

## MEETING MINUTES

### TOLLAND TOWN COUNCIL HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER 6<sup>th</sup> FLOOR COUNCIL ROOM FEBRUARY 10, 2009 – 7:30 P.M.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fred Daniels, Chairperson, MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle, Vice Chair, Michael McGee, Harvey Gilbert, April Teveris, Francis Kennedy and Dale Clayton

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** : Steven Werbner, Town Manager; Christine Hutton, Director of Finance & Records; Michael Wilkinson, Director of Administrative Services; Beverly Bellody, Director of Human Services & Staff Liaison to Tolland Energy Task Force; Sgt. Brian Kennedy, Resident Trooper Sergeant; Clem Langlois, Public Works Operations Manager; John Littell, Fire Chief, Public Safety Supervisor; members of the Tolland Fire Department, Inc.; Chris Alexander, President, Local IAFF; Catherine Osten, President, Local SEIU; Mark Summers, Chair, Tolland Energy Task Force; Christopher Martin and Christine Caruolo, Financial Advisors from Webster Bank; Steve May, Health Care Consultant from Milliman.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Fred Daniels called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Recited.
3. **MOMENT OF SILENCE** Observed.
4. **PROCLAMATIONS:** None.
5. **PUBLIC PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (*on any subject within the jurisdiction of the Town Council*) (2 minute limit)

**Catherine Osten President, Local SEIU PO Box 503 Baltic CT:** Ms. Osten represents 6000 municipal workers across CT and she works as a Lt. for the D.O.C. and is also the First Selectman of Sprague. She does not want the burden of tax cuts put on the people that are serving the public. They need to look for long term solutions. They can't jeopardize the men and women who work hard for the town. She understands the Town went to a 4 day work week. They bargained in good faith and asked the Town to approve it in good faith. They will invest in goods and services in local businesses, not foreign businesses. The risk of failing to approve the contract will risk driving way the men and women who support their constituents. She is asking the Council Members to vote in favor of the contract.

**Lucy Pancusco of 4 Dogwood Lane** is the Library Tech Asst. in Tolland. She is asking the Town to approve the contract. She understands the financial strain put on the Town and yet they reached an agreement with the Town to reduce the work week. She is asking that they receive the same benefits as other Town employees. She is asking that they approve the contract and she looks forward to working with them in the future.

**Sam Belsito of 55 Lee Lane** is happy that there will be no raises for the Town Manager and the Superintendent of the school. Town Council will need to make tough decisions in the future and he is

asking them to bring spending under control this year and cut back growth. Mr. Belsito feels that they can still save tax dollars by cutting out items that are not necessary. The Town Manager and the Superintendent have taken 1 small step to cutting spending but they need to do much more.

**Paul Reynolds of 32 Valley View Drive** stated he feels the council should honor the contract with the Town Firefighter's as they do great work and show a lot of professionalism in Town with Fire and EMS. They consistently receive the highest results with customer satisfaction in Town as well.

**John Kosciw of 410 Old Post Rd.**, and a Lt. on the Tolland Fire Dept. knows the contract is under scrutiny and he wants to know why? He works in Manchester and his boss lets him leave his job to go to a major incident here in Town and he knows other FD's have better contracts and make more money and the men need to keep up with training and scrutiny and they deserve to get paid more to do the difficult job they do.

**Kim Reynolds of 32 Valley View Drive** wants to support the FD. We expect them to lay down their lives for us and we should feel shame for what we are paying them versus what we are expecting them to do. We should not be debating the small raise they are asking for and it comes down to respect. She also stated the Council has the responsibility to listen to the people talking to them tonight.

**Tim Killion of 16 Hickory Court** and volunteer FF/EMT is asking the Council Members to honor the contract which was negotiated in good faith and now they are trying to go back on it. The positions are already underpaid by \$10K annually and the grass cutters in Town get paid more than the FF's and they risk their lives. Tolland will continue to lose people to other towns without the pay raise. Arbitration will cost more and this is only for 6 men. They should stick by their word since they negotiated in good faith.

**Michael Evens of 3 Ellen Drive** said arbitration will cost more than the raises. With the lawyer fees and arbitration fees, it will cost \$6k to \$7k to fight the contract for one year. This is more than it will cost for the first year of raises. He feels the lawyers will make out the most on this, and no one else.

