

RTM Meeting
June 7, 2011

The call

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the RTM Library, Museum and Arts Committee, to appoint Peter Flatow to serve as Trustee of the Westport Public Library for the four-year term beginning July 1, 2011.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, to acknowledge the 300 year anniversary of Greens Farms Congregational Church.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director for an appropriation of \$275,000 to the Sewer Fund Account (Pump Sta.#9, Force Main) for the replacement of the Hillandale Road force main serving Pump Station #9.
4. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director for an appropriation of \$500,000 from the fund balance of the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account to the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account (HVAC Upgrade: Town Hall) for the HVAC upgrade and energy efficiency project for the Town Hall.
5. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director for an appropriation of \$425,778 to the Highway Account (Storm Expenses) to cover the expenses incurred during the previous winter.
6. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the Human Services Director, to approve programs eligible for investment by business firms under the provisions of CGS Sections 12-630aa et seq, known as the R.E. Van Norstrand Neighborhood Assistance Act.
7. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the First Selectman to approve an ordinance adopting Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 4-124i through 4-124p as amended, providing for the formation of a regional Council of Governments, authorizing the town to join such Council when duly established, designating the First Selectman as the representative of the Town of Westport on such Council and authorizing the Representative Town Meeting to designate an alternate representative from its members for a two-year term or until the next election of the RTM. (First Reading, full text available in the Town Clerk's office.)

Minutes

Moderator Hadley Rose:

This meeting of Westport's Representative Town Meeting is now called to order. We welcome those who join us tonight in the Town Hall auditorium as well as those watching us streaming live on www.westportct.gov watching on cable channel 79. We are on ATT now as well on channel 99. My name is Hadley Rose and I am the RTM Moderator. On my right is our RTM secretary, Jackie Fuchs. Tonight's invocation will be by Mr. Alan Raymond.

Invocation, Alan Raymond:

Mr. Moderator, members of the RTM, ladies and gentlemen. When I was a little kid living in Buffalo, my parents' friends would ask me, 'what do you want to do when you grow up?' I would always answer, "I'm going to live in Westport." Because, growing up, I spent every summer of my life in this lovely community. Thus, as you can probably understand, it is an incredible honor to be asked to present tonight's RTM invocation before this distinguished and dedicated group of Westporters. Let us pray...It is a warm feeling, Lord, to be in this historic building where, for many, many years, hundreds and hundreds of school children once took their first halting, but eager, steps toward adulthood. Yes, their educational lives began here and, perhaps, their own personal dreams for the future began here, too. This, while those assembled in this room tonight dedicate their wisdom and their hearts to Westport's future, may we also remember and honor those who have, by their prior dedication and commitment, made Westport what it is today. Lord, we ask this in thy name. Amen.

There were 31 members present. Mr. Guthman, Ms. Ancel, Mr. Seidman, Ms. Levy and Ms. Cherry notified the Moderator that they would be absent. Mr. Mandell, Ms. Bruce, Mr. Keenan and Mr. Rossi notified the Moderator that they would be late.

Corrections to the RTM meeting of May 3:

Dick Lowenstein:

On page 9:

Line 12: "exercised **its**.." (not his)

Line 15: "By the time it left.."

Line 18: delete "of the electrical,"

Announcements

The next meeting of the RTM will be next Tuesday, June 14, at 8:00 p.m. That is the appeal of the P&Z decision.

P&Z Committee will meet at 7:45 p.m. in room 309.

RTM Announcements

Mr. Rose:

[Calling upon Mr. Meyer and Ms. Cady and Ms. Flug and probably Mr. Galan...]This is probably why Ms. Bruce said she'd be late!

Bill Meyer, district 3:

We've got a real treat tonight. We've got a real live duck coming tonight. This duck was born in California and moved to Westport a few years ago.

Diane Cady, district 1: Bill Meyer can get anybody to do anything!

Mr. Meyer:

At 10 o'clock on Saturday, we are having the Sunrise Rotary Duck Race. We hope you will all be there. We hope you bought a ticket. There are five of us in Sunrise Rotary. Thank you for your support.

Mr. Rose: Diane, you'll never live it down.

Lois Schine, district 8:

Westport Rotary won't let Sunrise Rotary get anything on us so, Friday, June 10, 7:30 p.m., Westport Rotary is sponsoring two world pianists at the Steinway Piano Gallery on the Post Road. This is a benefit for the End Polio Now campaign and I think we've all said it here before. Rotary, world wide, is pledged to eliminate polio from the entire world. The Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation has contributed \$300 million to that and we are challenged to raise the same amount. We are getting there but there are still a few pockets of polio left in Africa and, I think, in India. The tickets for Friday night are tax deductible and I don't have any to sell you. They are \$35. If you would like to go, call Barbara 203-260-0191. She needs to take reservations to insure that there are enough seats. Or, stop at the Steinway gallery.

Dick Lowenstein, district 5:

Don't be misled by this orange piece of paper. I am not here to promote the Duck Race. I am here to promote the Library Book Sale which is held July 16 – 19. At this point, the early part of June, we are still looking for volunteers to help set up the book sale starting July 11. If you would like to volunteer, go to the library or go online at westportlibrary.org to find all the information. I'll talk another bite of the apple in July when the sale is approaching.

Cathy Talmadge, district 6:

I would just like to remind everyone that after you go to the Duck Race on Saturday, go up to the Levitt Pavilion and Eco-fest. The Staples Green Club is hosting the Eco- fest for the third year which is becoming more and more a town event. There are bands, live music from noon to six, free food, lots of vendors who have information on environmentally friendly options. It used to be considered a high school event but it is family friendly event. Take your kids and grandkids. It's fun.

Arthur Ashman, district 7:

It's a hard act to follow the ducks. The Westport Arts Center is having its last jazz jam on Thursday. We have Saturday night spoken for, Thursday, and Friday as well. We are honoring Max Wilk. We already have 100 reservations. Jazz musicians from the local area are coming. We are not for any cause except to enjoy jazz.

Eileen Flug, district 9:

I wanted to announce, for those of you who aren't aware of it, there is a newly formed Friends of Westport Recreation. It is a 501(c) 3. We actually received the 501(c) 3 status a few weeks ago. The purpose of the Friends is to be an umbrella non-profit organization for fund raising for projects that will help support the parks and recreation in Westport. So, if anyone has a project that they would like to bring before the Friends of Parks and Rec., this is a great fundraising vehicle because our 501(c) 3 can be an umbrella for non-profit tax-deductible contributions for these projects. There is a procedure to go through presenting the proposal to the Parks and Rec. Commission and to the Friends of Parks and Recreation. If the proposal is accepted, then it can become a tax-exempt contribution type of project. Let me know. The other members of the Friends Board are Ken Bernhard, Jeff Mayer, Peter Wormser, Scott Smith and myself. There are a couple of ex-officio members, Jenny Johnson, Stu McCarthy and Janis Collins. So if anyone has any questions, let me know, or any projects they want to talk about, let me know or any of the other board members.

Birthday greetings: Mr. Guthman, who is hopefully off celebrating his birthday someplace nice, Ms. Flug whose birthday is today, Mr. Keenan who is not here and also, the duck lady's birthday is this month [Diane Cady].

Gordon Joseloff, First Selectman:

I'm known as your high tech First Selectman. I thought I'd try high tech and see if it works.

