

OFFICE OF THE
FIRST SELECTMAN

Telephone (203) 563-0100
Fax (203) 563-0299

Email to: Selectman@Wiltonct.org



William F. Brennan
First Selectman

Susan A. Bruschi
Second Selectman

Richard F. Creeth

Harold E. Clark

Ted W. Hoffstatter

TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2010
WILTON TOWN HALL, ROOM B**

PRESENT: First Selectman William Brennan, Second Selectman Susan Bruschi, Selectman Richard Creeth, Selectman Hal Clark, Selectman Ted Hoffstatter

GUESTS: Sandra Dennies, Pat Sesto, Sarah Taffel, David Lisowski, Peg Koellmer, Mark Ketley, Marv Berenblum and Bill Weber (NESC), 10 members of public, Jan Andras

OTHERS: Kara O'Connor (Villager), Joan Lownds (Bulletin)

First Selectmen Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

A. Consent Agenda

Upon motion by Mr. Clark, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved as follows:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting of 6/7/10

Tax Refunds

- Real Estate and Motor Vehicle Tax Refunds as per Tax Collector's memorandum dated 6/1/10

B. Discussion and/or Action

1. Proposal for Planning and Implementing a Survey of Seniors

Mr. Marv Berenblum and Mr. Bill Weber of NESC were present for discussion. Mr. Brennan read his opening comments (attached to minutes). Mr. Creeth added that we know taxes are a big issue for

seniors but the cost of this study is a modest investment to deepen our understanding of the issues and possible solutions. Ms. Bruschi agreed that we need to be better informed. The Elderly Tax Relief Program is headed in the right direction but next year will be even more difficult in terms of the budget and we need to look into other kinds of relief. Mr. Clark stated that this is not only a Wilton problem but is a problem of surrounding areas as well. The proposed survey would be regional. We need information from an objective survey. Any relief must be fact based. Mr. Hoffstatter agrees that taxes are the #1 problem but we cannot just drastically reduce taxes. An investment in this type of survey is worthwhile.

The informal survey results that were presented by Mr. Ruskewich will be provided to NESC. Mr. Berenblum advised that NESC is a not-for-profit organization and they have worked with the Town of Wilton on other projects. Any survey would have to be designed so that we know the objectives to be accomplished. NESC will be looking at regional and national surveys. They will want to talk to former seniors who have relocated to find out if their expectations were fulfilled with the move.

Mr. Brennan moved to proceed with the study as outlined by NESC. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

2. Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Program – Pro-ration of Benefits

The applications for credits and deferrals have exceeded the \$850,000 cap set by the Board of Selectmen. The amount of applications for credits would equal \$873,000 and the deferral program applications amounted to \$201,883. Assessor David Lisowski had prepared an outline of four scenarios for pro-rating credits, which he explained. There was a lengthy discussion about extending the cap and funding the entire amount required to cover all applications at the full amount. Mr. Brennan questioned the source of these additional funds. Ms. Dennies questioned the suggestion that money be appropriated from the reserve fund.

Mr. Brennan moved to adopt the equitable pro-ration scenario in order to get tax bills prepared and mailed as soon as possible and to discuss with the Board of Finance to see if there was a consensus agreement to make any additional adjustments with the January tax billing. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

3. Trackside Teen Center – Report on Management Changes

Trackside Board of Directors President Peg Koellmer reported that Mr. Mark Ketley has been hired as Executive Director. Mr. Ketley is currently the Executive Director of the Stamford YMCA and plans to

substantially increase Trakside's fundraising and grant development, to maximize programming available to teens, and to expand the use of the teen center building for the benefit of all Wilton residents. A copy of the 90 Day Plan for Trakside was distributed (attached to minutes).

4. 2009 Deer Mgmt. Summary Report & 2010 Recommendations

Pat Sesto reported that the seventh year of controlled hunting only yielded 41 deer. Surrounding towns of Redding and Ridgefield had culls of nearly 300 each. Due to this poor harvest, in 2010, the committee plans to make a change in focus by having a town-run hunt and also to have citizen volunteers actively seek out private lands for hunting.

Mr. Clark moved to support the 2010 recommendations of the Deer Management Committee. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

5. Draft Proposed Modification to Dog Ordinance – Public Hearing

Ms. Bruschi moved to hold a public hearing on the draft proposed modification to the Dog Ordinance at 7:15 pm on July 6, 2010 in meeting room B of the Town Hall. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

6. Employees Retirement Plan Investment Committee – OPEB Funds

CFO Sandy Dennies advised that there are sufficient OPEB Funds to initiate a long term investment of \$1 million.

Ms. Bruschi moved to support the Resolution entitled "Employees Retirement Plan Investment Committee Investment of OPEB Trust Funds" (attached). Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

7. Vanguard Advisory Services Non-Discretionary Advisory Service Agreement for Town of Wilton OPEB

This agreement would allow Vanguard to provide advisory services for the OPEB Funds, as an addition to the existing Wilton funds. Town Attorney Pat Sullivan has reviewed the agreement.

