

OFFICE OF THE  
FIRST SELECTMAN

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William F. Brennan  
*First Selectman*

Harold E. Clark  
*Second Selectman*

Alice L. Ayers

Richard F. Creeth

Susan A. Bruschi

TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, CT 06897

BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S REGULAR MEETING  
June 4, 2007

MINUTES

- Present: William F. Brennan, Harold E. Clark, Alice L. Ayers, Richard F. Creeth, Susan A. Bruschi
- Others: Ed Kulhawik, Police Chief; Joe Dolan, Chief Financial Officer; Sarah Taffel, Director of Human Resources, Labor Relations & Administrative Services;
- Guests: Tom Fleming, Carl Yoder, Kiwanis; Judy Zucker, Bob Kelso, Ken Dartley, Elderly Tax Relief Committee; Steve Hudspeth, Independent Committee on Ethics; Marian Kilbride, Dick Kilbride, Doug Bayer, Milton Pohl, Marilyn Gould, residents; Jerrod Newman, The Villager; Brian Shea, The Bulletin

First Selectman Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m.

A. Consent Agenda

A MOTION was made by Mr. Clark, seconded by Ms. Ayers and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda as amended:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting – May 7, 2007
- Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting – May 21, 2007\*
- Board of Selectmen's Executive Meeting – May 21, 2007

\* page 4, paragraph 6, second line – replace “removal” with “remove”

Tax Refunds

- Real Estate and motor vehicle tax refunds as outlined in the Tax Collector's memorandum dated May 23, 2007.

Gifts

- One hundred dollars (\$100.00) from Mr. and Mrs. George Zengo to the Fire Department Gift Fund.

- Fifty dollars (\$50.00) from Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Hulse on behalf of The Daisy Troop to the Fire Department Gift Fund.
- One hundred dollars (\$100.00) from Paul and Goldie Winn in memory of Elaine Garden to the Department of Social Services.
- Thirty five dollars (\$35.00) from Karen Price in memory of Elaine Garden to the Department of Social Services.
- One hundred dollars (\$100.00) from Burton and Hildegard Kloster to the Wilton Fire Department Gift Fund.

B. Discussion and/or Action

1. Consideration of approving a \$28,000 supplemental appropriation from the Board of Selectmen's Charter Authority for the Police Department Building HVAC system as outlined in Chief Kulhawik's memorandum dated May 30, 2007.

Chief Kulhawik reported that three weeks ago, water began pouring into the upstairs ventilation system due to a major breakdown in the air handler system. He suggested that both air handlers be replaced.

Chief Kulhawik also recommended that the 650 gallon hot water tank be replaced with a more energy efficient 200 gallon tank at the same time since the with the removal of the air handlers, the tank will be easily accessible.

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brennan, seconded by Ms. Ayers and unanimously carried to approve a \$28,000 supplemental appropriation from the Board of Selectmen's Charter Authority for the Police Department Building HVAC system as outlined in Chief Kulhawik's memorandum dated May 30, 2007.

2. Discussion of the Kiwanis Club's request to use the storage facility located on the Gilbert and Bennett School property as explained in Mr. Yoder's memorandum dated May 16, 2007.

Mr. Yoder stated that the building is currently an attractive nuisance. He explained that the Kiwanis Club has offered to repair the building in exchange for using the building for storage. Mr. Yoder noted that Kiwanis currently uses the yellow garage at Ambler Farm but that due to the activity at Ambler Farm, they must relocate.

Mr. Brennan explained that the request raises three issues:

1. a clear understanding of the use of the building and the term of the lease.
2. a security plan for the building
3. various liability and insurance issues

Mr. Brennan voiced his concern that the building could be damaged if nothing is done with it. He suggested that the Town and Kiwanis work together to resolve the above mentioned issues and offered to have Town Counsel draft a lease.

3. Review of the Elderly Tax Relief report.

Mr. Kelso thanked the members of the Elderly Tax Relief Committee. He commented that compared to other towns, Wilton's program is one of the best.