I want to talk to you tonight, briefly, about something you have heard a lot about. That's called OPEB. The Board of Finance is meeting tomorrow night in special session. They are going to bring in the actuaries. Some of you are going to look forward to it. It's at 5:30. They changed it because of the Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. I thought I'd take this opportunity to speak to you. What is an OPEB? Why is it important? It is holding up the setting of our tax, the mill rate. We were supposed to do it May 18, then June 1. We're not going to do it tomorrow. Hopefully, we will do it next week. I wanted you to know what the issue is with OPEB. It's a new term, about three years old. It stands for "Other Post Employment Benefits." It includes retiree health care, dental care and other post employment benefits such as life insurance, prescriptions. It does not include retiree pensions. The important thing to remember is that, in order to calculate it, you have to calculate not just those who retired but those who are working. You have to have the health claim history. It is very complex. It's an accounting thing.

You are projecting the cost that the town will incur over the next 30 years with your current employees as retirees. Why did OPEB become such an issue? The concern was triggered by the collapse of several major private sector retirement and health plans. The GASB, which is headquartered in Norwalk, found that public sector plans were also vulnerable, Westport among them as well as states. GASB, the General Accounting Standards Board, requires the public sector to account for long-term OPEB costs over the active service-life of benefiting employees rather than reporting the current year OPEB cost for existing retirees. We have done that year after year. That's why you haven't heard about OPEB before. We said, 'Okay, we have this number of retirees. Here is what the costs are. This is what we allocate for.' Now they are trying to get us to look out 30 years to predict what the costs will be and pay it into a trust fund. GASB intended that shining a light on these long term liabilities would force the public sector to address and, hopefully, avoid the collapses in benefit plans that accrued in the private sector. What's happened in Westport? As we and our actuaries were reviewing the projected OPEB Annual Required Contribution, you've heard that term "ARC", number for this year, it was found that there was a discrepancy between the number of covered employees in our pension plans, which are separate and more expensive, and those covered under OPEB. In other words, there are two accounts and two different measurements that we now have to now fund for. So, as we looked at this, we said there is something wrong here. The current actuaries were not the ones who did the initial OPEB valuation in 2007. They were redoing it for the first time. The discrepancy has been traced to not accounting for some covered Board of Education and library employees in the previous OPEB calculations. How and why this occurred is still under investigation. We are looking back at records. We changed firms. This was originally done under Don Miklus who is no longer with us so there is a little gap in information. As a result, the actuaries have had to go back and recalculate the projected liability cost for our entire pool of existing employees and retirees over the course of our lifetimes. This means going back over health claims for town employees, covered Board of Ed employees and covered library employees and retirees. The complex task has delayed this year's ARC number. As soon as we knew we had a potential issue, we consulted with our independent accounting firm, our bond counsel, Town Attorney and financial advisor. They have provided advice which we are following. The advice is find out what is involved and then figure out what to do about it. We have not gone to the bond rating agencies because all the advice was you don't need to go to them until you know what the issue is. We did inform the chair of the Board of Finance as well as the Moderator of the RTM that we had an issue and we didn't have a handle on what it was. Now, what we are doing and what the actuaries are doing and will tell the Board of Finance tomorrow, is that they are crunching the updated numbers but because of the complexity of the task, it is delayed getting to us. This is not something you want to fool around with. You want to be sure as best you can, even though it is a projected number for 30 years that the numbers are close. They will meet with the actuaries at 5:30 in special session. We have been told the ARC will not be available until next month. We'll hear more about that

tomorrow. So, I am urging the Board of Finance to set the tax rate on the basis of the best information available to us at this time. We know how much has been projected in the past year. We may or may not hear from the actuaries an inkling of what we may have to put in additionally. When we get that, we can add additional monies to the OPEB just as we have this year. We funded about 95 percent of OPEB this year, the ARC. Since the OPEB has been instituted, we are about 73 percent funded which is not bad. We are 86 percent funded on the pension plans. Believe me, there are a lot other communities who are a lot worse off but I will meet with the RTM Finance Committee to go over these in more detail after tomorrow's meeting. Here's what you have to remember about OPEB: Actuarial studies tell us that, in addition to the current covered employees, we will have hundreds of employees consuming retiree health care services during the next 30 years. Adding to the burden, retirees will live longer and health care costs will continue to increase. As more people retire, the costs will go up. Unless changes are made, the ever growing health care expense demand on the general fund will eventually consume our ability to provide essential public services. It's nice that we want to fund that ARC 100 percent every year, but when it grows to...fill in the blank...we suddenly say, 'Gosh, that means cutting our town budget by X dollars or our Board of Education budget by Y dollars. Do we really want to do that under the current system because we know that, like Medicare or Social Security, we aren't going to have enough money to do that in the end. So, essentially, that's an alert to tell you there's a discrepancy. The actuaries are working on it. We'll probably have to set the tax rate not knowing it. Just for comparison purposes, I think we put in \$4.3 million for the OPEB ARC this past year for what we now know are not the correct valuations so we'll have to determine what that new number will be. By comparison, pensions are a lot larger. This coming year, we put in \$9.4 million so it's roughly two to one. We are responsible for more pension costs than OPEB costs. Some communities, John Kondub told me tonight, he went to the Government Finance Officers' Association, they have not funded anything. They are doing it as they have in the past as we used to do it. They will fund it every year. The take away tonight, the actuaries are coming tomorrow. We have an added OPEB liability which we don't know what it is. We are going to have to set the tax rate without it. As we get a handle on the additional OPEB costs, I will come to you and to the Board of Finance and we'll decide what can we fund out of, perhaps, additional revenue coming in. The good news is that we've had about \$800,000 or even more of unanticipated revenue that's come in in this current year. This will give us a cushion to fund additional costs. Of course, all this is complicated by the fact of the reval. With reval, people's values are going to change not only because of the mill rate but because of the value of your home. Anyway, it's a complex issue but I did want you to hear it from me. I know there are probably lots of questions. We'll get to a lot of those tomorrow night. I'll talk to Mike Rea to set up a meeting to talk in more detail for those who want to know more. Thank you very much.

The secretary read item #1 of the call – Appointment of a member of the Library Board of Trustees. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Committee report

Wendy Batteau, Library, Museum and Arts Committee:

The Town Charter specifies that half of the Westport Public Library Trustees are to be selected by current members of the Westport Public Library Board and half are to be selected by the RTM. For the upcoming term, the RTM needs to appoint one person (to replace Thuy Tranthi who is retiring). Accordingly, members of the RTM Library, Museum and Arts Committee met with members of the Westport Public Library Governance and Nominations Committee to interview candidates for this and other trustee positions becoming available on July 1, 2011. Each applicant had previously attended informational sessions and supplied letters of interest, c.v.'s, and other pertinent information. Of the several impressive candidates, LM&A Committee members chose to nominate Peter Flatow, who has already been voluntarily sharing his expertise with The Library Director and others for about a year. Mr. Flatow works currently primarily as a consultant and coach to Fortune 100 companies such as AT&T, Johnson and Johnson and Nabisco, focusing on business growth and reinvention. He also works with a number of leading private equity investors such as Blackstone and Allied Capital, in maximizing investment opportunities. His particular business-development and marketing skills and his knowledge of and enthusiasm for the WPL (similar to those of Thuy Tranthi) will make him a valuable Board member. The motion to nominate Mr. Flatow was made by Kevin Green and seconded by Barbara Levy. The vote to approve was unanimous. Respectfully submitted, Wendy Batteau, Chair and Reporter; Kevin Green; Barbara Levy; Gene Seidman; Cathy Talmadge. Members not present: Mike Guthman who was attending a P&Z meeting on behalf of the Westport Public Library, Arthur Ashman and John Suggs.