Mr. Clark moved to authorize First Selectman William Brennan to sign the Vanguard Advisory Services Non-Discretionary Advisory Service Agreement for Town of Wilton OPEB. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

8. McGladrey & Pullen Agreement for audit services for FY 10
After an RFP, it has been decided to extend McGladrey & Pullen's contract for one additional year to serve as auditor for the fiscal year ending 6/30/10. In November, there will be another selection process.

Mr. Clark moved to authorize First Selectman William Brennan to sign the McGladrey & Pullen Agreement, dated 6/9/10, for Audit Services. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

9. Appointment of Richard Wehrmann to the Investment Committee
Mr. Brennan moved to appoint Mr. Richard Wehrmann as a member of the Wilton Employees Retirement Plan Investment Committee. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

10. Miscellaneous Other Business

Allen's Meadow Grant Application - Ms. Sesto advised that the Norwalk River Watershed Association, in conjunction with the Conservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission, would like to apply for American the Beautiful Grant funds to plant 15 trees at Allen's Meadow, consistent with the master plan for Allen's Meadow. Ms. Liz Craig of the Association advised that this project will consist of several beautiful varieties of trees.

Mr. Clark moved to approve the grant application by the Norwalk River Watershed Association for funds to plant 15 trees at Allen's Meadow. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

Treasurer – Mr. Brennan advised that Janet Bondeson will be resigning as Treasurer as of 7/15/10 after more than 10 years of service. It is necessary to have all necessary signatories changed before she leaves.

Mr. Clark moved the Resolution to appoint Sandra L. Dennies as Treasurer, Town of Wilton (attached). Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

C. Public Comment – None noted.

D. Reports

1. First Selectman Report
Rt 33 – Repaving will begin in July.

2. Selectmen Reports

Mr. Creeth: The Energy Commission would like to meet with the BOS for an update. They feel it is time to begin an outreach program. Mr. Creeth to propose a date to meet.

Mr. Clark: No report

Mr. Hoffstatter: Would like to discuss the next steps for the reusable bag ordinance at the next meeting.

Ms. Bruschi – No report

E. Executive Session

Mr. Clark moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel issue and to invite HR Director Sarah Taffel to attend. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

Meeting entered executive session at 9:15 pm and returned to open session at 9:44 pm.

Mr. Clark moved to approve the request for a disability pension to Louis A. Iannaccone. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Jan Andras, Recording Secretary

Comments to BOS by W. F. Brennan regarding proposed senior survey objectives.

Consideration of a proposal to conduct a survey of senior residents – examine the issues of greatest concern to our seniors and their future plans. What have been the experiences of citizens who left Wilton – moved to another town in CT or out of state? Have seniors who moved realized their objectives? If not, what are the issues.

The Board of Selectmen's objective is to try to find policy solutions to enable more of our seniors to remain in Wilton.

Since our last meeting, where we discussed this subject, I have had several emails or letters. I would like to read two that are representative:

Read two letters –

First, I believe a little background is in order at this point –

When the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Committee presented their recommendations, there was considerable debate. Eventually, program improvements were adopted that increased benefits. However, the BOS was obligated to put a cap on the amount of relief that we felt the Town could afford. As stated, even though we had a very difficult budget, we increased program benefits. Last year, our program budgeted \$650m. For fiscal year 11, the amount was increased to \$850m or a +31% year over year increase. Since inception of the current program, this is the third full review in which benefits to elderly and disabled citizens have been increased by the Town's Board of Selectmen.

Advocates for greater tax relief for seniors requested that the BOS do a survey to assess the problem and to determine possible additional ways to provide economic relief. In response, the BOS agreed to do a survey once the FY 11 budget was finalized.

Now, I can assure you the BOS is well aware of the difficult economic squeeze that seniors on fixed incomes face to meet property tax obligations.

In consultation with other First Selectman and Mayors, it is also clear that this is not a unique Wilton problem. I am told that the situation is similar in other neighboring communities. Property taxes are the primary source of revenue for most CT municipalities and gradually increase due to increased operating expenditures, employee wages and benefits, plus energy and material cost increases.

As we have researched this subject, we have found that seniors move for many reasons – high property taxes – yes, but also the high cost of living in Fairfield County and in other areas with close proximity to major cities or urban areas. The problem is not limited to just our area, with indications that seniors relocate to less expensive areas for

many reasons, such as warmer climate, closer location to children or relatives, to return to home towns, to enjoy greater recreational activities, etc.

In a recent meeting with Rudy Marconi, First Selectman of Ridgefield, he said they have observed a pattern that indicates seniors have moved to Ridgefield from Chappaqua and Long Island because Ridgefield's property taxes are lower than Westchester County and Long Island. Yet some Ridgefield seniors have moved elsewhere because they feel Ridgefield's property taxes are too high! It is all relative and as I have tried to illustrate, it is not a simple problem.

