

MINUTES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2008 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 P. Corbett, Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney, Susan G. Falkoff, Jonathan Hecht, Angeline B. Kounelis, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Mark Sideris and Council President Clyde L. Younger. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll, Town Attorney Mark Reich and Council Clerk, Valerie Papas.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: October 14th. Councilor Sideris moved the minutes as written, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

Councilor Sideris moved to Suspend the Rules in order to add Public Forum to the agenda and to move forward President's Report, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote. **7. REPORTS FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT** – The Council President read a statement clarifying his remarks in the Boston Globe with respect to comments he made regarding the National ADL's stance of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. He stated that he could not stress enough the Council's commitment and dedication to the human rights of the Armenian people (see attached comments).

PUBLIC FORUM: The Chair recognized Mr. Will Twombly who presented a bi-lingual map of Watertown and its services. He thanked the Harvard/O'Neil/Watertown charitable committee for their grant and thanked all those involved in the making of the map.

The Chair recognized Peg Cassidy, Prentiss Street who stated the importance that the selection process for applicants to fill the affordable units at the Coolidge School apartments is done in a transparent process that is well defined and vetted.

Councilor Devaney moved to Suspend the Rules in order to bring forward agenda item 6A, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by voice vote. Acceptance of proclamation officially recognizing October as Italian Heritage Month – Councilor Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney.

Councilor Devaney read the proclamation and recognized Rudy Basconi, President of the Sons of Italy, Antonio Mastraturo and Mary Cooper, members.

Mr. Basconi thanked the Council for the recognition and stated his commitment to community, charity drives and student scholarships.

Councilor Sideris moved to accept the proclamation, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote.

4. COMMITTEE REPORT:

A. Joint Committee of Human Services and Economic Development and Planning update on Branch Libraries – John Lawn/Jonathan Hecht, Chairs. The Chair recognized Councilor Lawn who read the Committee report (attached). It was noted that the town is in need of records/archival storage space and well as office space for an expanded ITT department, community center or other town departments. Additional meetings will take place for more discussion. Councilor Sideris moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote.

5. INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATIONS:

A. Informational Presentation by the Food Pantry – Deb Kaup, Coordinator/Director. The Chair recognized Ms. Kaup who noted the following facts regarding the Watertown food pantry: on any given day, seventeen families and or 55 people are served. An increase from last year has been noted; up 33 families from last year. Rice is a staple at the food pantry and generics are substituted to make the dollars go further. Food stamp numbers are down State wide due to the complicated paperwork; 868 Watertown families are currently receiving this service. Watertown food pantry has been able to maintain its supplies due to its loyal supporters and grants. Ms. Kaup offered the Council a tour of the facility.

B. Informational Presentation on the upcoming marketing process for the affordable units at the former Coolidge School - Nina Schwarzschild, Mitchell Properties and Megan Nye, Hall Keen Management. The Chair recognized Ms. Schwarzschild and Ms. Nye who explained the local preference guidelines for filling the ten affordable residential apartments.

It was noted that the definition of local preference includes: current resident, current employee or former resident within past five years. It was stated that the definition came from previous housing development projects in town and from Mass Housing. The Manager stated that the definition is consistent with other affordable housing projects and noted that Mass Housing and the Planning Office were involved.

Mr. Steve Magoon, Planning Director stated that past criteria were used; the criteria was paired down and aimed at seniors. He indicated that a good application pool will be used to fill the units.

It was further stated that if there are an inadequate number of minority applicants, non Watertown minorities will be added to the local selection pool as required by HUD. During the lottery process, a neutral third party will observe. Ms. Nye and Ms. Schwarzschild reviewed the application process and the construction status dates (see attached).

There was a question on what the process would be if there were an inadequate number of Watertown minority applicants. Councilor Devaney questioned what an inadequate number was, and requested a specific number for the word "inadequate". She noted that the term inadequate was a value judgment. She stated that Watertown has an adequate number of minorities to apply for the affordable units without going to other communities. She stated that employees of local businesses and employees of the Town were never included in any previous Coolidge School presentation for local preference status.

Several councilors including Hecht, Lawn, Piccirilli and Sideris spoke in concern with the timeframe and the ability to fill the apartments given the deadline of November.

Ms. Nye stated that they will re-examine the timeframe and get back to the Council.

Councilor Corbett spoke in concern with having consistency with affordable units and maintaining the overall process over time.

Councilor Falkoff asked if the November 21st application deadline can be extended.

Councilor Piccirilli agreed with the request noting that an application process can be daunting and time consuming. Ms. Schwarzchild clarified that the application deadline of November 21st does not include any of the required paperwork. The applications are then reviewed and applicants are contacted if more information is needed or if any information is missing prior to the lottery process.

6. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

- A. Acceptance of proclamation officially recognizing October as Italian Heritage Month – Councilor Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney. Previously voted.

- B. Resolution authorizing a transfer of \$2,069,882 from Town Council Reserve and Town Health Insurance Accounts to the Fiscal Year 2009 Town Council Reserve and various Fire Department Salary Accounts in order to fund an Agreement with the Firefighters Association covering the period of July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2008.

