenues we're shifting this to a pay system on Sundays. You know, we were losing revenue because of this and it was originally set up so that the center had a little more incentive to park in with the thought that people would go into the center, park at what is a little less expensive area and then walk over to Blue Back Square and thereby walk by a lot of stores and shop in the center. Well what we found was that Blue Black Square really did tie the center together into one unit and whether you park in the garage or you park in the surface lots in the center we're finding customers are crossing Main Street and shopping in all the stores. All our stores immediately said in the center that business went up when Blue Back opened so it doesn't appear we need the incentive anymore although we will still have the half hour free in our surface lots in the center which is not true in Blue Back Square.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Any other questions for Mr. Van Winkle? Mr. Visconti:

Councilor Visconti: Excuse me. I have a few comments on this issue. I want to read it into the record here tonight that this resolution is stating that there is going to be a negative...there is a negative impact on the garage revenue. When Blue Back Square was voted on the garages stood on their own. There's a couple ramifications of this. One of them is on the side streets. Mr. Van Winkle and I and Mr. Pat Alair have been working on trying to come up with a resolution of something to the side streets, Brace Road, Clifton, Arundel... We're getting people that are parking again that are wait staff by the droves all night. There's not much we can do. Most people don't mind the fact that shoppers are there but the workers... And a couple years ago, the Town Manager, I think it was Mr. Francis, did something with the people that were, you know, working for employees for different restaurants and they actually made a plan for having them park places. What's going to happen now is on Sundays we're going to have these people in front of our houses up and down Brace Road and Clifton... Well, not Brace. Clifton, Arendel and other streets. I haven't gone to other areas of the center but it's getting out of hand with the wait staff and I'm sure on Sundays they do park in these parking garages but if there's a negative impact on the parking garages because the center was always and is free on Sundays then I really want to put on the record that this plan, even though the Mayor spoke about this was an intention, it wasn't an intention I heard of and I'd like to see that somewhere on the record, if we can dig it up for the next meeting, as to how and

why we were going to someday make the surface lots payable on Sunday. I don't recall any of that during the hearings and... Although the revenue is a good idea if you want to raise revenue. The fact that it's negatively impacting the garages is something that I take exception with. Thank you.

President Slifka: Mr. Visconti, I'm going to respond because not surprisingly you got a few facts wrong. There's an easy answer as to why you didn't hear it in the hearings is because we didn't adopt the parking rates in the hearings. We adopted parking rates after the project was ready to open and you...because the Council acts at that point in time to set the parking rates for all the municipally controlled lots and we had a very substantive discussion at the time as to whether we were going to change the existing center structure at that time or implement immediately upon Blue Back's opening that which is before us now, and there was a concern amongst those of us that were sitting on the Council at the time that we didn't want there to be an immediate shock to the system, that there were people who had gotten used to coming to the center and parking on Sundays for free and that we didn't overnight want it all to change, especially with new incentive lure of a new development. So we said, you know, we want to transition into this. Let's keep it where it is on Sundays at that time and we'll check it again in a couple years based on the advice of staff and, as Mr. Van Winkle indicated here and we've all indicated in our comments, that time appears to be now. And as far as the negative impact is, I think you're trying to implicate...imply that this is a...something about the garages performing badly. This is simply that we've discovered that as customer behavior has grown they have realized that yes, on Sunday you can park in one spot for free and not pay and park closer in Blue Back but you have to pay and what most of the consumers would do is they'd pick the free spot and since we have capacity for everybody we figured it's time to equate it because it has now served its purpose. This was meant to make sure that the older part of the center did not suffer a competitive disadvantage at the beginning, as Mr. Van Winkle indicated. It has not. Blue Back has worked with the existing center and we're now bringing it into balance. We're going to have to do it at some point in time and per his advice this is the time.

Councilor Visconti: You're stating that there isn't a negative impact on the garages? Cause this resolution says there is.

