

RTM Minutes June 1, 2021

The Call

1. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the recommendation of the RTM Library, Museum and Arts Committee, in accordance with Section C34-1 of the Town Charter, to re-appoint Jeremy Price and Andrew Wilk to serve as trustees of the Westport Library for a four year term beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2025.
2. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon the request of the Human Services Director, to approve applicants to the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program pursuant to CGS 12-630aa et seq.
3. To take such action as the meeting may determine, upon a request by the Finance Director and the Personnel/Human Resources Director, to revise the Retirement Plan for Non-Union Supervisory Employees of the Town of Westport to include current management of the Police and Fire Departments. **POSTPONED.**

The Meeting

Moderator Velma Heller:

Good evening. This meeting of Westport's Representative Town Meeting is now called to order and we welcome those who are joining us the evening. My name is Velma Heller and I'm the RTM Moderator. As you know, this meeting is being held electronically. It will be live streamed on westportct.gov, and shown on Optimum Government Access Channel 79 or Frontier Channel 6020. I want to talk to you about public comments: Emails may be sent before the meeting to RTMmailinglist@westportct.gov, which goes to all RTM members. These emails that are received before the meeting will not be read aloud during the meeting. Comments to be read aloud at the meeting, during the public comment period for each agenda item, must be emailed to RTMcomments@westportct.gov. We will use our best efforts to read public comments if they are received during the public comment period for each item and if they state your full name and address. Comments by the public will be limited to three minutes and they will be monitored. Please note that meeting materials are available at westportct.gov along with the meeting notice posted on the Meeting List and Calendar page. Tonight's invocation will be delivered by Sal Liccione, RTM district 9.

Invocation, Sal Liccione, district 9:

First off, I want to thank Jeff and Velma for asking me to speak tonight. Velma, we're very glad you're back and we see that you are hopefully getting better. I want to say it is a pleasure and a privilege to serve on the RTM with my fellow colleagues who are my family and our town Board of Finance and our P&Z. We all love this town a lot and we've been through a lot in 2020 with the COVID crisis that we all came together as a team. It has been a privilege and an honor. We had to make some hard decisions and we worked to make the town better. We all love this town. Thank you Velma.

Dr. Heller:

Thank you Sal. It's always good to hear from somebody who loves the town as much as you do. Thanks again. And now, the pledge of allegiance.

There were 33 members present. Ms. Talmadge, Ms. Karpf and Ms. Rea notified the Moderator that they would be absent. Mr. Keenan notified the Moderator that he would be late.

Dr. Heller:

As a reminder, remain on mute until you are recognized and then unmute.

The minutes of the May 3 and May 4 meeting have been posted. There were no corrections. The minutes are accepted as submitted. If there are any later corrections please notify Jackie Fuchs, Dr. Heller or Town Clerk Jeff Dunkerton.

Announcements

Birthday greetings to Rick Jaffe, Jay Keenan, Arline Gertzoff and Carla Rea. Happy birthday all. Congratulations.

RTM Announcements

Rick Jaffe, district 1:

This is not my announcement. I am so happy to see Velma back that I may pay extra taxes. Not that happy...

Long time town resident and employee Patty Haberstroh is four years into her battle of her life against ALS, *Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis*. This is the disease that brought down Lou Gehrig. Baseball fans know Lou Gehrig because he is the man who played with the great Babe Ruth. He played through all kinds of injuries until ALS took him down and out. The name ALS is also called "Lou Gehrig's Disease". Many here today participated in the ALS pepper challenge in 2018 to raise funds and awareness to end ALS. The disease is still without effective treatment or cures. Patty's children Chuck, Steve and Tom are members of the Lou Gehrig Day Committee which has worked for two years to lobby Major League Baseball to have an annual day to honor Lou Gehrig and to raise awareness for ALS. After two years, while losing six of the 27 members of their committee to ALS itself, the LG4 Day Committee, four being Lou Gehrig's number, is honored to say that tomorrow, June 2, will be the first Annual Lou Gehrig Day across all Major League Baseball stadiums. The Haberstroh's came to my Rotary Club just last week and one of the things they told me is that the owners of Major League Baseball Teams do not unanimously agree that the sun will come up in the morning so to get them to agree to have a Lou Gehrig Day to raise awareness for ALS is beyond incredible. Gehrig will join Jackie Robinson and Roberto Clemente as the only three players to have a league-wide day named in their honor. The Co-Chair of the LG4 Day Committee and Westport resident Chuck Haberstroh leads the committee with ALS patient Adam Nelson. There is a web page, lg4day.com that has all the information you'll need. Charlie Haberstroh, who is her principal caregiver, is a former member of the RTM, current Chairman of the Parks and Rec. Commission and a friend of mine.