Members of the Westport electorate - No comment

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Rubin.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the RTM Library, Museum and Arts Committee, the appointment of Peter Flatow to serve as Trustee of the Westport Public Library for the four year term beginning July 1, 2011 is hereby approved.

Mr. Rose:

It has been moved and seconded by Mr. Rubin to approve the resolution just read.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously

Mr. Rose: Mr. Flatow, thank you very much for serving. We appreciate it.

The secretary read item #2 of the call - To acknowledge the 300 year anniversary of Greens Farms Congregational Church. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously

Presentation

Mr. Lowenstein:

Way back when Alan Raymond was a little boy, actually, well before that, the colonial legislature authorized the establishment of what was then called the West Parish in Fairfield. It is actually the 300th anniversary of the Greens Farms Congregational Church. Working with Jim Marpe, one of the co-chairs of the Tri-centennial Committee of the church and my fellow members of district 5, I propose that RTM approve the following proclamation:

WHEREAS the local government we enjoy today had its beginnings in 1711, when the colonial legislature established the West Parish of Fairfield in what today is known as Green's Farms;

WHEREAS the West Parish served as both the spiritual home and governing body for the residents who, collectively, constituted the town meeting;

WHEREAS from that humble start, the Town of Westport was chartered in 1835;

WHEREAS in 1949, the citizens of Westport elected their first Representative Town Meeting to replace the town meeting.

NOW THEREFORE, the Representative Town Meeting members, assembled in Westport Town Hall on June 7, 2011, voted to convey their heartiest congratulations to the Congregational Church of Green's Farms on the 300th anniversary of the first parish meeting on June 12, 1711.

Members of the Westport electorate

Jim Marpe, Morningside Drive South:

It is a genuine pleasure to be appearing before this body tonight and not asking for Board of Education budget approval of any kind.

Mr. Rose: The pleasure is all ours.

Mr. Marpe:

As Mr. Lowenstein already indicated, I am here speaking as a co-chair of the 300th anniversary Celebration Committee of Green's Farms Church. I share that responsibility with my wife, Mary Ellen, with Steve and Diane Parish and perhaps most importantly, Mr. Westport himself, Alan Raymond who is co-chair of our celebration activities. This Sunday, June 12, the Green's Farms Congregational Church will celebrate 300 years of continuous worship as a faith community. Three hundred years ago on June 12, 1711, what was then called the West Parish of Fairfield began worshiping and continued to worship through the

revolutionary war, through the burning of the second building in West Parish by the British, the collapse of the steeple during a hurricane in 1950, any other number of other events. Think about 300 years ago for a minute, 1711. It was only 90 years after the pilgrims stepped on Plymouth Rock, 20 years before George Washington was born, 65 years before the Declaration of independence, 125 years before the Town of Westport was officially chartered. It was the combination of that group of Bankside farmers who migrated here from Fairfield and a fair number of other settlers between Sasco Creek and Compo who made up what ultimately became that initial parish. There were about 270 residents of that community who, ultimately, with other parts in this area became Westport. Those settlers who, frankly, became tired of the lengthy commute to worship and do government business in Fairfield, maybe taking one or two hours by horseback; although, I was thinking on a Thursday afternoon it would take as much time to get to Fairfield today so not much has changed. In any case, today there are 630 members at Green's Farms Church comprising about 300 families with over 240 children as part of that worship group. Green's Farms Congregational Church is part of the Congregational Church which is also known as the United Church of Christ. We have come to understand that we are among the top 100 churches in terms of growth in terms of baptisms and through sheer new membership. It continues to be a much alive organization and growing all the time. I am going to quote Alan Raymond for a moment:

When Green's Farms Church was founded in 1711, the church was the Town. The church collected taxes, made the laws, ran the schools, (I know Elliot is old but I don't think he was here then), cared for the poor, things that governments do today, so, in a sense, we are not only celebrating the history of church, we are celebrating the history of Westport and Fairfield County.

They had consolidation figured out then but we're figuring it out today. As it relates to the RTM, as Mr. Lowenstein pointed out, that was the town meeting. We are thrilled that the members of the RTM from District 5 from the Green's Farms area have worked with us to acknowledge this celebration and Sunday we are having the celebratory event. I thank you for considering this proclamation and urge its unanimous approval. We are honored to be recognized by the wider community of Westport and want to be an active part of that. To that end, I also would like to invite you to another event on Friday, June 10. You can attend it before you attend the concert that Lois was talking about. It is an art exhibit that will be held in a tent in the parking lot in the Green's Farms Church. We have about 40 artists exhibiting. Most are from Green's Farms Church but some are from the greater community. It is art of various kinds. The theme is people taking their faith journeys and expressing them through art. I will leave these brochures. If you are interested in attending, it is from 5- 8 p.m. My thanks to the delegation from district 5 of the RTM.

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded.

RESOLVED: That the 300 year anniversary of Greens Farms Congregational Church is hereby acknowledged by the following proclamation.

WHEREAS the local government we enjoy today had its beginnings in 1711, when the colonial legislature established the West Parish of Fairfield in what today is known as Green's Farms;

WHEREAS the West Parish served as both the spiritual home and governing body for the residents who, collectively, constituted the town meeting;

WHEREAS from that humble start, the Town of Westport was chartered in 1835;

WHEREAS in 1949, the citizens of Westport elected their first Representative Town Meeting to replace the town meeting.

NOW THEREFORE, the Representative Town Meeting members, assembled in Westport Town Hall on June 7, 2011, voted to convey their heartiest congratulations to the Congregational Church of Green's Farms on the 300th anniversary of the first parish meeting on June 12, 1711.

Given this 12th day of June, Two Thousand Eleven

Members of the RTM

Mr. Meyer:

I'd just like to mention that there is a very important 40 year member of the Green's Farms Congregational Church. That is John Booth. He is watching at home tonight. He has been a big factor in the church. He was the Moderator. He was a Deacon. As you know, John was a dean of this RTM. He served for 16 years. He was chair of the most important committee, the Finance Committee. So, lets all say, "We love you, John." We know he is listening. I'd also like to mention that our Saugatuck Congregational Church which Linda and Eileen and I are very active in was a spin off in 1830 from the Green's Farms Church. We want to thank you, Jim, for letting us do that. In Connecticut, about every town was founded by a Congregational Church. We love you John!

Judy Starr, district 1:

Who will be presenting it to the congregation on Sunday? [Mr. Lowenstein.] This is like our ancestor governing body. Congratulations...and, I love you John. It was great working with you.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 30-0. Mr. Mandell is here now.

The secretary read item #3 of the call - Appropriation of \$275,000 for the replacement of the Hillandale Road force main serving Pump Station #9. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation

Steve Edwards, Director of Public Works

Tonight, this is the first of three requests I have so it is an expensive night for me. This is a request for \$275,000 for the replacement of a sewer line installed back in 1970. It is a cement line pipe that runs from a pump station on Center Street, across West Parish up to Hillandale under the connector back up to Hillandale out to Hillspoint and up to Spicer Road. The total length of the line is 7,000 linear feet. We want to replace a section under Hillandale that is approximately 1,300 linear feet. This area has become problematic in the past couple of years. It

developed small pin holes where the hydrogen sulfide in the effluent has eaten through the concrete and attacked the ductile iron line. We have actually developed leaks in the pipe that we have had to go out and repair four or five times in the past couple of years. It has become problematic and we have to address it. Money has been set aside in the five year capital forecast of the sewer reserve fund not the general fund. It is anticipated for repair.