President Slifka: No, I'm saying that it's common sense that we're implementing something today that according to Mr. Van Winkle's estimates would have an impact of \$100,000 in new revenue. The reason is because we set up an incentive. On one day a week for that day you could park for free in one part of our municipal lots and not in another and that was done at the time. We said we may lose some revenue based on that town-wide but it would be what we need in the short-term to make sure that incentive remains for people to go to the old center. It has now served its purpose. We will now make more money. I don't know how that's anything to dispute, the fact that if we give people... It had... It served its purpose. If you give people one place to park that's free that is nearby one that you're going to pay they're going to pick the one that's free. I would. That's all that it is so the negative impact is every time we could get one of those parkers to park in a spot where they would be charged we're not going to get that money

as long as we create an incentive for them to park somewhere that's free. Pretty simple equation.

Councilor Visconti: It's not a simple equation. It was free parking in the center in the flat lots before Blue Back was here on Sundays.

President Slifka: Yeah, and we did that on purpose.

Councilor Visconti: Before Blue Back came.

President Slifka: For...forever.

Councilor Visconti: Right.

President Slifka: Yeah.

Councilor Visconti: So this resolution is saying that there's a negative impact now on the garages because people are parking there. They're parking at Whole Foods also. They're parking in the side streets. The meters on Sundays...

President Slifka: It's not in the resolution.

Councilor Visconti: Yeah. I know, but the meters on Sun... In other words, there's many places... The meters on Sundays right now – do you pay? Do we charge?

President Slifka: No.

Councilor Visconti: No, we don't. Why isn't the resolution changed to pay meters on Sunday also?

President Slifka: Mr. Van Winkle?

Mr. Van Winkle: We are doing this one step at a time. We may come back to you to talk about turning those meters on on Sunday. At this time we didn't propose it. Again, this has two functions. One is the function to...was to assist the center when Blue Back opened so that we continued to attract our parkers and our customers into the existing center and not just to Blue Black Square and the second was, as I was putting this budget together looking for revenue I was looking for revenue. I was trying to find a way to generate additional revenue so we could reduce the spending side of the general fund that the property tax pays for and so it had two functions. One was to assist the center during that opening time of Blue Back Square and the second was to assist us with the budget that we had which was quite difficult this year.

Councilor Visconti: Well, to Mr. Van Winkle, do you recognize or was there a way to measure what's going to happen on the side streets on Sundays now with the wait work staff that will be parking on the streets? There's a ramification during the week and on

Saturdays but now it will be on Sundays also. And is there any way to measure that because we're dealing with hardships on the side streets. Sundays at least is a day our streets are empty. It's nice to be able to come outside and there's not 25, 30 cars out front pulling in your driveways. The rest of the week we have to live with it and not just my street, all over. So taking Sunday away, beyond this particular resolution, charging for it is going to drive people to the streets and are we prepared to measure that? I got involved in politics because of this and it's like back to square one again so these paved lots now will become places where people have to pay and we're going to have workers, you know, continuing now to fill the streets on a Sunday too.

President Slifka: Mr. Adler?

Councilor Adler: I think one of the things that we worked through on the budget was that the revenue side is heavily impacted over this year and the coming years just due to the economics so, you know, if... I think by the nature of saying negatively impacting I think basically if something is free somebody will go in that direction. Hence the garages will be impacted so I think, you know, even though it's one more thing to charge for that seventh day it's an additional revenue source for us to pick up for parking on that Sunday so, you know, I don't know why the additional dialogue here but it's something that we need to do. It's either that or we're going to potentially impact another service area within the budget so I don't know if that helps.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Adler. Is there anybody else? Mr. Visconti?

Councilor Visconti: Yeah. One more statement. I think in this type of economic climate it would be better to try to get as much free parking on one day, such as Sunday. I brought it up before that we should think about concessions in the garages, some way to draw people into the garages. This particular thing, I can understand why we want to raise money but we have to think about bad economic times and people coming. To know you can come to West Hartford center anywhere on a Sunday for free may help. I don't know what the merchants are looking at but...and I don't know the numbers but all I know is that tough times are going to chase people away.

President Slifka: Okay. All those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. Okay. We're up to number... Oh, we have a suspense item. I'd like to entertain a motion to suspend the rules for the purpose of discussion of a resolution.

Vice President Brennan: So moved.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion on the motion to suspend? All those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. Mr. Brennan, could you read the suspense item?