Matt Mandell, district 1:

Two announcements: The first, the Chamber of Commerce is holding its first live, in-person, event other than the concerts. It will be a networking event on June 17 at 5:30 at Gilbertie's which is one of our newest members. It will be outside, beautiful gardens, and anybody is invited to come and meet other business people in a networking session. We are very happy to see the tide is turning here and us stepping gently into in-person meetings again. This one will be

outside. So, anyone who wants to come, just go to the Chamber and come. Also, in the same vein, Slice of Saugatuck and the Dog Festival have been scheduled; Slice of Saugatuck on Sept. 11 and the Dog Festival on Oct. 10. The Chamber is moving forward. We're going to in-person events and hopefully we're going to make it there and everything is going to work out. On a more somber note, there will be a rally tomorrow at 7 o'clock at Jesup Green called "Stand Together Against Anti-Semitism." It's sort of sad that we had to have a rally for Black people and a rally for Asian people against hate and now we are having one for Jews because it's the fastest growing hate crime in America, against Jewish people. So, tomorrow at 7 o'clock at Jesup Green. So, come on out and support your fellow members of the tribe and if you're not a member of the tribe, please come and support us, as well. Anti-Semitism must be stamped out. We've seen what happened in the prior century. We cannot let it happen again. See you tomorrow evening.

Andrew Colabella, district 4:

This June 20, 2021, also Father's Day, will be the Police Athletic League Car Show. The hours will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will be a 1 Franklin Street en masse; however, it will be at the Saugatuck train station. There will be postings online and also at westportpal.org. It will be \$15/ticket to pre-register your collector car, your special interest hot rod, customized American or foreign car. If you have an awesome Maserati, you may attend. If you have a vehicle that is older than 1994 – 1996, you can definitely attend. There will be special interest hot rods. Anyone can come. Anyone can join. There will be door prizes, there will be a raffle and there will be plenty of opportunities to win a lot of stuff. So, June 20, 2021. So, come on down.

Kristin Schneeman, district 9:

I guess June is a busy month. I also wanted to mention that June is Pride Month which, as many of you know, we celebrate the resilience of the LGBTQ community. We have a new organization in town called Westport Pride which has been helping put together a number of events in June starting tomorrow evening with a panel discussion at the library. It is a virtual event. It is called Westport Pride LGBTQ plus history, past, present and future moderated by Dan Woog and, full disclosure, featuring one of my children. On June 4, Staples High School is going to have its first Pride Day celebration; the first one in a high school in Connecticut as far as we know. On June 5, there is a Pride rally, so lots on rallies happening on Jesup Green. At 10 a.m., the First Selectman will be there making a proclamation. Thank you very much to Mr. Marpe. There is a banner and rainbow lights on the bridge. There are lawn signs at Baker Graphics. There are Merchants in Pride all over town who are donating portions of sales to Westport Pride so I hope everyone will come out and show extra love and support for all members of our community.

RTM Committee meetings

- June 3 – Joint Education and Finance Committee regarding the school roof. That will be at 7 p.m. It was previously reported at 7:30. It is going to be 7 p.m. this Thursday. There will be a subsequent meeting later in the month for July activity.
- The Code of Conduct Special Committee will have its next meeting to continue to go through their draft Code, Wednesday, June 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Dr. Heller:

The next RTM meeting is a special meeting which will be held on Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. If necessary, the meeting shall reconvene on Tuesday, June 15 to deal with any agenda items not disposed of at the adjournment of the June 8 meeting.

Lou Mall, district 2:

I would like to bring to your attention, it's an agenda item and I would like to point something out at the beginning of the meeting so if we have people who are sitting in on the meeting, they would be able to drop off. I just discovered that we have the wrong plan document that went out to RTM members for tonight's meeting about the Non-union Supervisory Plan. So, I think that we should put off that agenda item for another date and get the right plan document. This is not the document that we reviewed in committee. We reviewed the Non-union *Supervisory Plan*. That's the plan we're to vote on tonight but the packet has the Non-union *Non-Supervisory Plan*. It's the wrong thing. We would be voting on something we're not familiar with. I suggest we withdraw it for this evening and reschedule it for another date.

