

**Town of Windsor
Finance Committee Minutes
Town Hall – Council Chambers
June 14, 2010**

APPROVED MINUTES

PRESENT: Committee Chair Deputy Mayor Al Simon, Councilor Donald Jepsen, Councilor Randy McKenney

STAFF: Peter Souza, Town Manager; Emily Moon, Assistant Town Manager; Tom Lenehan, Town Engineer; Brian Funk, Director of Public Works; Paul Norris, Director of Recreation and Leisure Services; Robert Metcalf, Acting Finance Director; James Bourke, Assistant Finance Director; Linda Collins, Finance Department Accountant

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Bradshaw Smith, 23 Ludlow Road, read a statement (attached) to voice his lack of support for the river trail extension.

3. RIVER TRAIL PROJECT FROM E. BARBER STREET TO HARTFORD CITY LINE

Town Manager Souza provided an introduction to the project, which has long been on the Riverfront Recapture plan and which would provide a safe way to travel and recreate in the Wilson area. Approximately 1,700 residents live in the Wilson area; 650 of whom live on the east side of Route 159. The grant is one of, if not the largest, grants awarded under this Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) program.

Town Engineer, Tom Lenehan, reviewed the project's history, scope, connectivity and design. He spoke about the permitting portion of the project, which will be the longest and most difficult part of the project. The project is supported by the DEP and by CRCOG. We've used about \$20,000 of the \$75,000 the Town Council previously appropriated for the design and permitting.

The Town Manager explained staff's desire to issue a short-term note for a portion of the project so that the town doesn't have to borrow for what is reimbursed by the grant.

Councilor Jepsen asked if we might be able to build a less expensive bridge. Mr. Lenehan said that might be possible after design, but that the bridge has to span the brook and be above flood level.

Councilor Jepsen asked about possible access directly across from Wilson Avenue. Mr. Lenehan said this was DEP land. Easements across the railroad might be one issue. Tent sites might be created in this area, too.

Councilor McKenney asked if it was staff's intent to pay off some of the debt after the first year. The Town Manager said it was.

Moved by Councilor McKenney, seconded by Councilor Jepsen, to recommend to the full Town Council that the Town Council continue to support this project by approving the attached resolution concerning extending the River Walk Trail, and to recommend that the Town Manager be approved to execute the agreement with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

Councilor Jepsen stated some reservations with the cost of the project, but that there are future opportunities to pull back if costs change. Deputy Mayor Simon expressed similar concerns and that the project might not be moving forward without the grant.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

4. OPEN PURCHASE ORDERS (POs)

Town Manager Souza provided an overview of the open purchase orders and explained the scope of work for the Milliman purchase order, which includes evaluating possible changes to the town's pension program.

Town Manager Souza explained that the POs are all for the General Fund and that Mechanic Street expenses are being tracked for possible recapture during redevelopment.

Councilor Jepsen asked if the equipment purchases would be made off of the state bid list. Public Works Director, Brian Funk, answered that some would be and others were bid separately.

Councilor McKenney asked if we would have to negotiate changes to the pension plan. Town Manager Souza stated that we would like to keep the plan consistent across union and non-union groups, but we would have to negotiate for changes to the unions' plans. Mr. Souza explained that we are benchmarking our plan with others and determining how we can mitigate future costs.

Moved by Councilor McKenney, seconded by Councilor Jepsen, that the Finance Committee recommend that the open purchase orders as outlined on the attached report dated June 14, 2010 be submitted and approved by the Town Council until October 18, 2010.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

5. FISCAL YEAR END REVENUE & EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS

Interim Financial Director Bob Metcalf explained that we are ending the year better than we had anticipated. He reviewed 3rd quarter results and sections where revenues were higher than expected for Year End and where expenditure savings are expected.

The Year End General Fund balance is expected be to \$14.1 million or almost 14% of the budget. Special Education Excess Costs revenues were about \$600,000 more than budgeted.

Councilor Jepsen asked if the full \$1.6 million in federal stimulus needed to be spent and would be spent in FY 10. The Town Manager said it must be and will be spent. The Town Manager explained that approximately 1% of the budget will be returned to the General Fund balance.