Committees report

Finance and Public Works Committees, Ms. Talmadge:

I won't reiterate what Steve has said. The few things he didn't say is that the sewer reserve fund \$3,000,080. It has been in the five-year budget. He anticipates the work would begin in August and take three weeks before the school buses are out. It was approved unanimously . The Public Works Committee met on May 19 and the Finance Committee met on May 31. This is a joint report. In both cases, the Public Works Committee voted unanimously to approve. There was a quorum. I want to apologize to Jack Klinge. I didn't have him there but he was there and I will add him to the report. The Finance Committee did not have a quorum. There were four people present and they voted unanimously to support this issue.

Members of the Westport electorate - No comment

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Rubin.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director, the sum of \$275,000 **from the undesignated fund balance account within the sewer reserve fund** to the sewer fund account (Pump Station #9, Force Main) for the replacement of the Hillandale Road force main serving Pump Station #9 is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Jonathan Cunitz, district 4:

This is a language question on the resolution. The following resolution, reading ahead, refers to recommending a sum from a fund balance of a certain account. This resolution as well as the one on number five, talks about where the money is going but doesn't indicate where it is coming from. It just mentions it will be coming from the sewer fund. Should the resolutions read to show where the money is coming from, not only on this one but also on number five?

Mr. Edwards:

It is coming from the sewer reserve fund. The other request is capital and nonrecurring fund.

Mr. Rose:

I guess the question is whether you have to be more specific in the resolution.

John Kondub, Finance Director:

The account structure within the fund that Dr. Cunitz so eloquently quoted is a reserve fund. It is a fund balance account in that account that is called the undesignated fund balance account. You may want to amend the motion to say:

...An appropriation from the undesignated balance account within the sewer reserve fund.

Mr. Rose:

I am going to ask for unanimous consent for this item and two items down
...from the undesignated fund balance account within the sewer reserve fund to the sewer fund account

There is unanimous consent.

The motion passes unanimously. 30-0.

The secretary read item #4 of the call - An appropriation of \$500,000 for the HVAC upgrade and energy efficiency project for the Town Hall. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation

Mr. Edwards:

This is a request that I wrestled with for some time because it ain't really broke. The system that I've got here is working. The HVAC system does work. The heating system does work. With time, it's 30 years old. It's inefficient. I can certainly improve on our energy efficiency. I can do things that will certainly save on a lot of energy so, with that and the fact that we are eligible for \$100,000 grant, it pushed me over the top. So, I am here asking for an appropriation for something that is right. I don't often come and ask for money for something that isn't broken or about to be broken but, in this case here, we are able to take federal grant money and use that with state incentives and get a payback of just over five years. That makes sense. It will improve the comfort zone in the building. It will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will reduce fuel expenses. It will do all those right things. It will save us money in the long run. I'm looking for an appropriation of \$500,000. It will upgrade the HVAC system which is the ventilation and cooling system. We are not dealing with heating system at this point in time. You may ask why not wrap the two together but the heating system doesn't have any of the incentives. It is an oil fuel system. My tank doesn't have to be replaced yet. I can get four or five years out of the system. When the tank has to be replaced, I will probably come back in before you to bring natural gas in and replace the tank and the heating system and try to get as much bang for the buck as we can there. Right now we're concentrating on the chillers, the cooling system and an overall building management control system. That will save us money over the long run. Again, the payback is just over five years.

Committee Reports

Public Works Committee, Ms. Talmadge:

The RTM Public Works Committee met on May 19 to discuss this proposal. Again, not to repeat what Steve has said, I think the other points are that he would begin work in the fall and needs to do that if he is going to receive the \$101,000. The RTM Public Works Committee voted unanimously to support this.

Finance Committee, Jeff Wieser, district 4:

Again not to repeat the same things but the important thing is that it is \$500,000 but the capital and nonrecurring expense fund will be getting back \$140,000 so we are only talking about a \$360,000 expense. With the expenses saved, it is about a five and a half year payback. It seems like a very good deal. We did not have a quorum but voted 4-0.

Members of the Westport electorate - No comment

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Rubin.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director, the sum of \$500,000 from the fund balance of the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account to the Capital & Nonrecurring Expenditure Fund (C&NEF) Account (HVAC Upgrade: Town Hall) for the HVAC upgrade and energy efficiency project for the Town Hall is hereby appropriated.

Mr. Rose:

It has been moved and seconded by Mr. Rubin to approve the resolution just read.

Members of the RTM

Ms. Batteau:

I know that the State Energy Committee and the state are in the midst of passing a huge new energy program and there are a number of new incentives and rebates and all that. I am wondering if it is worthwhile to put this off for a month or so and seeing if yet more rebates come along.

Mr. Edwards:

The energy program that we are invested in right now, the grant for the \$107,000 has already been encumbered and has to be expended before December. In order to do that, I have to get the bids out and I have to get the work in place. Any incentives that will be additive, I can apply for during the interim. I can certainly apply until the job completion which will again be about December. I cannot be so naïve to think the state will get anything organized. Based on new legislation they are putting in now, they won't know who will be on first base until December or January. I think we will certainly capitalize on whatever we can but I've got locked in right now \$140,000. If I can get more, I will but I wouldn't hold my breath.

Ms. Batteau: Sounds good.

Ms. Starr:

Steve, I was just wondering how the temperature will be set. Will there be individual controls or not? It is similar to the questions asked at the Kings Highway meeting so if you can tell us how the temperature level will be know. If someone is cold, can they adjust it?

Mr. Edwards:

No. The temperature will be controlled by a building automated system. There will be individual controls but the last thing I'm going to do is give everyone a thermostat that they can fight amongst themselves turning it up and down. There is no better way to have bloodshed than to give a person on one side of a room a thermostat. We will not do that but there will be a central building automated system that we will be able to control. We will be able to monitor every room off a central computer. We can make adjustments where warranted. We can put placebos up there so people can feel good but they really don't do anything.

Ms. Starr: Will it be kept at a given temperature?

Mr. Edwards

The major advantage is that it will be set at predetermined temperatures and there will be automatic turn-backs at night. Certain rooms in the building now, I don't have controls on so, as far as controlling the building temperatures to turn off on weekends. With special events when the theater comes in, I will be able to turn them on and then turn them off after the presentation. There is just much better control.

Ms. Starr: Will it be set at a given temperature?

Mr. Edwards:

It will be set at a temperature that is appropriate. Obviously, I set the temperature at the Senior Center at a different temperature than I set here. If we have a given population that wants a temperature, I can adjust it. We cannot set temperature based on everybody's wishes.

Ms. Starr:

So it's TBD and we want to keep the peace. Time will tell. I just wanted to know how it would work. Thank you.

Mike Rea, district 8:

I wasn't at the meeting when they heard this and voted on it. I think it makes sense to get ahead of the curve but, as a cautionary note, in this time of reaching out trying to seek federal and state funding, let's be careful how we do that. Whether we are bonding or expensing or capital projects, clearly, budget time is going to come up again and we are going to be confronted with priorities. I don't

want to get into the philosophical end of the conversation but it's still our tax money. If we don't take it, some other municipality will take it. Here in Westport we have to be cognizant that there may be some grants coming up, there may be some state and federal funds that we simply can't afford. But I will be voting yes on this one.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 31-0.