Dr. Heller:

Thank you. I think I would like to hear from Mr. Marpe. I assume he is aware of this at this point. I think what we should do at this point, Mr. Mall, is to proceed with the other two items until I hear from Mr. Marpe.

The secretary read item #1 of the call - To re-appoint Jeremy Price and Andrew Wilk to serve as trustees of the Westport Library for a 4 year term beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2025.

Presentation

Amy Kaplan, district 3, Chair, Library, Museum and Arts Committee:

The Library, Museum and Arts Committee met Wednesday, May 25, to consider recommending the reappointment of Jeremy Price and Andrew Wilk who are serving currently on the Library Board of Trustees. Pat Wieser, head of the Library Committee attended as a representative of the Board of Trustees and she voiced her full support for both candidates. Jeremy is the current Vice President working closely with the current President, Ian Bruce, and the library executive team. Andrew has been instrumental in helping to source, connect and produce much of the amazing library content that is so well received by our community. The committee agreed that both candidates are extremely qualified and we look forward to more of their service to the library and the town of Westport. We then voted unanimously 5-0 to recommend that the RTM approve the reappointment of both Jeremy Price and Andrew Wilk each to a four year term as Library Trustees.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Mr. Wieser read the resolution and it was seconded.

RESOLVED: That upon the recommendation of the RTM Library, Museum and Arts Committee, in accordance with Section C34-1 of the Town Charter, Jeremy Price and Andrew Wilk are hereby reappointed to serve as trustees of the Westport Library for a 4 year term beginning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2025.

Members of the RTM – No comments

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously 33-0.

Dr. Heller:

I am back and I am sorry for the interruption. I was just on the phone with the First Selectman and he has reinforced what Lou Mall just reported to you. The committee reviewed the correct document but that was not the document that was sent out to everybody. So, they will reschedule at the earliest possible convenience and that item is withdrawn from this evening's agenda.

Police Chief Foti Koskinas:

I am respectfully requesting that this go on at the special meeting. The personnel have been waiting for this for a long time. Depending on the agenda, I ask the RTM to give consideration to putting this on the special meeting and not wait a full month.

Dr. Heller:

I understand. We have possibly two special meetings so I will wait to hear from the First Selectman as to when he is ready to go ahead with this. We will move on it as quickly as possible.

Chief Koskinas: Thank you for your consideration. Have a good night everyone.

Wendy Batteau, district 8:

We got an interesting email as everybody knows from Kris Hamlin earlier today.

Dr. Heller: This item has been withdrawn from the agenda tonight.

Ms. Batteau:

I thought it made some points about finances. When we get the revised proposal, what I'd like to see is the cost differential; what the difference would be according to each plan for the next couple of years if we go back to 2017 or if we just continue on with the plan that was negotiated in 2018 so maybe that could be submitted along with.

Dr. Heller:

Wendy, I think your question is a valid question, by all means, and it is my suggestion that you present that question to the Committee Chairs so they can address it. I think it's perhaps something they can look into. Maybe it's already been looked into. It's possible that somebody already covered that territory so, by all means.

Ms. Batteau: Okay. Thank you.

The Secretary read item #2 of the call - To approve applicants to the Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program pursuant to CGS 12-630aa et seq.

Presentation

Elaine Daignault, Department of Human Services:

This is my annual visit to you in regards to the Neighborhood Assistance Act which is a tax credit program sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services. The RTM's role this evening is to certify that the two applicants which we received for the 20/21 Neighborhood Assistance Program including the Westport Country Playhouse and Homes with Hope, that they are, in fact, recognized non-profit community agencies in Westport. Just a little background on the Neighborhood Assistance Program: It's designed to provide funding for municipal and tax-exempt organizations by providing a corporate business tax credit for businesses that make cash contribution to these entities. So, the Neighborhood Assistance Program, they provide an application; I, in turn, bring it to the RTM for approval. We send it into the Department of Revenue Services. The Department of Revenue Services essentially puts those two businesses online so businesses can make donations to them and make a tax credit. The minimum contribution for the tax credit is \$250 and the maximum contribution any non-profit or municipal entity can receive under the program is \$150,000. There are no town funds involved in this program. We're simply certifying the two non-profit agencies. The Westport Country Playhouse has actually applied for two. One is a \$14,210 request for an upgrade of their parking lot to include LED lighting and another for \$10,500 to purchase assisted listening technology for the Jason Roberts Theater and the second applicant, Homes with Hope, is applying for \$24,340 request for roof replacement for the Bacharach Community. The applications are in order. The agencies have included all of their 990 forms as required and, with your approval, I will submit them to the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services in time to meet the July 1 deadline. That's it.