Getting back to the survey, if we vote to proceed, we hope with NESC's help to design a survey that will shed some light on these patterns, identify actions other towns have taken to address the problem and suggest policies that the Town might adopt to help keep Wilton an attractive and affordable place to live for our senior citizens.

Clearly it is a multi-dimensional problem that I believe must be addressed with a multi-faceted program.

Elderly Tax Relief is a partial solution, but the Board of Selectmen, as well as the Board of Finance, unanimously agreed that the Town does not have infinite resources to enable a financial entitlement program for our seniors. One new approach may be to investigate land use policy changes to create more affordable housing for seniors. Easy to say, but not so easy to do. Wilton Commons, a project to create affordable housing for seniors with continuing support from this board, has been fighting for financing for over ten years! The Stay at Home in Wilton program is another helpful program for some senior residents who wish to remain in their current homes. Improved quality of life initiatives – more facilities for seniors, more discounts from retailers, restaurants and professional services for seniors are a few other thoughts. Hopefully, a professionally designed and managed third party survey would also identify additional remedies that we might pursue to ease this very difficult problem.

TRACKSIDE TEEN COMMUNITY CENTER

90 DAY PLAN

DAYS 1-30

- Execute contract for executive director
- Evaluate program director position
- Interview and contract with program director
- Schedule meeting with Superintendant of schools
- Schedule meeting with board of selectman
- Schedule meeting with WHS principal
- Schedule meeting with Middlebrook school
- Prepare press release on new director
- Review budget with finance committee and prepare outlook review to Board
- Organize and relocate office space where needed
- Schedule meetings with key founders of Trackside for evaluation and support
- Prepare fund development goals with committee chair and present to board.
- Assist program director with September planning
- Meet and evaluate with YMCA Executive Director
- Meet and evaluate with Parks and Recreation Director
- Meet and evaluate with School Resource Officer
- Formulate and seek board approval on rental policies and pricing structures
- Begin to prepare rfp's for possible kitchen catering usage and café supervision and operation

Days 31- 60

- Execute plan with High school for Executive and Program Directors access to students during the school day
- Execute plan with Middle school for Executive and Program Directors access to students during the school day
- Assist Board President with Board Development, including establishing Development Committee
- Review, create, or implement Strategic Plan
- Meet with civic and non profit organizations in Wilton for building usage discussions
- Develop afternoon and evening program initiatives for building usage with program director
- Update and manage effectively website. Seek website guidance pro bono if needed.
- Contact media for discussions on weekly or monthly space for Trackside Column.
- Execute plan with program director with 2 month future planning, with one month execution
- Identify capital improvement needs and costs, report to Board for discussion
- Working with the Board, identify fall / winter fund raising event and create committee
- Prepare cash flow analysis and finance report protocols for Board meetings
- Meet with local businesses to discuss in-kind donations and marketing opportunities off of such donations
- Evaluate and streamline entry procedures and trackpass system
- Evaluate and determine usage of electronic id system
- Evaluate all room spaces in building and make recommendations to board for usage

Days 61-90

- With board president, schedule meetings with key Board of Finance members for operational and goal review
- Schedule meetings with middle and high school clubs, advisors and coaches to begin dialogue on Trackside usage and involvement
- Assist program director in setting up middle school student committee
- Prepare and distribute request for supervision assistance at fall dance events and send out to civic organizations
- Finalize café plans and submit to board for approval
- Meet with school social workers and health leaders to facilitate growth and exposure
- Schedule and conduct presentations at civic luncheons
- With fund development board representative, schedule and conduct initial face to face solicitations with identified donors
- Review 90 day progress with Board and initiate next 90 day steps

RESOLUTION
EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT PLAN INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
INVESTMENT OF OPEB TRUST FUNDS

WHEREAS, the Employees Retirement Plan Investment Committee has demonstrated expertise in the investment of Wilton Employees Retirement funds, and

WHEREAS, the OPEB Trust has expressed the desire for the Investment Committee to also manage investment of the OPEB Trust funds;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT, The Investment Committee be authorized by the Town of Wilton to act in its capacity for developing and modifying an investment policy statement for adoption by the OPEB Trustees;


THAT, The Investment Committee shall manage the OPEB investments in accordance with such policies;

THAT, the Investment Committee shall evaluate performance and be assigned such other investment-related responsibilities as may be assigned by the OPEB Trust.


This Resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

June 21, 2010


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RESOLUTION
TREASURER, TOWN OF WILTON

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT, The Town of Wilton accepts the resignation of Janet Bondeson and thanks her for more than 10.75 years of service, and

THAT, The Town of Wilton hereby recognizes Sandra L. Dennies as the Treasurer, Town of Wilton, effective July 1, 2010.

THAT, The Town of Wilton hereby authorizes the provision of notification to the Town's banking institutions to recognize the newly appointed Treasurer as the signatory on all municipal transactions beginning July 1, 2010.

This resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

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