

**TOWN OF WINDSOR
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JANUARY 11, 2010**

APPROVED MINUTES

PRESENT: Councilor Matthew Marci, Chair; Councilors Michael McDonald and William Herzfeld

STAFF: Town Manager, Peter Souza; Assistant Town Manager, Emily Moon; Town Engineer, Tom Lenehan; Police Department Chief of Police, Kevin Searles; Public Works Projects Engineer, Bob Dinallo; Public Works Operations Manager, Wayne Radke; Fire Administrator, Paul Goldberg; Fire Chief, Bill Lewis

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Wallick, 782 Stone Road, said he felt there was a lot of data missing from the Rainbow Road document, including exactly where the traffic counts were taken, whether there were any accidents at the medians, etc. State law says there needs to be 3 feet separating motorists and pedestrians.

Patricia Abramowicz, 271 Rainbow Road, said she saw people cutting through Winterwood during the time the diverter was up.

Dennis Burns, 864 Stone Road, stated that he would like to know what all of the traffic improvements were for.

3. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT LENGTH OF SERVICES PLAN

Town Manager, Peter Souza, presented the information about the plan design.

We applied for and received a federal grant-SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) of \$291,115 to create a length of service awards program (LOSAP). The intent of this program is to offer a financial reward for maintaining an active membership with the fire department. The Wilcox and Reynolds Insurance Company of Mansfield, Connecticut has provided the most cost effective program proposal to the town.

Wilcox and Reynolds would manage the financial part of the program, working directly with the volunteer firefighters for disbursement of funds and managing the funds for maximum growth. The federal grant will cover the first four years of expenses. The first year's costs are estimated to be \$116,722, with the second through fourth year at \$58,131. The fifth year of the program would have a town contribution cost of \$101,600 and then decreasing through the out-years of the program.

This Length of Service Program would be somewhat similar to a "pension" type plan that would be paid out at retirement age. As conceptualized, the program would offer a benefit range from \$50 to \$400 a month depending on years of service and participation during those years of service.

Chief Lewis outlined how the plan would work for a volunteer. He also described the minimums that the volunteer would be required to have in order to be eligible and to collect the pension, such as having attained the Firefighter 1 title and the amount of service years.

Town Manager Souza stated that the maximum benefit is \$400/year, which is significantly less than the annual salary for a firefighter. The annual contribution by the town will be adjusted after year four.

Councilor Herzfeld asked if the benefit would go to the spouse if the firefighter dies? Wilcox representative Michael Gergler said that yes, after the age of 65, the benefit would go to the spouse for 10 years.

Councilor McDonald asked if there are any grants for future years. Town Manager Souza said that there are not any currently available, but we could explore that further at that time.

Councilor Herzfeld asked what the participation assumptions were. Mr. Goldberg stated that there are currently 125 firefighters on the roll. He assumes that most would get full benefits, but that will depend on the eligibility requirements being met. Attendance at fires is mandatory for eligibility. Each firefighter's eligibility for this plan would be assessed on an annual basis.

Councilor Marci asked how many people we assume will be eligible for the plan during the first year? Mr. Goldberg responded that he believes it would anywhere from 60%-65% of the firefighters.

Mr. Souza added that he'd like to have this item go before the Town Council for further review before the budget season begins.

Mr. Goldberg stated that a portion of the funds were already required to be drawn down.

Councilor Marci stated he'd like to refer this to the full Town Council for their review and then have it be referred to the Finance Committee so they can have a chance to review it as well.

Councilor Herzfeld asked the Fire Chief if he feels this will help the town retain people. Mr. Lewis responded that he feels it will probably help with retaining longer term volunteers.

Moved by Councilor Herzfeld, seconded by Councilor McDonald, that the Health and Safety Committee recommend to the Town Council that the Town Manager be authorized to formalize a Length of Service Program for the Windsor Volunteer Fire Department and to negotiate and enter into an agreement with Wilcox and Reynolds Insurance Company, Inc to manage the Length of Service Program. Furthermore, it is understood the funding source for the first four years of the program is the SAFER federal grant program and funding for the out-years of the program would be subject to the annual budget appropriation process.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

4. DISCUSSION OF RAINBOW ROAD TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Ms. Emily Moon, Assistant Town Manager, reviewed the purpose of the traffic measures installed on Rainbow Road and gave an overview of what material would be presented during the meeting. The calming measures included installing Digital Speed Display Signs, constructing medians at the intersection of Hamilton/High and Rainbow and erecting a temporary traffic diverter.

Mr. Tom Lenehan, Town Engineer, explained where the traffic counts were taken and when. This program did help cut the number of speeders over 45 mph at the intersection most dramatically. In the eastbound direction, the 85th percentile speed was significantly reduced from 39 mph to 34 mph. Additionally, the number of speeders exceeding 45 mph during the work week was reduced from 93 to 10. In the westbound direction, the 85th percentile speed was reduced from 40 mph to 39 mph, and the number of weekday speeders above 45 mph was reduced from 98 to 45. Mr. Lenehan stated that he believed the medians were effective at reducing speed. At the diverter, the traffic count data indicates that the average daily traffic on Rainbow Road in the vicinity of the diverter was reduced 9.3% or by 236 vehicles during the seven day period. During the peak hours during the work week, the a.m. eastbound traffic decreased by 10.5% or 180 vehicles. Concurrently, there was an increase of 214 vehicles in the a.m. northbound traffic along International Drive.

