

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 10, 2007 AT 7:15 PM

RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1. ROLL CALL: A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 7:15 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Stephen Corbett, Marilyn Petitto Devaney, Angeline B. Kounelis, Jonathan Hecht, John J. Lawn, Jr., Stephen E. Romanelli, Mark S. Sideris, and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Also present were the Council Clerk, Valerie Papas, Town Manager Michael Driscoll and Town Attorney Mark Reich. Councilor Donohue was absent.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. EXAMINATION OF MINUTES: March 13th and 27th. Councilor Sideris moved both sets of minutes as written, with attachments, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.

4. PUBLIC FORUM: none noted.

5. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS:

A. Informational Presentation on the Independent State Auditor's Report on Certain Activities of the Department of Public Health Food Protection Program – Steven J. Ward, Health Director. The Chair recognized Mr. Ward who provided an executive summary of the State Auditor's Report and an update of activities of the health department. It was noted that while Watertown has less than the federally required full time staff needed for the number of food establishments, the deficiency has been addressed through a food consultant line item in the budget. The report also indicated that Watertown's state mandated inspections are met and often exceeded; and that all inspectors have attained their certified food protection manager training. It was further noted in the report that Watertown has consistently maintained high standards for the last twelve years and the sanitarians have been recognized to be top notch professionals by their peers (see attached executive summary and State Report).

Councilor Devaney congratulated Mr. Ward and the health department for their fine work and well deserved recognition. She noted however, that she has concerns over the vacant Town Nurse position.

Mr. Ward stated that filling that position has been difficult as the salary is not attractive to many entering the field and that it is a state wide concern.

Councilor Romanelli indicated that the schools have trouble filling the school nurse position as well, as the salary is too low and should be addressed by the Manager.

The Chair encouraged the Manager to look into this issue and bring it back to the attention of the Budget and Fiscal Oversight committee or the full Council as soon as possible.

Councilor Kounelis asked if canteen trucks servicing the local area require a license. Mr. Ward indicated that any canteen truck servicing Watertown requires a local license. Councilor Kounelis thanked Mr. Ward for his department's performance and presentation.

Councilor Sideris also noted his kudos to the department.

6. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

A. Acceptance of Proclamation for Project Literacy – Mark S. Sideris. Councilor Sideris read a proclamation honoring Project Literacy on their 20th anniversary. It was noted that on Sunday, April 29th, a celebration will take place at the Library. Ms. Ann ___ thanked Councilor Sideris for the honor and extended an invitation to all.

B. Resolution authorizing a transfer of funds in the amount of \$35,000 for the Pleasant Street Corridor study. Presentation delayed, pending arrival of Sasaki Associates.

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. The Chair noted that Ms. Lucia Mastrangelo is this year's recipient of the Unsung Hero Award which will be recognized on May 16th at the State House.

2. The Chair indicated that an article appeared in the Boston Globe with respect to a law suit involving the Coolidge School project. The Chair stated that the Council is supposed to have regular updates with respect to this project and indicated his disappointment in learning of the incident in the local newspaper.

3. The Chair asked what the status is regarding a records request from the Retirement Board Chairman, Thomas Thibeaut with respect to the names of candidates who applied for the 5th member of the Retirement Board.

Mr. Reich stated that the Town has taken the position that the records request was an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. He noted that the application for the position on the Retirement Board was not a public process and that the Town is protecting the rights of individuals as resumes are not a public record.

Mr. Reich indicated that although the Supervisor of Public Records did Order the release of the resumes, the Town requested reconsideration. Mr. Reich further stated that the Attorney General has refused to enforce the Order based on other decisions of surrounding cities.

The Chair stated that he was relying on a decision which was based on Watertown and not other towns and wants the matter resolved.

Mr. Reich stated that the Attorney General has declined to enforce the ruling disagreeing with the Supervisor of Public Records.

Councilor Devaney stated that the people who applied for the position are not employees of the Town and the Retirement Board is not a Town board. She asked why the Town is not complying with the Order.

Mr. Reich stated that the end results have reached its conclusion given the decision of the Town of Braintree matter, based on case law.

4. The Chair stated that he has met with the Town Auditor with respect to the Town Council's budget and expects the proposed budget to be forwarded to the Council and the Manager.

5. The Chair stated that there continues to be a problem with the audio of the Council meetings and asked that the Cable Access Board assist with this problem.

6. The Chair noted the poor condition of the Council Office walls which has been an ongoing problem for several years, with large portions of paint peeling off the walls. The Chair indicated that he sees no reason for the continued delay in its repair and asked the Manager to look into the remedy as soon as possible.