**RESOLUTION (VAN WINKLE) CONCERNING STATE FILING FOR
ASBESTOS ABATEMENT AT NORTHFELDT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

ADOPTED

WHEREAS, it has been determined that there is a need to perform asbestos abatement at Norfeldt Elementary School, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education and the Town Council have appropriated sufficient funding in Asbestos Abatement account to undertake this project, and

WHEREAS, in order to be eligible for State school construction grant funds, the State Department of Education requires the authorization of the Town Council to initiate a school construction project.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of West Hartford that the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to work with the established building committee, begin architectural drawing and make application for grant assistance from the State Department of Education, Bureau of School Facilities.

President Slifka: Do you move adoption?

Vice President Brennan: I think that's just Northfeldt Elementary School. I move that we adopt.

President Slifka: That is correct.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: Second with the correction on the title by Mr. Brennan. Mr. Van Winkle, this was yours?

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes, sir. A good many of our school projects are assisted by a state grant. In this case we are replacing a boiler within this school. The replacement of the boiler is an energy conservation and will save us significant dollars through using a substantially more efficient boiler. It is not assisted with a state grant but asbestos removal as a project is and so the expenditure we'll make on the removal of asbestos, 40 percent of that cost will be offset by a state grant. In order to get that grant you have to sign off on this resolution and the board itself has to sign off on a program resolution which they did last week.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Are there any questions or discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. We're up to Announcements. Does anybody have any? Okay. Just... I want to thank the Veteran's Committee for their work on the Memorial Day Parade. Mr. Van Winkle announced some of that earlier but it was once again a fantastic parade. I think record turnout, great

weather and a very nice ceremony afterwards over at the Veteran's Memorial and we had a great team of veterans who assumed a new responsibility this year and did a fantastic job. Mr. Brennan, you're the liaison. Do you want to add anything?

Vice President Brennan: Right. This commission I think... I agree. They are to be commended. They really came together over the last several months not just for the purpose of this parade but they took on the parade as an additional sort of trial balloon. They're helping out the existing veterans from the American Legion and the VFW because they've been doing it for many years and they've asked the Veteran's Commission to consider it. They hit the ball out of the park. They did a great job and I also agree with Mr. Van Winkle this is by far the best parade there is. It's for all the right purposes. People come and honor veterans but it's so well done and just sort of a perfectly executed wonderful time in two hours flat. We missed the bugler but maybe next year. Um, but again, kudos to the Veteran's Commission. They have their hearts in the right places. They are trying, as best they can, to add more and more veterans into the parade so they're compiling lists. They're going to be asking if you're a veteran and you want to get in touch it's on the website or contact any of us. We'll put you in touch with them because they are looking for more veterans both to help veterans but also to come out and be part of the parade.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Brennan. Mrs. Cantor?

Councilor Cantor: Just to mention, I agree. I thought it was a real...it was a very moving weekend actually with the...starting with the placing of the flags on Saturday and I... You... Sometimes you don't share these things. My dad happened to be with me who was an army of occupation in Germany at the end of World War II and I don't think he ever really stayed for the ceremony and he was really touched by all the speakers and especially your anecdote with your grandfather and he was really moved by that. I did want to mention, though, that Cruising the Center, to change gears, Cruising the Center rain date is next Wednesday from 5:30 to 8:00 so don't go tomorrow.

President Slifka: Okay. Any others? Mr. Van Winkle?

Mr. Van Winkle: Just while we're talking about veterans if you've been to our Veteran's Memorial and that beautiful memorial and how wonderful it is and you stand on the walk and you look down and you'll see the names of veterans on granite stones that are in the ground there. You don't have to have died in the war. You can get your name in there. We've got Father's Day coming up. Do you want to buy a gift for dad and you haven't been able to figure out what to buy here's a great gift. You contact the Department of Community Services and they will sell you a brick. You can have your father, brother, mothers or cousin's name inscribed into that memorial. It will be there forever so it recognizes not only those who died in those wars on the monument but also those who served from West Hartford in the stones as you walk so there are still a lot of stones available and anyone who is interested should contact the Department of Community Services in West Hartford.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Hmm?

President Slifka: That's right. Next year. Okay, we're up to Reports from Corporation Counsel, Mr. O'Brien?