## 6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

- 6.1 Consideration of a resolution to make an additional appropriation of \$1,500 received from the Connecticut State Library for a Library Needs Assessment Grant.

Steve Werbner stated they have discussed this item in the past and the grant has already been received to be used by the Library for focus groups and to gather ideas for future needs of the libraries. They need to appropriate the money for the intended use.

Harvey Gilbert moved, and April seconded, to open to a public hearing. All were in favor. Public comment: none. A Straw poll was taken. 12 were in favor, none opposed. Harvey Gilbert motioned to close the public hearing, seconded by Dale Clayton. All were in favor. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle moved the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby appropriates to the General Fund Library Professional Services account an additional \$1,500 received from the State of Connecticut, Connecticut State Library, for a Library Services and Technology Act Community Assessment Grant.

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. All were in favor.

- 6.2 Consideration of a resolution to appropriate \$788.00 received as distribution of funds in the CRRA class action lawsuit to capital improvements for future use in conjunction with our municipal solid waste collection program.

Steve Werbner said the Town was involved with other communities in a class action lawsuit. This small amount was approved by the court to the Town and needs to be put in the Capital Improvement Acct. A public hearing needs to be held to appropriate the funds.

Harvey Gilbert motioned to open public hearing, Michael McGee seconded. All were in favor. Public comment: none. A straw poll was taken and 15 were in favor, none were opposed. Harvey Gilbert motioned to close the public hearing, seconded by Dale Clayton. All were in favor.

MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle moved the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby appropriates \$788.00 received as distribution of funds in the CRRA class action lawsuit to capital improvements for future use in conjunction with the Town of Tolland's municipal solid waste collection program.

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. All were in favor.

- 6.3 Consideration of an amendment to the Code of the Town of Tolland, Chapter 143 - Vehicles and Traffic, Ordinance No. 15, §143-2 - Stopping, Standing and Parking Restrictions, to add Section M, Winter Parking Ban.

Steve Werbner gave some background on this item and said that it was suggested to have prohibited parking during the winter for snow operations since they had several concerns with their trucks having to move around the parked cars. They also had to have some cars towed in the recent past and the workers had to knock on many doors in the middle of the night asking people to move their cars. Many surrounding Towns also have this same ordinance in place. There was an appeal received and a minor suggestion made. He is proposing if they want to accept it they can insert the suggested wording instead. Fred Daniels read the revised wording. Dale Clayton asked if Section I already covered this, but Steve Werbner said the appeal was regarding the specific time of year. Fred Daniels stated that in the past they have issued parking bans but people were not following it. Steve Werbner said that this ordinance would make it standard during this time of year. Harvey Gilbert motioned to open to public hearing, seconded by Michael McGee. All were in favor.

**Rod Hurtuk of 76 Tolland Green** commented that he didn't feel Section 1 was as broad as Steve Werbner made it sound. He also felt the penalties were clearly stated as well. He said our Town does not have a lot of sidewalks and yet they do have very long driveways. He felt that this will cause more problems and that he feels that it is more of a matter of the communication of the ban to the residents. He has only heard of it twice, and only this year. He feels we need to keep the current laws on the books and enforce it better as we are not a larger city like Manchester or Vernon. We are Tolland.

A straw poll was taken: 4 were in favor. 1 opposed. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle moved the following resolution:

**BE IT ORDAINED** by the Town Council of the Town of Tolland that the attached amendment §143-2 (M) to the Code of the Town of Tolland, Chapter 143 - Vehicles and Traffic, Ordinance No. 15, §143-2 – Stopping, Standing and Parking Restrictions, is approved.

§143-2 – Stopping, Standing and Parking Restrictions.

No person shall park a motor vehicle or leave it standing or stopped:

A. On a public sidewalk.

B. Within 10 feet of a fire hydrant whether it be on private property or a public highway.

C. On a highway, except upon the right-hand side of the traveled portion of any highway in the direction in which such vehicle is headed.

D. If a highway is curbed, when safety will permit, more than 12 inches from the curb.

E. Within 25 feet of an intersection or marked crosswalk thereat.

F. Within 25 feet of a stop sign.

G. Upon the traveled portion of any highway, at any curve or turn, or at the top of any grade where a clear view of such vehicle may not be had from a distance of at least 150 feet in either direction.