- B. Resolution authorizing a transfer of funds in the amount of \$35,000 for the Pleasant Street Corridor study. The Chair recognized Kathryn Madden, Sasaki Associates, who provided a power point presentation on the Pleasant Street Corridor Study. It was noted that there will be an April 23rd start date with a revised scope of work to include a kick off meeting and interviews, a planning framework, economic development and fiscal analysis, public charrette, concept plan and implementation strategy (see scope of services attached).

Following the presentation, the Chair opened up the presentation for public comment and recognized:

Mr. Albert Kamishlian, Porter Street – who stated that Pleasant Street is in desperate need of “bleed offs” to calm traffic congestion.

Councilor Corbett stated that the study supports the recommendations of the Economic and Development Committee and makes good sense. He indicated that the Town needs to look at long term planning, most importantly from the public and noted that we need a project we can move forward with as a blue print which includes a vision and a developed strategy.

Councilor Hecht stated that he is happy to see progress underway with Sasaki Associates, which is a local company with proven experience. He indicated that the Town should not allow the study to sit around.

James Bean, Pine Street – stated that Sasaki Associates worked very hard with the WADC and the Art Center project and that there were no disappointments there.

Councilor Devaney stated that Pleasant Street should be widened. She noted that there is an opportunity to relieve the burden of the tax payers with beautiful buildings and that the Town should be realistic with respect to grant monies from the State.

The Chair thanked Ms. Madden for the presentation and noted the importance of having residents buy into the process.

Councilor Kounelis noted that the transfer tonight was only a partial payment of \$35,000 for the study. She inquired about the linkage agreement with Stop & Shop and if those monies have been forwarded to the Town.

The Manager indicated that the monies from Stop & Shop are in escrow with the Town Attorney.

Kathryn Button, Edwards Road – asked what groups, if any, have been contacted or included in the study.

Ms. Madden stated that the process will be open to the public and public groups and noted that Sasaki will conduct stakeholder interviews and a charrette which will be open to the public.

Councilor Devaney moved the transfer of \$35,000, seconded by Councilor Romanelli and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

8. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

1. The Manager noted that he has asked for an added agenda item to tonight's executive session.
2. The Manager stated that he will follow up on the Boston Globe article regarding the Coolidge School project and how the Town will proceed with the appeal.
3. The Manager indicated that he will follow up on the repairs needed in the Council Office within the 08 budget or a loan order.

9. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Councilor Devaney asked for a report regarding poor workmanship on Town buildings.

With respect to the Boston Globe article, Councilor Devaney noted her continued disappointment at learning about important Town issue in the local papers or on the street.

Councilor Kounelis asked for a full report on complaints regarding the new electronic parking meters including the number of parking meters, their location, the number of malfunctioning parking meters, broken posts and location and number of removed parking meters. She stated that she is embarrassed by continued reports by residents of broken meters. Councilor Kounelis asked that monthly reports made by the parking attendants be shared with the Town Council.

Councilor Romanelli thanked Councilor Kounelis for the request and stated that he too has received complaints regarding malfunctioning meters.

Councilor Romanelli asked why the Town Council has not been noticed on all the construction going on along Pleasant Street. He noted his surprise at the traffic back up on Pleasant Street due to digging in the street and stated that he was not apprised at who was doing the digging in the street and why.

Councilor Kounelis asked for a more accurate guestimate of the cost of the new police station on Main Street noting that the Town's estimate of \$13-14 million based on square footage was disputed in a recent Boston Globe article which cited that the station could cost upwards of \$20 million based of recent square footage figures.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Devaney announced that the Boys Basketball team had their picture taken with the governor as part of their celebration of their state championship win.

Councilor Devaney stated that the Town's energy committee should be part of the police station building committee.

The Chair stated that the School Committee honored all the winter sports teams last night which included basketball, cross country, track and hockey.

11. PUBLIC FORUM

Raya Stern, Library Trustee – spoke out against a Letter to the Editor regarding a bronze plaque stored in the east branch for safe keeping and noted that the bronze plaque will be affixed to the front of the library building very soon. She thanked the Town Council and citizens for their support in the building of the new library.

James Bean, Pine Street – stated that the issue of resumes has nothing to do with the Retirement Board but is a matter of extending the right to privacy to those who apply for positions.

Albert Kamishlian, Porter Street – forwarded material on waste management.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION: There being no further business to come before the Town Council's open session, Councilor Sideris moved to go into executive session at 9:30 pm for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to real property and collective bargaining or

litigation and not return to open session following adjournment of executive session, seconded by Councilor Corbett and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.