

OFFICE OF THE
FIRST SELECTMAN

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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
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2009
WILTON TOWN HALL, ROOM B**

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

GUESTS: CFO Joe Dolan, Judy Zucker, Ken Dartley, Michael Graupner, Ann Richards, Phil Richards

OTHERS: Brian Shea (Bulletin), Tom Evans (Villager)

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

A. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Clark, seconded and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen Meeting – June 15, 2009 Regular Meeting

Tax Refunds

- Motor Vehicle Tax Refunds and Personal Property Tax Refunds as outlined in Tax Collector's Memorandum of June 23, 2009

Gifts

- United Way Donation of \$1,500 to the Senior Center

Board of Selectmen members voiced their appreciation for the generous donation from the United Way.

B. Discussion and/or Action

1. Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Review Committee – Vote on committee charge and members

The draft charge was discussed at the last meeting and changes were made. Ms. Bruschi moved to adopt the Charge to the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Review Committee (copy attached). Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

Committee members approved to date include Judy Zucker, CFO Joe Dolan and Social Services Director Cathy Pierce. Mr. Ken Dartley stated that he does not believe that town employees should be voting members of this committee. Mr. Michael Graupner objects to resurrecting the same charge and review that was done by the 2007 committee. He feels that a “needs based” program deals with a very small number of seniors and more should be done to keep all seniors from moving out of town.

The Board of Selectmen interviewed seven volunteers to serve on the committee. Each Selectman voted for his/her four top choices. The ballots were tallied. Ms. Bruschi moved to appoint Chuck Cunningham, Joseph Equale, Gerry Holdridge and Antonia Wiseman to the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Review Committee, along with Judy Zucker, Joseph Dolan and Cathy Pierce. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

2. Consideration of cost of living adjustment for retired employees

Mr. Creeth stated that a year like the current, when the CPI shows a decline, does not justify increasing the COLA for retired town employees. All town residents have been hit in their retirement funds. We need to be conservative for at least the next two years while waiting for changes in the current economic situation. The other Selectmen agreed that unfortunately an increase at this time cannot be justified.

Mr. Creeth moved that there be no COLA increase for retired employees for FY 2010. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

3. Consideration of resignation from the Wilton Energy Commission

Mr. Brennan moved to accept the resignation of E. Rust Muirhead from the Wilton Energy Commission, with regret. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

Mr. Creeth, who serves on the Energy Commission, advised that Mr. Muirhead has been an invaluable member. Ms. Bruschi appreciates Mr. Muirhead staying on with the Commission until a replacement was found, despite his increased job obligations.

4. Consideration of re-appointment to Area Nine Cable Council

Mr. Brennan moved to re-appoint Carole Young-Kleinfeld as a representative to the Area Nine Cable Council for a two year term. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

5. Consideration of re-appointment to the WPCA

Mr. Hoffstatter moved to re-appoint Eric Fanwick to the Water Pollution Control Authority for a five year term. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

6. Consideration of new appointment to the WPCA

This item was withdrawn. An interview of the candidate is scheduled for July 15.

7. Charter Commission – continue review of Draft Report

Sections #5, #6 and #8 of the Draft Charter were discussed with no major issues raised. The Board of Selectmen will be meeting tomorrow evening to go over Section 7 – Appropriations, Budgets and Finance.

C. Public Comment – None noted.

D. Reports

1. First Selectman

Chief Ed Kulhawik – Mr. Brennan read his statement advising of the planned retirement of Police Chief Ed Kulhawik (attached to minutes).

FAA – Mr. Brennan distributed copies of a news release from AG Richard Blumenthal regarding his intention to appeal the matter of the FAA plans for flight patterns over southern Fairfield County to the Supreme Court.

Contingency Plan – Mr. Brennan intends to start early by beginning discussion on contingency plans for 2011 with department heads at the Operating Committee meeting later this week. In FY 2011, we will not have the reserves that were used to help offset the mill rate in FY 2010. In addition, the grand list is not increasing significantly and the State of Connecticut is in a financial crisis. Therefore, contingency planning is appropriate to be prepared.

Health District – A letter was received from the Director of the Westport/Weston Health District suggesting a meeting to begin discussing various issues. First, it will be necessary to review the labor/union issues to determine if they are surmountable.

2. Selectmen's Reports

Ms. Bruschi – No report

Mr. Hoffstatter – Calls are being received about troop boxes. Regarding looking at elderly tax relief programs in other states, as was suggested by Mr. Graupner earlier this evening, he feels that could be an option. However, if we look at other states, we would need to take into account what they are dealing with at the state level that may be different than Connecticut.

Mr. Clark – No report

Mr. Creeth – No report

E. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Jan Andras, Recording Secretary

att. 1: Charge to Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Review Committee

att. 2: W. F. Brennan Statement

Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled

A committee has been appointed by the Board of Selectmen to review the Town of Wilton's Tax Relief Program for the Elderly and Disabled. Initially adopted in January 1997, this program has been periodically reviewed and improved in February 2000, February 2004 and most recently in September 2007.

Given recent economic developments, the Board feels it is timely to review this program to determine if any changes are required to more effectively assist Wilton's elderly and disabled citizens.

Judy Zucker, who served on the 2007 committee, will chair a committee of seven (7) members.

The key principle of Wilton's tax relief program, which is reaffirmed by the Board of Selectmen, is that it is "needs-based." In brief, benefits should be available to our senior and disabled citizens who are in the most need of financial assistance and wish to remain in their Wilton homes.

The Board of Selectmen requests the Committee to complete a comprehensive review of our current program and suggests the following activity:

- Early in the review process – hold a public hearing to obtain insight from citizens on the current program and any suggested changes that should be considered.
- Review the programs of other Connecticut municipalities. Use the 27 District Reference Group (DRG) (A&B) towns to do a comparative analysis.
- As needed, interview Wilton town employees, the Chairman or a representative from the Board of Finance, officials in other towns, and previous committee members who have knowledge and insight on tax relief programs. Estimate and quantify the cost implications to the Town of any recommended changes to the plan.
- Complete a written report summarizing the findings from the review process and outlining recommended changes, if any, to make our program responsive to the needs of Wilton's elderly or disabled citizens. We suggest the committee report to the Board of Selectmen at the November 16, 2009 Board of Selectmen meeting. It would be helpful if we had the written recommendations and report available by November 10, 2009 to enable copies to be distributed to BOS members prior to the November 16, 2009 meeting.

Thank you for volunteering to serve on this important committee.

William F. Brennan
First Selectman

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Statement

Edward Kulhawik, Wilton's Chief of the Police Department has announced his plans to retire effective August 14, 2009.

Chief Kulhawik's career spanned a period of 27 years, during which time he rose through the ranks from patrol officer to Chief of Police.

His performance in every position was outstanding and his conscientious and courteous service to Wilton's citizens was always at the highest professional standards.

As Chief of the Police Department, he set admirable achievement goals for himself and his department; built strong morale and pride through the organization; and treated everyone family.

Speaking on behalf of the Town of Wilton, we thank Chief Kulhawik for his years of service to our community and wish him continued success and happiness in his future endeavors.

William F. Brennan
First Selectman