H. In any posted no-parking zone.

I. Within the limits of a public highway in such a manner as to constitute a traffic hazard or to obstruct free movement of traffic thereon or so as to impede public authority in the removal of snow, ice and other hazardous substances.

J. In front of or obstructing or interfering with ingress to or egress from any private driveway or alleyway.

K. In an intersection.

L. Double parked.

**M. On and after the effective date of this ordinance no person shall park any vehicle on any public roadway under the jurisdiction of the Town of Tolland or in any area designated as a municipal parking area (excluding Town-owned vehicles) between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. from November 1 through April 15.**

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. Discussion: Fred Daniels commented that they had the public safety people here last time that are charged with the safety of the community. It was their recommendation that the problems with the vehicles and the problems they impose, as well as the precedence set from other surrounding rural towns, to enforce such an ordinance. All were in favor.

7a. **REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RESPONSIBLE TO THE COUNCIL:**

- 7a.1 Report of the Tolland Energy Task Force. Mark Summers Chairman of the task force gave a PowerPoint presentation of their recommendations.

Mr. Summers said there were two options: Oil and Geothermal. They felt the existing system needs to be looked at since it was not efficient; it is 25 yrs old and needs to be replaced. There are 3 categories save, replace, or eliminate. He reviewed the 2007 report done by CES on the existing system. He reviewed components such as the boilers, heat pumps and cooling tower and what options they have. He also reviewed the cost replacements and the oil is less expensive upfront (1.2M vs 1.7M estimate). The geothermal is more expensive due to drilling of wells under the parking lot. He also reviewed the annual operating costs of both options and the oil and electricity required. There is considerable savings with the geothermal (option two) operating costs. Geothermal uses less energy and costs less to operate annually. Payback period depends on fuel costs and he gave two different scenarios and showed that as fuel costs rise, operating costs reduce for the geothermal system. He also showed a list of pros and cons for each system and not only is there a faster payback with the geothermal system as well as less energy being used, less pollution, more control, and cleaner air. He also felt it would be setting the example for other residents and business in town since it uses less energy and less operating costs. It was a unanimous suggestion from the members to implement the geothermal system. They would need buy in from town leaders and a thermal conductivity test for the well and a building thermal scan. They are also looking for funding options.

MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle asked if it was a closed loop system and he said yes. So, there would be no environmental impact. Mr. Summers briefly reviewed how the system would work and that the water stays in the system forever. Fred Daniels said that in regards to funding, they are hoping that since energy efficiency is an important aspect of this administration with President Obama, they expect and hope to see retrofit of buildings as part of the plan. Steve Werbner said he wasn't sure how much would be coming to the town, but they have also been putting aside money for the replacement of 19 heat pumps. If the council would like to, they can put the money towards the design fee. He asked the architects and engineers if they did the design now, and it sat for a couple of years, would there be substantial cost increases, but they said no. Ten years there could be code changes to comply with, etc. Fred Daniels also asked if they looked at the schools and other buildings. Mr. Summers didn't feel that there was a large economy of scale and wouldn't save that much by doing them all at once and they focused on just the one item for now to keep it simple.

- 7b. **REPORTS OF TOWN COUNCIL LIAISONS** Francis Kennedy said that Michael McGee and he attended the joint subcommittee (BOE, Steve Werbner and Superintendent) about the use of the schools. They reached a consensus about how the building could be used, possibly even generating funds for the towns. There was a cost factor to use the bldg. for both internal functions or outside, such as heating, electricity, etc. They are scheduling a walk through and will try to compartmentalize the building into zones for the heating so they can heat sections of the building. There is another meeting coming up that they will attend and he will keep us informed.

Fred Daniels attended the WPCA meeting and the consultants reviewed the concerns with the environmental issue they had back in the 1970's. These are long range projects such as sewer systems and community water waste disposal system. The biggest concern from the people was what it would do to the property values of their homes. Another meeting will be held and all are welcome to attend. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle said that the P & Z Commission had commissioned a group from Sacred Heart to do surveys to 400 random households about how the Town should evolve relating to Planning and Zoning. They should get results in a couple of months.