The secretary read item #5 of the call - An appropriation of \$425,778 to the Highway Account (Storm Expenses) to cover the expenses incurred during the previous winter. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation

Mr. Edwards:

This is money already spent. It is housekeeping, unfortunately. The winter this past year was not an easy one for us. For those who don't remember, we had 67" of snow. We had 11 general calls. Typically, in a typical year, in my 26 years here, we have been averaging 29 inches of snow with 8-9 calls. This was one of the curve setters. It just didn't seem to end. Overall, I had appropriated a budget of \$410,000. I think I went through that before Christmas. We ended up with a budget shortfall of \$425,777.12. Out of that, the good news is we have an application in to FEMA for approximately \$170,000. I think we will receive the better part of that when they audit but I anticipate something in the neighborhood of \$165 to \$170,000 coming in August or September giving us a little bit of relief. One thing I do want to note on this is that the primary expense on this is outside contractors. That is \$383,000, outside contractors. This is primarily associated with parking lots. As we go forward approving projects, parking lots is probably one of my largest expenses out of this overall budget. The downtown parking lots and the school parking lots accounted for \$383,000. My regular road maintenance, my overtime, \$142,000, that is what my guys do, my 17 individuals out there plowing. We plow 122 miles of roadway. That overtime number was \$142,000. School parking lots and downtown parking lots, outside contractors, \$383,000. Just keep in mind when you are looking at numbers and comparing town versus town, it shakes out as to where the effort is expended. My department, this budget has a lot of money expended on school parking lots and downtown. Some people throw up in my face, we spent \$800,000 in snow removal. That's snow removal town wide. It is Board of Ed. and downtown business. In some of the other towns, Public Works only does roadways. I just want to keep it in perspective and we know that we are comparing apples to apples.

Committees Report

Public Works Committee and Finance Committee, Ms. Talmadge:

This is a joint report. Public Works met May 19. Finance met May 31. Not to reiterate what Steve said, one thing we did discuss in Finance Committee we

discussed, the fact that about half the parking lots are schools. The area got a lot bigger because of Staples increase in parking. Perhaps we should look next year in allocating some portion of the snow removal expense to the Board of Education budget, to begin understanding the real costs. The other thing I wanted to note is that we have gone to a 90 percent salt and 10 percent sand formula so the cost of sand was way down this year. The reason we did that was to reduce sweeping expense in the spring. It is much less. The Public Works Committee voted 6-0 to unanimously support the expenditure. The Finance Committee not have a quorum but voted 4-0 to support the motion.

Members of the Westport electorate - No comment

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Rubin.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance and a request by the Public Works Director, the sum of \$425,778 from the undesignated fund balance account within the sewer reserve fund, general account, to the Highway Account (Storm Expenses) to cover the expenses incurred during the previous winter is hereby appropriated.

Members of the RTM

Mr. Rea:

Tomorrow it's going to be about 95 degrees. It's going to be sweltering. How soon we forget what we went through this last winter. I just wanted to take the opportunity to thank Steve for the public works department and our contractors and our vendors for doing a super job this winter. You were there when we needed you. Thanks very much. I did find the information about parking lot breakdown really interesting. It's sort of compelling. I know it's one of those complex issues. When you mention the downtown parking lots. I know a vital, vigorous, economically healthy downtown is important. Clearly, the merchants in the downtown area are struggling with the economy, as well. Perhaps we should think about, we plow, we light, we insure, we sand, garbage removal, perhaps it's time that we think about benefit assessing the downtown property owners for that and try to bring in some revenue and relief to the taxpayers. I know in the past there have been challenges and some technical things. I think Gail Kelly could tell us about lawsuits from decades ago. But I think it's worth looking at and it's probably time that we relook at it as a source of revenue, something that we could feel freely to plow as often as necessary knowing that the costs would be covered and not feel the sting of it. It's something to think about.

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously 31-0.

The secretary read item #6 of the call - To approve programs eligible for investment by business firms under the provisions of CGS Sections 12-630aa et seq, known as the R.E. Van Norstrand Neighborhood Assistance Act. By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously.

Presentation

Barbara Butler, Human Services Director:

The Neighborhood Assistance Tax Credit Program is sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services. The program is designed to provide funding to municipal and tax-exempt organizations by providing a corporate business tax credit for businesses that make cash contributions to these entities. The Neighborhood assistance program allows businesses to claim a state tax credit for cash contributions made to qualifying community programs conducted by tax exempt or municipal agencies. The types of community programs that qualify for the tax program include, but are not limited to, energy conservation, employment and training, child care services, neighborhood assistance, substance abuse, open space acquisition programs, crime prevention programs and affordable housing development. The minimum contribution on which a tax credit may be granted is \$25,000. The maximum contribution that a non-profit or municipal entity can receive under this program is \$150,000. There are no town funds involved in this program. Each municipal agency or tax-exempt organization that wishes to participate in the program must complete a proposal application that is available on the Department of Revenue Services website and submit their proposal to the municipality for approval by its governing body, which would be you. All locally approved programs must be submitted to the Department of Revenue Services no later than July 1. Incidentally, once they get the approval, which is sometime in late August, they have until Sept. 15 to raise the funds which is a small window. The list of agencies presented for your approval tonight have been submitted by three well respected community non-profit agencies which provide much needed and highly valued services to Westport residents. They include Homes with Hope, Positive Directions and the Children's Community Development Center. These applications were reviewed by the RTM Health and Human Services Committee which I assume will be making a recommendation to you. These three agencies need an acknowledgement from you as to the legitimacy of their organizations and an appreciation for the services they provide to the Westport community in order to be accepted by the State of Connecticut to participate in the 2011 Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program. Then they will have to go out and do the hard work of finding a donor wishing to take advantage of the tax credit benefit. I urge you to give them that opportunity.

Committee Report

Health and Human Services Committee, Dr. Cunitz:

The Health and Human Services Committee met on May 31 to review this. Everyone should have gotten the minutes. If not, they are on stage. I am not going to repeat it. What I would like to say is that, in the past, some of the organizations have gotten approval from the state but have not been able to raise the funds in time. As Barbara mentioned, there is a very short window of opportunity. What the committee discussed was that these organizations in advance of getting approval from the state should line up donors. Barbara, I

believe it can only be C corporations, not S corporations or proprietorships that qualify. Therefore, if anybody knows any civic minded C corporations who are interested in trying to get some good tax credits through their generosity, please steer them to these three organizations ahead of time so they can line it up and get the tax credits. No money comes from Westport. No direct funds from the state. It is only in the form of tax savings for the corporations.

Members of the Westport electorate - No comment

Ms. Flug read the resolution and it was seconded by Mr. Rubin.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Human Services pursuant to CGS Sections 12-630aa et seq., Interfaith Housing Association of Westport & Weston, Inc.'s Bacharach Community emergency shelter for mothers and their children, Positive Directions-The Center for Prevention & Recovery's Family Counseling & Prevention for low Income Families, and Children's Community Development Center's Energy Efficient Appliance Upgrades are hereby approved as programs eligible for investment by businesses under the provisions of the R.E. Van Norstrand Neighborhood Assistance Act .

Members of the RTM – No comment

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously, 30-0-1. Mr. Wieser is recusing himself.

The secretary read item #7 of the call - To approve an ordinance adopting Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 4-124i through 4-124p as amended, providing for the formation of a regional Council of Governments, authorizing the town to join such Council when duly established, designating the First Selectman as the representative of the Town of Westport on such Council and authorizing the Representative Town Meeting to designate an alternate representative from its members for a two-year term or until the next election of the RTM. (First Reading, full text available in the Town Clerk's office.)