ITEM #14: REPORTS OF CORPORATION COUNSEL

Mr. O'Brien: Yes, when we were here two weeks ago Councilor Verrengia requested that I give you a report concerning the dispute between the MDC and CRRA with regard to the Trash to Energy Plant so I'd like to in about a two minute framework give you a brief overview of what the situation is down there. When the MidConn project was started back in the early to mid 1980s the CRRA entered into a contract with the MDC in 1984 whereby the MDC would provide personnel to operate the shredding facility in the Trash to Energy plant and that contract expires at the end of 2011. Right now there are some 90 MDC employees who work down at the Trash to Energy plant and CRRA has indicated that rather than renewing the contract they wish to go out to bid and see if they can find a private operator to operate it at a lesser cost. The CRRA does have a 20 year option in the contract. They have to exercise that option one year before the expiration of the contract so they obviously could still do so if they chose to but every indication is they wish to go out to bid and see if they can possibly privatize the operation. What has happened is the MDC has indicated that it is going to have termination costs because 90 employees will have to be laid off, not necessarily the same ones that work at the plant because under the union contracts they have a right to go back to the MDC and bump others less senior out of their jobs but ultimately there will be 90 layoffs and the MDC has indicated that their estimate is the termination costs are going to run about 33 million dollars and it's MDC's position that under their contract with CRRA, CRRA has to pay those termination costs. CRRA disagrees and says no we don't have to pay those termination costs and what has triggered the present dispute is each year five months before CRRA adopts its budget, MDC by contract is required to send over its own budget for the 90 employees and CRRA's actuaries have recommended that they begin escrowing for separation costs so they included about 8.5 million in this year's budget for separation costs. That was rejected by CRRA on the basis that they're saying they don't have to pay for it. The contract has an arbitration provision and it appears the issue of who has to pay separation costs is going to go to binding arbitration. Now the important ramification for West Hartford is if it's found that CRRA does not have to pay the separation costs than the eight member towns in the MDC will have to bear the entire burden, whether it's 33 million or some other number. The entire burden will be borne by the eight towns including West Hartford. If CRRA has to bear it than the 70 towns in the MidConn project will have to incur the separation costs and this is assuming that the CRRA does go out to bid, obtains a bid that it likes and terminates its contract with MDC so financially there's some pretty strong, you know, there's issues directly affecting our town. Obviously spreading it out...the cost among 70 municipalities is going to reduce the fiscal impact to us but that's going to ultimately be decided in arbitration and right now it appears to be headed that way although an arbitration panel has not been selected and no evidence has been presented but that in a nutshell is the issue between the MDC and CRRA.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. O'Brien. Actually, since you compiled your report Mr. Van Winkle and I were at a meeting of several MDC member towns, the Chair of the MDC and the Chair of CRRA and the message that we all sent was regardless of your dispute this is a waste of time and money because taxpayers are going to pay on either end and is there some way to short-circuit this. Long story short is that they've agreed to at least for the moment to relax some of the discovery dispute that's at issue in an effort to try to resolve some of the... They claim that most of the dispute now is just on the numbers. I don't necessarily believe that. I don't think Mr. Van Winkle believes that either but that's what they said in the meeting and to that end, allowing some of the documents to be released and reviewed by the other side might bring a greater understanding to that. Most of the people left feeling pretty good about that – that there was more progress than there had been in a long time but I think Mr. Van Winkle and I would probably put ourselves as the pessimists of that group and we'll believe it when we see it but at least they were saying good things when they left. Thank you for the update.

Mr. O'Brien: Thank you.

President Slifka: Are there any questions for Mr. O'Brien? Joe, send any question over? Okay. Thank you. That gets us to... Let's see. There are no appointments. You said no need for Executive Session?

Mr. O'Brien: No Executive Session.

President Slifka: Okay. That gets us to the Consent Calendar. Mr. Brennan?

ITEM #19: CONSENT CALENDAR

ADOPTED

ITEM #11: RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT FUND BUDGET BASED UPON AWARD NOTIFICATION FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.