8. **NEW BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS)**

- 8.1 Presentation on Debt Management and financial strategy for Five Year Capital Improvement Plan. Christopher Martin and Christine Caruolo from Webster Bank are the financial advisors and they reviewed this year's version of debt management. Steve Werbner said this debt management plan works off of the budget and since he has made some minor changes to it, he handed out a brief list of the changes for the council to review. Steve Werbner reduced the first year general fund from \$550k by \$300k in order to meet budget targets by eliminating the 26k for maintenance of light duty vehicles and moved out some other items such as mowers for future years. For year two he also made some changes regarding street sweeping, contracting it out instead of keeping the vehicle to do this, and he will review more details on the capital budget when they review it at a later time. In year 3 they have moved the school renovation projects, as well as the geothermal project, which would require a referendum as well as road culvert and pavement management. The Debt service plan is made off these adjustments he mentioned.

Ms. Caruolo reviewed the debt plan for the next 5 years and where they stand. She handed out the report which included an executive summary and details. There is no debt issuance expected for the next two years. They don't recommend issuing bonds for less than \$1.5M as it doesn't make sense due to the costs of the bond. She reviewed existing and proposed debt service by dollar amount. She commented on the method Tolland is using to not issue new debt over the next two years and this allows them to catch up so the debt will begin to go down in the future. The mill rate impact was reviewed and with certain assumptions made it shows the mill rate to stay relatively constant over the next few years. She reviewed the % of debt service and that it had peaked in 2006 and will begin to go down after 2011. The debt service was considered low to moderate and was considered manageable indicating the Town was in a very good position. The debt service per capital is 2117 and the Town is still considered to have a moderate to low position for a small town. Mr. Martin from Webster Bank said the Town received an update from Standard and Poors which is also worth noting.

- 8.2 Discussion on health benefits with the Town's Health Insurance Consultant from Milliman.

Steve Werbner introduced Steve May from Milliman. Mr. May is here regarding the latest updates and what is happening with the Town's Health Insurance. Mr. May said they started the process in October and they are not yet finished. Anthem was asking for a 24% increase, they have negotiated just under 15.89%. They independently underwrite your plan so were able to do this. The Town has looked other options to save money such as looking at LTD and STD Anthem would shave points off to save money. Right now the budget includes a rate increase of 13.89%. They also looked at the potential of being self insured and unfortunately the group is not large enough to self insure for health – but could possibly do it for dental only, saving \$60k. They are also looking at ways to save on prescription drugs as well. They are staying with Anthem for prescription drug and that a 13.89% increase is more inline with last year. Last year they had 5 large claims (over \$50k) and this year they had 15 of them. 2 of them are over \$150k. This is driving the rate increase. They also asked Cigna to provide a proposal. Cigna said they were at 19% originally but they have been given new info. And will look at it again to make any revisions. They are also looking at other ways to save such as Health Benefit plan for the non-affiliated. Dale Clayton asked if there are other major providers out there to get quotes from. They were previously with United and the service was not as the Town expected. On the local level they fell down with service while they do serve the State – they don't do well with Towns. Aetna is just now getting in to smaller public sector and they still had some issues with the claim systems with the merger from ten years ago. Cigna is the largest municipal provider and there are other smaller ones as well and they are continuing to look at it. Fred Daniels asked about the size of a self insured and when it is worth while and Steve said typically over 500 people. Even with the BOE we are only at 398 to 402.

- 8.3 Consideration of a resolution, Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 22-232 and 22-333, for the Town Council to adopt a revised fee schedule for dog impoundments and related activities. Steve Werbner reviewed the existing costs and that while the State sets certain costs they do have some flexibility to increase fees. The dog pound is not currently supporting itself and this will help to offset those costs. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle read the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby adopts, pursuant to C.G.S. sec. 22-232 and 22-333, the following fee schedule for dog impoundments and related activities:

Redemption	First Impoundment	\$15.00
	Second Impoundment	\$15.00
	Subsequent impoundment	\$20.00

Boarding fees, per day. \$15.00

Plus any and all medical fees, advertising fees and costs associated with the care of the animal while it is impounded. These charges will be at current market prices.

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. Discussion: April Teveris clarified the only change was from \$8 to \$15. And Fred Daniels said yes. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle said she agreed with the increase and they need to try to get the dog pound self sustaining. All were in favor.