Presentation

Mr. Joseloff:

What I'm going to talk about, this is a first reading, the important word here is "COG". COG is Council of Governments. Essentially, this is what I call the Rodney Dangerfield move. Diane Farrell tried it in 2003. Rodney Dangerfield is a one time Westport resident who always used to say that we need a little more respect. That's what we need, a little more respect and that is why we are suggesting changing from SWRPA. SWRPA is a planning agency. It stands for Southwest Regional Planning Agency. We are a member along with seven other communities from here southward. There are 15 regional planning agencies that

were authorized in 1947. The RPA primarily focused on regional planning. The CEO's, my role, and those of the other CEO's is primarily related to transportation planning. That's called the "MPO". The state or the feds mandate that, in order for the State of Connecticut to get federal funding for transportation, you must have a Metropolitan Planning Organization in the region. We do not have county government and haven't since 1956. So, therefore, we had to set up Metropolitan Planning Organizations in each of the regional planning agencies. In 1965 and 1971, legislation was added to allow formation of a Council of Government (COG) and a Council of Elected Officials (COEO.) In those years, 10 of the 15 have switched to a Council of Government. Effective July 1, the Greater Bridgeport Planning Agency which includes Easton, Bridgeport, Trumbull and Monroe became a COEO. Only four Regional Planning Agencies will remain. SWRPA is one of the four. New Canaan has already voted on this. Weston is going to vote next week. The name of the game is to streamline our work and the work of the Regional Planning Agency. There are 22 members on the SWRPA Board. They are focused on regional planning. Westport has three representatives: Mike Stashower, Steve Halstead and Jeff Jacobs. They go to monthly meetings at SWRPA and deal with regional planning. Also, in the same month, that staff of seven on the Regional Planning Agency, SWRPA has to prepare for a meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization of which I am the vice chair. So, you have a staff of seven preparing two monthly meetings for two groups dealing with many of the same issues. The SWRPA Board does not focus entirely on what we do but there is a lot of duplication. The name of the game is to eliminate the duplication, to streamline it, make it more efficient and to gain a little more respect. As we attempt to regionalize, this is an effective way of aiding communities to understand each other and to share costs. It's harder to do as a Southwest Regional Planning Agency. It gives the ultimate responsibility to the CEO's of each of the communities. We meet monthly. I have luncheon with my colleagues, mayors and first selectmen. That's where we trade ideas and initiatives. That's where the informal work has been done. We really need to gain the same stature that the other RPA's in the state have gained. As silly as it seems, when we send a letter to the State Legislature, to our delegation or to a committee and say the Metropolitan Planning Organization of the Southwest Regional Planning Agency can ask you to do so and so. Okay, we can certainly ask them. But if we say the Southwest Regional Council of Governments ask you to do so and so, we think it gains a little more attention. We'll have some more capabilities operating as a Council of Government rather than as a Planning Agency. The MPO is concentrating on transportation. I don't have to tell you how important transportation is to our area. There is an executive director and staff. I believe it numbers seven. They are based in Stamford. Westport's dues are in the neighborhood of just under \$8,000 per year. They will not increase under the Council of Governments. The region will be led by the local CEO's but, as the ordinance says, there will be an RTM designated alternate. If the CEO is unable to attend. The RTM designated alternate will attend on behalf of Westport. There will be a streamlined organization. There will be eight chief elected officials and eight members from P&Z, appointed by the local CEO's, who will still do the work

they are doing now but as a subcommittee of the Council of Governments, as a planning commission. I know this is a lot to absorb but it's going to streamline and, hopefully, make us more effective. Sixteen members will now replace the 22 members in SWRPA. The staff is focused on CEO priorities. Twelve annual meeting will replace 24 annual meetings of the two-headed monster. As I said, authorization is now underway in other communities. New Canaan has already voted. I believe Weston will vote next week. Wilton has already voted. This will come back to the RTM on July 12 for action. I don't know the Stamford or Greenwich time tables. The aim is to get the COG in place prior to fall elections so we don't get involved in new people who have not attended Metropolitan Planning Organization meetings and are not familiar with the COG. Five of the eight municipalities or 60 percent approval is needed to become a COG. Our goal, of course, is to get 100 percent approval from all the legislative bodies or equivalent in all the eight communities. The SWRPA representatives will be here and talk to our committees. We'll talk to Matt and we'll talk to Eileen. I think they are going to have separate sessions. Eileen is Ordinance and Matt will concentrate on the essentials on why we should approve a transition to a Council of Government. It is a lot to absorb but the things to remember are that it's to streamline and make us more efficient, more responsible as the CEO's and, hopefully, achieve some savings by making regionalization efforts among the eight communities in the region. It will be a lot easier and a lot more effective. Normally, when we have first readings there's no debate or questions, but if somebody has something that is burning, that they need to know now, I will be happy to answer it; otherwise, I will be at the committee meetings. I will have some fellow first selectmen and mayors at the RTM meeting on July 12 to further answer your questions and to show that this is an initiative that we all or most of us endorse. Just to raise an issue that was raised, Diane Farrell, when she was chair of the Metropolitan Planning Organization in 2003 tried to get this through and some of the concerns were, at the time, believe it or not, that this was a first step to a return to county government. No such thing. That was a false effort raised to scare people. That's not what this is about. Our costs will be the same. This will be more efficient and, hopefully, achieve better results for southwest Connecticut, particularly in transportation area where we have been shortchanged so many ways on I-95 and on the New Haven line in rail cars. Thank you for your attention and I look forward to debate, answering your questions in committee and on July 12.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Members of the RTM

Mr. Rea:

I was wondering if there is a charter or responsibilities or bylaws that could be shared with the members of the RTM prior to the meeting.

Mr. Joseloff: Yes. We will get it to you.

Matthew Mandell, district 1:

Personal privilege: I couldn't make an announcement earlier...Just to let you know the website for the appeal that we are dealing with will be updated tomorrow. I have received memos from the Town Attorney. I have received memos from the Health and Human Services group and the petitioners as well as the applicant. It will be updated tomorrow prior to the committee meeting. The Long Range Planning Committee is joining us. It is tomorrow night, room 309 at 7:45 where we will continue our review of text amendment 625.

Question for the First Selectman: The timetable, in terms of getting this done and voting, you said you wanted it done prior to the election. I'm concerned with my committee and this body is tied up through next week. July 12 to me seems a little quick to digest all of this. Is it necessary to do it in July or can we have more time to work on this?

Mr. Joseloff:

Actually, it's not that complicated. I'd be happy to answer in detail. The goal of all the CEO's is to have it done by the late summer. As I said, Weston is voting next week, we vote July and Greenwich will vote in August. We don't want to get into September/October. It's not that complicated. Westport's vote is important. I'd like to do it sooner rather than later.

Mr. Mandell:

The P&Z Committee is the planning group for this organization. We will be holding a meeting or two meetings in late June sometime after the appeal is over with. I personally think July might be quick but we'll see. If you say that it's easy enough, we'll see when the paperwork comes through.

Mr. Lowenstein:

If I recall, SWRPA and COG have responsibility of going beyond planning. They involve things like call dispatch, all the things that departments can combine across towns: health, police, fire. In that respect, I think any committee, Public Protection, Health and Human Services, but, more important, I think it important for Long Range Planning Committee be part of this process. It's not just a zoning issue, it's a planning issue. My recommendation is for Mr. Klinge to take this up as well.