Mr. Kelso stated that the overall conclusion of this committee is that Wilton's program compares favorably to our peer towns and should be retained in its current form but that some adjustment to the benefits provided would be appropriate in order to (1) compensate for increases in property taxes since the last improvements were made to the program, that being for fiscal year 2005 and to (2) anticipate the impact of future mill rate increases. Any changes to the current program adopted will first be effective for fiscal year 2009, so that the proposed increases will, if adopted, represent a catching up for four years worth of property tax increases.

Mr. Brennan noted that the program is a needs based program, not an entitlement program.

Mr. Kelso explained that, at the suggestion of Mr. Creeth, the committee also recommends that the maximum tax credit amounts available in each bracket be indexed annually to the increase in the mill rate so that the credit amounts automatically keep pace with the increase in taxes. Mr. Brennan questioned if the mill rate decreases, would the limits decrease as well. Mr. Kelso replied yes except in revaluations years when the credit amounts would be adjusted by the COLA increase.

Ms. Ayers stated that some members of the committee are not Wilton taxpayers and should not have had a vote. Ms. Zucker noted that the vote was unanimous. Mr. Brennan noted that the composition of the committee was well publicized in advance and it was similar to previous committees appointed by the Selectmen. At the next scheduled review of Wilton's Elderly Tax Relief program, the composition of the committee and the voting rights of members would be reviewed.

Mr. Creeth commented that most seniors eligible for a tax credit take the credit, however, many seniors eligible for tax deferral do not take the deferral. Mr. Dartley remarked that the committee discussed lowering the 5% simple interest on the deferrals as a means to make the deferral option more attractive. Mr. Creeth expressed his opinion that the low enrollment in the deferral program is because of the concept of a deferral rather than the interest associated with it.

Mr. Kilbride stated that the program is discriminatory since it is not offered to all seniors.

Mr. Dolan explained that the Selectmen must pass the proposal to the Board of Finance for comment and once the Selectmen receive back the Board of Finance's changes, a public hearing must be scheduled.

4. Discussion on next steps on the Independent Committee on Ethics report.

Mr. Brennan stated that the committee has incorporated the Selectmen's suggested edits to the proposed code.

The Selectmen agreed to schedule a public hearing on June 28, 2007 at 7:30pm in meeting room B to hear public comment on the proposed code.

Mr. Bayer, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission and an attorney in town, voiced his concern over the proposed prohibition of any past member of any Board/Commission to appear in front of that board for one year after his term has ended. He noted that it could have a negative effect on volunteers for a town this size. He urged the Selectmen to review the provision. Mr. Hudspeth responded that the committee felt it is important to have an isolation period. Ms. Zucker added that other towns have similar provisions.

5. Discussion of the Comstock building project and the construction process.

Mr. Creeth, on behalf of Mr. Brennan, read a construction process statement (attached).

Mr. Brennan added that a list of committee members is being compiled for the Comstock building project.

6. Consideration of approving benefit changes to non-union employees.

Ms. Taffel distributed a handout of the changes (attached). She stated that approving the changes is a two step process. The first is to familiarize the Selectmen with the changes. The second is to prepare changes to the employee handout and amendment to the pension plan.

Ms. Taffel stated that in the past, the AFSCME changes have been extended to non-union employees.

7. Consideration of appointing Harry Somerdyk to the Area Nine Cable Council. Said term to expire June 30, 2009.

A MOTION was made by Ms. Bruschi, seconded by Ms. Ayers and unanimously carried to appoint Harry Somerdyk to the Area Nine Cable Council. Said term to expire June 30, 2009.

C. Public Comment

Ms. Gould asked the Selectmen to reconsider the police and fire extra duty fee increase for non profit organizations.

Mr. Brennan will ask Town Counsel for advice on the legality of a two-tiered system.

Mr. Pohl voiced his concern over the Comstock building project, specifically the Senior Center. He suggested that the utilization of other Town facilities be evaluated. Mr. Pohl also suggested that liquor stores be allowed in town.

D. Reports

1. First Selectman's Report

No report.

2. Selectman's Report

Mr. Clark commended the Parade Committee on organizing a very nice parade.

F. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Mr. Brennan, seconded by Mr. Creeth and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Lund  
Recording Secretary