The Chair recognized the Manager who provided a brief overview of the transfer. Councilor Devaney moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

- C. Resolution authorizing a transfer of \$1,121,318 from the Fiscal Year 2009 Town Council Reserve and the Town Health Insurance Accounts to various Fire Department Salary Accounts in order to fund an Agreement with the Firefighters Association covering the period of July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009 and to replenish monies previously moved to Council Reserve related to the Fiscal Year 2006 – 2008 (July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2008) Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Chair recognized the Manager who provided a brief overview of the transfer. Councilor

Devaney moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

D. Resolution authorizing a transfer of \$504,647 from Town Council Reserve and Town Health Insurance Accounts to the Fiscal Year 2009 Town Council Reserve and various Police Department Salary Accounts in order to fund an Agreement with the Police Supervisors Association covering the period of July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2008. The Chair recognized the Manager who provided a brief overview of the transfer. Councilor Devaney moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Sideris and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

E. Resolution authorizing a transfer of \$353,100 from the Fiscal Year 2009 Town Council Reserve and Town Health Insurance Accounts to various Police Department Salary Accounts in order to fund an Agreement with the Police Supervisors Association covering the period of July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009 and to replenish monies previously moved to Council Reserve related to the Fiscal Year 2006 – 2008 (July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2008) Collective Bargaining Agreement. The Chair recognized the Manager who provided a brief overview of the transfer. Councilor Falkoff moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

F. Resolution authorizing a transfer of \$4,908 from the Fiscal Year 2009 Town Council Reserve Account in order to fund salary adjustments for three Non-Union Confidential employees covering the period of July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009. The Chair recognized the Manager who provided a brief overview of the transfer. Councilor Sideris moved the resolution, seconded by Councilor Devaney and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

The Chair requested a motion to refer compensation of non-union Council employees to the Committee on Personnel and Town Organization. Councilor Sideris moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Hecht and adopted by voice vote.

G. First Reading on a Proposed Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget.
The Chair recognized the Manager who provided an overview of the proposed amendment, noting that a legal advertisement of the proposed amendment will be placed in the local paper for a public hearing and vote to take place on November 12th.

H. Resolution regarding Question 1 on the November 4th Election Ballot –

sponsored by Councilors Jon Hecht, Steve Corbett, John Lawn and Susan Falkoff.

The Chair recognized Councilor Hecht who indicated that the proposed resolution opposes Question 1 and that there will be considerable damage to all communities in the Commonwealth if it is passed. He agreed that we need tax reform, but indicated that Question 1 will not make things better, but will make things worse. Councilor Hecht read the resolution, seconded by Councilor Corbett.

Councilor Corbett concurred and noted that if Question 1 were to pass, there would be financial chaos.

Councilor Kounelis stated that if Question 1 were to pass, real estate taxes would increase in order to generate the loss of revenue.

Councilor Devaney agreed stating that Question 1, if it were to pass, would impact the disabled, water taxes and eliminate financial assistance from the State.

Councilor Sideris stated that nothing would be gained by eliminating the State tax and urged everyone to vote no.

Councilor Piccirilli echoed previous comments and noted that Question 1 is reckless and would be a negative for Watertown.

The Chair agreed and indicated that if passed, the measure would be devastating. He noted that the State budget is already lean – with no extra fat to cut.

Upon a roll call vote, the Resolution opposing Question 1 was adopted by unanimously.

7. REPORTS FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Previously presented.

8. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER:

A. Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2010 Preliminary Budget Overview. The Manager recognized School Committee Chairman, Anthony Paolillo; Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steven Hiersche and new Library Trustee Anna Kuwabara, who were present in the audience. The Manager provided a lengthy and informative preliminary budget overview (attached).

9. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:

Councilor Kounelis thanked Superintendent Mee for a four page memorandum on Pigeon feces and asked; where are we at this point? Where are we going and what will it cost? She noted that there are still many questions not answered.

Councilor Devaney questioned why contractors were not responsible for repairing a set of sidewalks at the Lowell School as previously noted by Councilor Piccirilli. Councilor Piccirilli explained that the sidewalks he asked to be repaired because of a safety issue was outside of the work performed by contractors. The Manager concurred and provided a further explanation of the work. Councilor Devaney asked for a follow up/report on the matter.

The Chair stated that he is aware that a study of our cemeteries will be conducted and asked if the Public Works committee will be involved. The Manager stated that the Town is looking to move forward with a design plan. The matter will then be brought back to the Council and/or the Committee of Public Works for further discussion.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilor Lawn thanked employees, and the Manager for negotiating a contract which included joining the State's GIC, noting that this is an important step moving forward.

11. PUBLIC FORUM – none noted.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION There being no further business to come before the Council, Councilor Sideris moved to adjourn the open meeting at 11:30 pm and go into executive session in order to discuss strategy with respect to real property and not to return to open session after its adjournment, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by unanimous roll call vote.

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted as amended on November 12, 2008.

Clyde L. Younger, Council President