Mr. Joseloff:

Actually, Dick, it doesn't involve police, etc. That's really handled by the Department of Emergency Management, Homeland Security. I happen to be the Metropolitan Planning Organization representative to Regional 1 of the Department of Emergency Management, Homeland Security and, as the designated representative, I attend meetings with troop G, about 40 members of the Regional 1 of the Department of Emergency Management, Homeland Security area. SWRPA directly is not responsible for public safety. That's really handled by the Police Chiefs and the Fire Chiefs and Department of Emergency

Management. We do report to them. The Metropolitan Planning Organization is focused on transportation. SWRPA is most focused on land use issues not security or other issues. Larry Bradley will be available and he will describe what they do. When ever there is a border development or a land use issue at a border community, it has to be submitted to SWRPA for their comments and, I believe, approval. So, a lot of it deals with planning, planning of roads. They put out documents that deal with population. I am happy to have any committee weigh in but I don't want to make it appear more complex than it is.

Ms. Batteau:

So, this is going to go to the Ordinance Committee. What I read didn't look like an ordinance. For example, I was wondering, is there a procedure designated for choosing the alternate from the RTM? I was wondering if you could supply ordinances from the towns that have already voted on it.

Mr. Joseloff:

I can but they are very similar. Our ordinance was based the model ordinance set up by SWRPA, but I'll be happy to provide the variations, if that's what you want. As far as the designation, it's not included in the language but we have other designees in the RTM. It is selected by the Moderator, appointed by the Moderator and then confirmed by the RTM. That's really up to the RTM and the Moderator to determine how you would approve and select the designated alternate. I don't think it belongs in the ordinance per se. Off the top of my head, I'm not sure how you would change it. The Library Committee comes up with a designee for the library board and I don't think that's designated in the charter or the rules. We can figure that out but all the other communities have an alternate who is designated by the legislative body.

Bob Galan, district 3:

The P&Z designee, is that coming from the commission or the department?

Mr. Joseloff:

It is designated by the commission. Let me clarify, under the COG, it is anticipated that a staff member from the Planning and Zoning Department, Larry Bradley, will be the representative because they are the professionals.

Mr. Galan:

On the COG's, I know you are looking for eight out of eight but if you hit 60 percent threshold, some municipalities don't vote for it, are they not included in it or do they get dragged along kicking and screaming?

Mr. Joseloff:

Ideally, there will be 100 percent but they are members. They can elect not to participate but they are a member of the Council of Government. For a CEO not to show up when there's a Council of Government meeting, it's a bit awkward.

John Suggs, district 5:

I would like to request if there's already prepared, the bylaws. I am more interested in an analysis of making this move based on who's supporting it and who is opposed to it, what have the first 10 who have gone ahead before us, experienced from this, what have been the objections? I would like an independent analysis rather than just the elected official asking for this, if there is some sort of report to be given to us so we could have a fuller picture of this before we have to take action.

Mr. Joseloff:

SWRPA has prepared some detailed background on the genesis of this and I believe it includes some detail on what the others have done. I'll try and get what you want. Independent, I don't know. I guess we could Google some of the actions and press reports of the other regions to see what's involved. I'll have to check with SWRPA and see if there is back up on other regions. Don't forget, this has occurred since 1965. Bridgeport was the last to switch over. That will be effective July 1. Last summer, a couple of us, CEO's from the SWRPA region traveled to Litchfield County, New Haven County to talk to those who have made the jump in an effort to really to answer some of the same questions, how has it worked out? What were some of the objections? What were some of the bumps in converting? In the end, we did four. In large cities and rural communities and four out of four said they were glad they made the change. They laughed at the southwest and said, 'How can you have a two-headed monster when you need to set priorities and you need to get your staff focused on priorities?' Some of the things we are now doing at SWRPA, they said we were never involved because we are so focused on our three or four priorities. Of course, when we went to Litchfield County, they were concerned about the County Fair which is happening next week so their priorities are a little bit different from ours. Each of the four that we went and talked to, they were very supportive of the change that they had made and were glad that they did it, but we'll try to get some background to you.

Mr. Rose: Gordon, you might be able to get something from CCM on that.

Stephen Rubin, district 7:

You mentioned county government and mentioned that Diane Farrell said no to that prospect at that time. Since it has been over 50 years since we ended county government, I would like to see what the advantages and disadvantages, since 50 years has passed, to possibly reviewing by going back to see what happened. County government isn't necessarily bad. Some states, such as New York, chose to maintain county government as a way to consolidate.

Mr. Joseloff:

Interesting question, Steve, but this is not a return to county government, nowhere near it. To do a review of county government 50 years ago and things that have happened, I don't think it's particularly relevant. I think John Suggs' interest in what's been the experience is more valuable. The State of Connecticut

in shirking or not having county government has suffered to some degree because most of the other states, if not all, have a county government system. The federal government rules and regulations that we have to adhere to, whether it's paving roads or seeking funding for this or that, are based on county government system. We've had to build a hybrid in SWRPA and the regional planning agencies, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, to compete with the other states in getting funding. To some bureaucrats in Washington, believe it or not, they don't understand that. What do you mean that you don't have a county government? Is it Westport county? No. Fairfield County. We'll send it to the Fairfield County Council. No, we don't have a Fairfield County Council. There's been some disadvantage of not having that procedure but I don't think anybody, including me, is advocating any semblance of returning to county government. I think that's certainly why we have a tax advantage over Westchester, New Jersey, Nassau, Suffolk. I think a lot of that burden is from adding an additional step. What this does is make the CEO's a lot more responsible for the things they are doing. A lot of it is boiler plate. When you become CEO, there's a packet. You are supposed to remember all these acronyms. They speak a language. You focus on what's valuable for your community. So, when the Department of Transportation wants to pave the Post Road, a section of it, that first goes before the Metropolitan Planning Organization. That happened six years ago. The Department of Transportation, it takes them a long time. That had to be approved and then go to the state, get some federal funds, whatever. All that is handled by Metropolitan Planning Organization. I just think it would be an impossible task to go back 50 years to seek what you're doing. We can do a library search. If you focus a bit more, we can talk privately about what you're seeking. I'll be happy to try to meet it.

Mr. Rea:

Interesting, Steve. I guess the last vestige of county government was High Sheriff's Office. Fairfield had its own sheriff. I just recently joined the Stamford Business Association and sit on their Transportation Committee. I appreciate what Gordon is talking about with regards to any one community when you are talking about issues like transportation. It becomes very complex when you are talking about railroads, highways and interdependency of various towns to support the systems. The reason I was so curious, like Mr. Suggs, to get more information is that I had the brief experience of serving on SWRPA many years ago. I found it an interesting body with representatives seeking better ways to operate. I think of Lois when we scratch our heads and say, 'Do we have to buy all this equipment? Can't we share it with other towns?' You want some regional solutions. On the other hand, I remember from those days serving on SWRPA, that the towns had a distinct character. They had different personalities. Stamford looked different than Westport. Fairfield looked different than Norwalk. Weston was more interested in zoning and keeping septic than they were about sewers. So, when you get involved with SWRPA or whatever COG is, and that's why I want more information, you tend to talk about issues of local autonomy and the character of your town. Make no mistake, in the absence of any other county

organization, the state, the feds or the courts will rule based upon... what's your plan? They'll go to that organization. Matt Mandell will be interested to know that if there is a housing ruling or a court decision, they'll say, what does your COG call for? What is the master plan here? They'll go by that. It's really very important. It certainly does belong in Long Term Planning and in P&Z. No doubt about it. It will affect the character and the economy and the nature of our community. We should think about this very seriously and get as much information about it as possible.