WHEREAS, the Town of West Hartford is in receipt of a letter from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development dated May 1, 2009 which states that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allocation for the Town of West Hartford's fiscal year 2009-2010 is \$1,102,902, and

WHEREAS, when the Town Council of the Town of West Hartford adopted the CDBG budget for fiscal year 2009-2010 on April 23, 2009 the grant allocation was not available, so the Town assumed level funding from fiscal year 2008-2009 of \$1,083,452 and adopted the CDBG budget accordingly, and

WHEREAS, the Town desires to adjust the fiscal year 2009-2010 CDBG budget to the actual grant allocation and appropriate the balance of \$19,450 to be used in accordance with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines, and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that funding is needed to complete the Town's Five-Year Consolidated Plan (professional services \$15,500) and to supplement temporary payroll (\$3,950) in the Housing Rehabilitation program,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD that the fiscal year 2009-2010 Community Development Block Grant Fund budget is hereby amended as follows:

Increase Revenue

13-301310-30403-9031	Housing Rehabilitation	Community Development Block Grant	\$ 3,950
13-301310-30403-9031	Housing Rehabilitation	Community Development Block Grant	\$10,000
13-402000-40020-9031	CDBG Administration	Community Development Block Grant	\$ 5,500

Increase Appropriation

13-301310-30403-1007	Housing Rehabilitation	Temporary Payroll	\$ 3,950
13-301310-30403-2070	Housing Rehabilitation	Professional Services	\$10,000
13-402000-40020-2070	CDBG Administration	Professional Services	\$ 5,500

ITEM #13: RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACTING TOWN MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER A CONTRACT WITH THE CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY FOR A HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION GRANT

BE IT RESOLVED that Ron Van Winkle, Acting Town Manager for the Town of West Hartford, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of this municipality a contract with the Connecticut State Library for a Historic Documents Preservation Grant.

Vice President Brennan: I move that... Consent Calendar – I move that we adopt.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor? Those opposed. Motion carries. Number 20, Mr. Brennan?

COMMUNICATIONS:

ITEM #20: FROM ROBERT J. MILNE (5-4-09) REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE TOWN COUNCIL REGARDING ITEMS 229, 230, 231 and 232 (TABLED AT 5-12-09 COUNCIL MEETING).

RECEIVED

Vice President Brennan: I move that we receive.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: A motion is made and seconded. Any discussion? Seeing none, all those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries. Mr. Milne, you have five minutes.

Mr. Milne: I greet you that way as a reflection of the comments by Mr. Brennan in reference to the veterans who served. I am a veteran. I served in 68 - 72 prior to the time that the Mayor... I left service prior to the time that the Mayor was born. I'm sure the Mayor has never served this country. I think it's a great thing. I am a veteran so contact me if you so please. Like the issue of not serving the country the Mayor does not seem to be willing to even pay for parking. He comments today in speaking to Mr. Visconti that he'd prefer not to pay parking rather than paying the town. When I come downtown, regardless of what I do I always pay for parking to help the town. I think that's important. I think leadership should instill upon themselves that every contribution to this town is worthwhile so Mr. Mayor, I encourage you to pay for your parking. Find a parking space in town. I'd like to start with Item 227.

President Slifka: What are you talking about?

Mr. Milne: Item 227 please.

President Slifka: No, how about we go back to your end... What are you referring to?

Mr. Milne: No, Item 227.

President Slifka: No, I ask that you back up for once.

Mr. Milne: What?

President Slifka: What are you... Are you implying that we're not paying for our parking?

Mr. Milne: Sir, I don't think you're listening.

President Slifka: Oh, I think I am.

Mr. Milne: You play it back and then we'll discuss it.

President Slifka: No, we just voted to have parking paid for.

Mr. Milne: Not for discussion, sir. Not for discussion.

President Slifka: Oh, I believe it is.

Mr. Milne: It's not for discussion.

President Slifka: Oh, I believe it is, Mr. Milne.

Mr. Milne: It's not for discussion. There a record. The statement is on record.

President Slifka: Well, then you can sit down. You're done. I'm ruling you out of order. You have chosen... You have talked about topics that are off-topic. When the Council has engaged you in them you have refused so I think you can sit down.

Mr. Milne: I'd like to talk about Item 227.

President Slifka: I think you can sit down.

Mr. Milne: This is an example. ..

President Slifka: I think you can sit down.

Mr. Milne: You're not willing to pay for parking.

Voice from audience: Sit down.

Mr. Milne: Thank you.

President Slifka: No, thank you. Alright, I move to... No petitions? Move to adjourn.

Vice President Brennan: So moved.

Councilor Coursey: Second.

President Slifka: All those in favor? Those opposed? Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 P.M.

Essie S. Labrot
Town Clerk/Council Clerk

/sab