Dr. Heller:

Thank you very much. There was a lot of detailed paperwork to go with that that we all got to review. There is no committee report.

Members of the Westport electorate – no comments

Mr. Wieser read the resolution and it was seconded.

RESOLVED: That upon the request of the Human Services Director, pursuant to CGS 12-630aa et seq., the Westport Country Playhouse and Homes with Hope Inc. are hereby approved as programs eligible for investment by businesses under the provisions of the 2021 Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Tax Credit Program.

Members of the RTM – no comments

By show of hands, the motion passes unanimously 33-0.

Mr. Liccione:

When the Compensation Committee met, all parties weren't in the room for the meeting and I heard from two parties today that really want their voices to be heard.

Dr. Heller:

You should mention that to the Committee Chairs. That is important for them to hear.

Mr. Mall:

Our committees, Compensation, Finance and Public Protection all had the proper document when we met on May 19. Rick Jaffe wrote an excellent committee report. I'd like to thank Rick for his hard work. He happens to be a member of all three committees and drew the short straw for writing the report. So, there is really no need for the committee to meet again. It's only necessary to get the right document into the hands of the other members of the RTM. I'm going to ask Ralph Chetcuti and Gary Conrad to work with Jeff (Dunkerton) to get the proper document that says it's the *Non-union Supervisory Pension Plan* that covers the fire and police officers that we're talking about in this revision. So, I don't expect to have another committee meeting.

Dr. Heller:

Mr. Liccione, in response to your question, anybody who did not get a chance to speak at the committee meetings is certainly more than welcome to share their thoughts through public comment with the RTM. That is what those people should be advised. We did hear from some people through email but they are more than welcome to share their comments at the RTM meeting.

Mr. Mandell:

In this strange world where we're going to move forward, whether we're live, whether we're on zoom, all I can say is with a 35 minute meeting, I'm glad this was on zoom!

Dr. Heller: I'm glad you're glad. I'm hoping that we will get to see each other again soon.

Karen Kramer, district 5: Tomorrow night. Jesup Green.

Dr. Heller:

Jesup Green. Absolutely. But I was talking about our next scheduled zoom meeting which is June 8. Perhaps we can get everything done on June 8. If not, we will meet on June 15 to reconvene the meeting. Thank you all for being here. I feel remarkably good for having my first meeting after all of this. I know that all of your happy faces contribute to that happy feeling so, thank you. Glad you were able to show up for the Memorial Day event yesterday. Sorry I missed you.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey M. Dunkerton
Town Clerk



by Jacquelyn Fuchs

ATTENDANCE: June 1, 2021

DIST.	NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOTIFIED MODERATOR	LATE/ LEFT EARLY
1	Richard Jaffe	X			
	Matthew Mandell	X			
	Kristin M. Purcell	X			
	Chris Tait	X			
2	Harris Falk	X			
	Jay Keenan	X		X	ARR. 7:50
	Louis M. Mall	X			
	Christine Meiers Schatz	X			
3	Mark Friedman	X			
	Arline Gertzoff	X			
	Jimmy Izzo	X			
	Amy Kaplan	X			
4	Andrew J. Colabella	X			
	Kristan Hamlin	X			
	Noah Hammond	X			
	Jeff Wieser	X			
5	Peter Gold	X			
	Dick Lowenstein	X			
	Nicole Klein	X			
	Karen Kramer	X			
6	Candace Banks	X			
	Jessica Bram	X			
	Seth Braunstein	X			
	Cathy Talmadge		X	X	
7	Brandi Briggs	X			
	Lauren Karpf		X	X	
	Jack Klinge	X			
	Ellen Lautenberg	X			
8	Wendy Batteau	X			
	Lisa Newman	X			
	Carla Rea		X	X	
	Stephen Shackelford	X			
9	Velma Heller	X			
	Sal Liccione	X			
	Kristin Schneeman	X			
	Lauren Soloff	X			
Total		33	3		