Deputy Mayor Simon stated he was surprised that this much money could be returned in such a tight year. He asked what the impact of the savings was. Town Manager Souza explained that there were several vacancies, workers compensation injuries and disabilities that resulted in budget savings in some places, but also more overtime and reduced service levels in others. There was no school resource officer at Sage Park Middle School this year. There was a re-organization in Social Services Department reducing one full-time position to part-time. The Police Department did not buy a cruiser. The light winter also reduced costs. About \$100,000 was saved in General Services for debt service and Metropolitan District Commission costs. Some insurance costs might go up based on experience. Some cost savings were identified and imposed as of October 2009.

6. EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS STUDY

Town Manager Souza outlined possible operations and elements the study could look at. He gave examples for the Police Department and Department of Public Works. Use of technology and a fleet review are also possible areas to explore.

Councilor Jepsen stated that his hope was to look for savings for next year and possibly savings in one department that might be applicable in other departments. Some long-term adjustments might be needed to achieve savings. He's open to which departments.

Deputy Mayor Simon said he felt he didn't have a handle on the Police Department's spending and he was hopeful the study would examine this in detail.

Councilor McKenney said he'd hate to spend \$50,000 to cut services that are minimal costs. He said that the Town Council had said that staff is doing a good job budgeting, saving and spending and \$50,000 seems like a lot to spend to possibly come up with ideas we may or may not implement.

Deputy Mayor Simon said he was interested in knowing more about how the Police Department is run. He's not convinced of the adequacy of their overtime policies. Town Manager Souza said that if that is the intent of the study, then the focus of the study needs to be more than savings and review the organizational structure, productivity and scheduling along with contractual obligations.

Deputy Mayor Simon said he was very interested in looking at our personnel obligations and expenses. He's particularly concerned about long-term costs like pension payouts.

Councilor Jepsen said he'd like to see the proposed timeline followed. Town Manager Souza said he'd pull together a proposed scope for Council discussion for their June 21st meeting.

7. STAFF REPORTS

Emily Moon, Assistant Town Manager, reported on the 'Red Flags' Rule. As part of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Federal Trade Commission promulgated rules implementing this law's identity theft prevention provisions. The rules and this aspect of the law are referred to as the 'Red Flags' Rules.

Businesses and governments must adopt policies and practices to protect the personal identification information of people they lend credit to. The law requires that every business and government identify whether it acts as a creditor in an ongoing customer relationship for "covered accounts." The town may have such accounts and act as a creditor. For example, our housing rehabilitation loans and possibly some of our day care centers might fall under this law. Staff is examining the applicability of the law and developing a policy to implement the Red Flags rules. This item may be placed on the June 21st Town Council agenda.

Town Manager Peter Souza reported on the FY 2010 Year End transfers. Town Council typically gives staff the authority to move up to \$5,000 between service units to cover budget overages at year-end. While none of these transfers are anticipated at this time, staff will request this ability at the June 21st meeting.

Town Manager Souza reported on the Transfer Station and stewardship permit. He explained that 1/10th of one acre is regulated under Subtitle C, hazardous materials. The landfill is regulated under subtitle "C" due to the hydroxide storage cell. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is saying the town is going to get a stewardship permit and is requiring us to apply, as this is how the DEP has decided to handle moving landfills out of interim status. The permit will encompass the various plans/permits DEP issues for landfill, i.e. capping plan, leachate management, groundwater monitoring, gas collection system, post closure maintenance & management.

Staff has been working to clarify the language in the draft permit. The various plans and permits would fall under the stewardship permit. Staff is still questioning the DEP's authority, particularly on enforcement of the permit. The DEP is requiring that a public information meeting be held in August. The public comment period will be 7/14/2010 to 8/27/2010. The goal is to have the commissioner issue a permit by October 1, 2010. The permit has plusses but also raises a number of questions and unknowns because it is vague, such as potential increased costs and possible future enforcement actions. The permit is meant to be comprehensive in nature, sets

specific timelines for the DEP and the town. There are possible leverages with the DEP on various closure elements. The permit potentially addresses and relieves issues in the Consent Order. We have made progress in determining final capping material and some progress on the leachate treatment. The town has no choice but to apply for the permit. One will be issued with or without our involvement. Staff anticipates presenting information to the Town Council soon.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilor Jepsen, seconded by Councilor McKenney, to approve the March 22, 2010 meeting minutes.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

9. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councilor McKenney, seconded by Councilor Jepsen, to adjourn at 8:37 PM.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Moon
Assistant Town Manager
Recording Secretary