Mr. Joseloff:

Mike, I know you didn't ask me a question but a quick response. It will affect the nature and character of our community no more than SWRPA does at the moment. Each of us is very protective of our communities. We are not about to engage where we are going to tell somebody else what to do and they tell us what to do. It is an enabling body to allow us to do things more efficiently to consolidate. When you have two bodies that a staff of seven has to serve, they are duplicating and it's not an efficient way to go.

Jack Klinge, district 7:

On behalf of the Long Range Planning Committee, which I think I've been involved with close to 10 years now, I inherited a bunch of files which talk a lot about how can SWRPA be more efficient, more effective, have more clout at the state level as well as perhaps at the national level. I will take some time to pull that together so our committee can get up to date on why we are doing this.

There are some advantages. I remember that from previous dialogs. It was about shared disaster control and transportation, fire and police at some time were talked about, how can that be more efficient from town to town. A lot was talked about. Diane did try to go to a COG government. There are pros and cons. There are more pros in my recollection. I would like to suggest that we don't push this for July decision, quite honestly, because I'm not sure I can get ready but look to August. I know you hate to meet in August. If you want to be educated on this as an RTM, it's going to take more than three or four weeks to do it properly. Quite frankly, from my recollection, it is worth knowing how this thing works. It's an interesting animal. It can be a true help to the Town of Westport if we do it right and it's properly managed. I'd like to look to August decision or agreement as opposed to July.

Ms. Starr:

How did it come about? What kind of dialog took place? Can you give us some background?

Mr. Joseloff:

It came forward because we looked at the other regions and saw that there was a movement to convert to this form of government, the council of elected officials. As we went to Hartford and we talked to elected representatives, as we talked to the other regional planning agencies, we realized that they were more efficient,

that they were able to get more attention than Southwest which was still struggling to serve two bodies. As more and more switched to this form of government, it became increasingly clear that we were at a disadvantage.

Ms. Starr:

I have been thinking about some questions. I have been thinking about it since I saw it on the agenda. I think it would be helpful to have, I think someone suggested, the equivalent to a constitution of this how it works, the enumerated duties, responsibilities and powers of a COG and its respective members. I'd also be curious to know who pays for it and how the payments necessary for it would be levied. Would there be a fee? Would there be the ability to tax? Would it be per project? Questions like that and if there happens to be an appeals process, in case a member doesn't feel that a decision...if a decision is harmful to it, how would they appeal...things like that, how actually it works or doesn't work. I would be interested to know how it would affect the authority of our own bodies particularly our Board of Finance, our Planning and Zoning Commission, as well as our RTM. Would decisions that we make here be at all negated, overridden or mitigated having a more powerful board than a planning board because we don't elect the SWRPA members and we don't elect the seven other members of the COG. I would like to know how that would work and what it would cost in terms of autonomy, our having final say in decisions. We do cooperate. We know how important regionalization is but I think part of the term is in the definition. To everybody's credit and benefit, we have entered local agreements with other public protection agencies and I think those are good things. We can do those by ourselves. I think there is an awful lot to learn and I would support gaining knowledge. I would also wonder if the Finance Committee would consider this something to look at in terms of cost benefits. Mike, you would know more in that regard. I also think there's a lot to learn. I think it would be good for not only us to be vested in a decision one way or the other but also the public to really know. Having said that, it would give Gordon time to get the information and for us to assimilate it and for any decision to have more background and more meaning. I think September would be a better time for us to vote on it when the public could also come out and be informed and have a say in this. I'd like to move that we postpone this until September.

Mr. Rose:

She made a motion to postpone something that is not on the agenda yet. It's a first reading. Nothing has been decided yet.

Mr. Joseloff:

Before this gets too far down the road, nothing will change but the name of the organization and who is ultimately responsible. It will not tell the RTM, the Board of Finance, the P&Z or anybody else, there will be no change operationally as how we operate as a town and how SWRPA operates under the name of the Council of Governments. It's just not going to change. I am concerned that by raising these questions, people think it will. It won't. I am happy to have the

SWRPA Executive Director come in and provide the background for you and the elected officials. What I don't want to have happen is for Westport to be the last of the communities to vote on it, in effect, where our vote doesn't count. If five of the eight communities vote approval for a Council of Government before Westport does, it's a done deal. I'd like Westport to be in there. I'd like Westport to be among the early adopters to show and investigate thoroughly what can be done. I'd like it in July. July 12 is the meeting. Postponing it three weeks is not a big deal but certainly I'd like to do it before the fall before we get focused on a lot of other things. It really is a streamlining of an existing organization, a yeoman's job, more competitively with other regions. Not to cloud the issue, the state is trying to reduce the number of regional planning agencies. One of the reasons is that we want to be on an equal footing that if they consolidate regions. For instance, if they say we are with Region 1 by fiat consolidated with Region 1, which is all of Fairfield County, SWRPA is southern Fairfield County, as they consolidate, if we are a regional planning agency, we will have less say if we want to join with others or not join with others if we are not on that equal footing. That's a complexity that I didn't really want to get into but we really must be competitive footing before the state tries to tell us what to do.

Ms. Schine:

The whole idea of these governments getting together is not a new concept. About 10 years ago, when I was President of the Westport Chamber of Commerce, the presidents of chambers of commerce and representatives from all the municipal governments got together to deal with a number of issues that could be better dealt with regionally than individually. One was transportation and I don't think anything got accomplished but do you remember when Steve Winn wanted to build a gambling casino in Bridgeport? That was an issue that brought us all together and everybody put money into fighting that. Then there was the changing of patterns of airplanes over Fairfield County when we got together with a bunch of other communities and put money in to fight that regulation. These things have been done. This is going to facilitate it and make it a little easier to work together. It is not going to change anything here.

Mr. Rose: Thank you Mr. Joseloff and we'll see you in the future.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia H. Strauss
Town Clerk



by Jacquelyn Fuchs
Secretary

ATTENDANCE: June 7, 2011

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Diane Cady	X		X	Arr. 8:40 p.m.
	Matthew Mandell	X			
	Elizabeth Milwe	X			
	Judith Starr	X			
2	Linda Bruce	X		X	Arr. 8:50 p.m.
	Michael Guthman		X	X	
	Jay Keenan	X		X	Arr. 9:10 p.m.
	Sean Timmins	X			.
3	Amy Ancel		X	X	
	Robert Galan	X			
	Bill Meyer	X			
	Hadley Rose	X			
4	Jonathan Cunitz, DBA	X			
	Gene Seidman		X	X	
	George Underhill	X			
	Jeffrey Wieser	X			
5	Barbara Levy		X	X	
	Richard Lowenstein	X			.
	Paul Rossi	X		X	Arr. 8:25 p.m.
	John Suggs	X			
6	Joyce Colburn	X			
	Paul Lebowitz	X			
	Catherine Talmadge	X			
	Christopher Urist	X			
7	Arthur Ashman, D.D.S.	X			
	Allen Bomes	X			
	Jack Klinge	X			
	Stephen Rubin	X			
8	Wendy Batteau	X			
	Heather Cherry		X	X	
	Michael Rea	X			
	Lois Schine	X			
9	Eileen Flug	X			
	Kevin Green, Ph. D.	X			
	Velma Heller, Ed. D.	X			
	John McCarthy	X			
Total		31	5		