Councilor Marci asked if the counts were taken on a 24-hour basis. Mr. Lenehan stated that they were and for 7 days.

Councilor McDonald asked if the number of trucks were reduced. Staff explained that the number of large trucks remained fairly constant at 1.1% of total traffic volume. This rate is less than what is seen on other collector roads in Windsor.

Councilor Herzfeld stated it would be interesting to see if the counts are the same now at the diverter's former location – or to see if the counts went back up.

Mr. Bob Dinallo, Public Works Project Engineer, summarized his observations of the diverter. He took weekday traffic studies consisting of manual counts and observations at the diverter on three different occasions during the morning and afternoon peak periods. The first time was on October 14-15, 2009, when the diverter was installed. The second time was on October 29 and the third time was on November 12, the day before the diverter was removed. Here are a few of his observations:

Drivers' behavior during at least the first few days of the trial indicated that they were surprised and confused by the diverter despite the prior notice posted on the changeable message signs. The violation rate at the stop signs was high, probably caused by a combination of willful disobedience by some drivers to a seemingly unjustified regulation and driver inattentiveness and confusion. Drivers had to learn new behavior including how many vehicles in a queue should proceed through the diverter at one time. A couple of times two vehicles met in the diverter and one had to back up.

By the second study, drivers seemed to have gotten better adjusted to the proper procedure to navigate the diverter. Stop sign violations, while still on the high side, dropped by over half. Judging from the overly fast acceleration rates of some vehicles after leaving the diverter Mr. Dinallo sensed that many drivers had a passionate dislike for the diverter. Some of the stop sign violations were by vehicles he had recognized as violators before. There were still a few incidents of driver rudeness.

By the third study, the stop sign violation rate had returned to the levels recorded during the first study. Many of these violators were people working in the adjacent office buildings. Mr. Dinallo noticed that a lot of trash had been left in the road around the drums. He also noticed more driver discourtesy and aggressiveness.

Councilor Herzfeld asked Police Chief Kevin Searles if the department had noticed any change in enforcement activity results. Chief Searles stated that the Rainbow Road targeted traffic

enforcement has been returned to a normal level after the department had considerably stepped up enforcement in the area for a long time. The department has asked officers to focus their heavier traffic enforcement activities on roads that see higher traffic volumes and more traffic accidents, in an effort to reduce accidents.

Ms. Moon stated that town staff could not recommend reinstalling the diverter on a permanent basis. The potential drawbacks outweigh the benefits. She stated that staff recommends using the Digital Speed Display Signs throughout town and, that if the Council wished to do more traffic calming on Rainbow Road, that Council could consider funding the installation of more medians on the road.

Ms. Moon said that town staff would review the state law that the resident mentioned during public comment.

Councilor Herzfeld said that at this time we should stand down and just observe any additional changes to the traffic.

Councilor McDonald said he would be interested in getting another week of data collection this spring to see if the effect lasted.

5. DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC CALMING MANUAL

Ms. Moon reviewed the purpose of the manual and its contents. This manual also sets forth a protocol for evaluating traffic calming needs and prioritizing their implementation. The manual is designed to give town staff and the town council a tool to use to apply a consistent approach to assessing and responding to neighborhood traffic concerns. The manual prescribes a neighborhood involvement process.

The committee discussed the benefits of having a traffic calming manual. Councilor McDonald wondered where the 67% neighborhood approval threshold came from. Ms. Moon stated that it was very common for successful traffic calming programs to require a super majority of consent prior to installing traffic calming measures. This ensures neighborhood buy-in and awareness.

Moved by Councilor Herzfeld, seconded by Councilor McDonald to that the Health and Safety Committee endorse the Traffic Calming Manual and recommend to the Town Council that it endorse the Traffic Calming Manual, as amended by the committee, and direct staff to use the manual when assessing neighborhood traffic issues throughout Windsor, and recommend that the Town Council approve the funding necessary to support the implementation of the Traffic Calming Manual.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

6. STAFF REPORTS

The Town Manager stated they should be expecting the delivery of a new rescue truck soon. It will take 30 days to outfit it for service and it can be on-line by late winter.

Councilor Herzfeld asked what happens to the old truck. Town Manager Souza responded that we will try to sell it.

Town Manager Souza stated that 554 shots were given to individuals during the H1N1 vaccination clinic held on Saturday, 1/9/10.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor McDonald, seconded by Councilor Herzfeld, to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2009 meeting.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

8. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councilor McDonald, seconded by Councilor Herzfeld, to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Moon
Assistant Town Manager
Recording Secretary