- 8.4 Consideration of a resolution to approve the necessary funds to ratify IAFF (Firefighters) AFL-CIO Local 3954 Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period dated July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011. Fred Daniels stated the Town entered into negotiations and reached an agreement and has recommended its passage. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle read the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the necessary funds to ratify IAFF (Firefighters) AFL-CIO Local 3954 Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period dated July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011 and authorizes Steven R. Werbner, Town Manager, to execute said agreement on behalf of the Town of Tolland.

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. Discussion: Fred Daniels stated these are difficult times everyone knows, and his comments will also pertain to the next item on the agenda. Many towns have asked unaffiliated employees to give back and to share in the sacrifice of the town. The Town reached an agreement that seemed like it was the best interest of the Town and the bargaining unit. However, things have changed and the economic climate in the town has changed rapidly. If they don't have revenues, the only options are to increase taxes or cut costs. He understands they agreed in good faith, but they need to try and cut costs. He didn't feel that they should take back anything from the current year that started in July. Harvey Gilbert agreed and didn't feel they could go out so many years with the increase. Dale Clayton agreed that it should be on a year by year basis due to the climate. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle said it was a small amount and that we should vote in favor of the contract. Francis Kennedy said he felt we should go on a year by year basis. Fred Daniels said we don't have that option to do this, we have to ask the bargaining unit if they would do that and if they say no they would end up in arbitration. He asked Steve Werbner if the figures they heard earlier would be correct for arbitration costs. Steve Werbner said that it sounded about right (\$6k to \$8k). Dale Clayton asked if we had to

go to arbitration where would we get the money and Steve Werbner said from the legal fees line item.

Fred Daniels said that he felt the prudent option would be to decline this at this time. 1 in favor (MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle), 6 were opposed.

- 8.5 Consideration of a resolution to approve the necessary funds to ratify CSEA, SEIU Local 2001 (Town Hall Employees) Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period dated July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010.

Fred Daniels said that this was a two year contract, not a 3 year like the FF's and the unaffiliated employees have agreed to go to a high deductible health plan and that they agreed to not get an increase this year as well. He said they won't balance the budget this year with these changes, but they need to make decisions to save money. Francis Kennedy concurred. Harvey Gilbert concurred. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle said this was a 2 yr agreement and for the people that were working along side the members felt we could go back to ask them to freeze salaries in the second year if necessary like they did with the unaffiliated positions. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle read the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the necessary funds to ratify CSEA, SEIU Local 2001 (Town Hall Employees) Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period dated July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2010 and authorizes Steven R. Werbner, Town Manager, to execute said agreement on behalf of the Town of Tolland.

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. 1 in favor, (MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle) 6 opposed.

- 8.6 Consideration of a resolution to approve the amended 401a Adoption Agreement with ICMA-RC which includes an accelerated vesting schedule and authorizes Steven R. Werbner, Town Manager, to execute said agreement on behalf of the Town of Tolland.

Mike Wilkinson commented that the Town has a 401k and they currently pay 6% in to this and the employee puts in 2.5% with a 5year vested plan. The proposal is to change this to an accelerated vested plan. It's being proposed because they are at a disadvantage for new hires and he doesn't know of any other town that has this 5 yr plan. Some towns you are vested on day 1 and so on. Fred Daniels asked about the 10 year vesting schedule and wanted to know more about the acceleration program. Christine Hutton recalled that it was 10% per year but wasn't sure. April Teveris said that if this was done to help keep employees, what has changed. Steve Werbner said the world changed, and it has to do with keeping people at the position. April Teveris didn't feel that this was unfair and that 5 years is not a long time. Steve Werbner said it is today. April Teveris said if an employee wants to stay for 5 years to get vested, that is their decision. Steve Werbner said there are some employees that are scheduled to leave based on their retirement times and they need to have more incentive to bring new employees in. They are also changing to a health savings acct and they have discussed other options for recruiting new employees. Harvey Gilbert asked how many employees this affects and how much will it cost. Steve Werbner said they budget 6% and if someone leaves they get a credit back. Mike Wilkinson gave an example of a person leaving after 3 years and that they would loose money if they left. Dale Clayton said he didn't feel the town was not competitive now and felt we should promote longevity. He said we just turned down two contracts that were minimal increases and this could cost us more. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle and Harvey Gilbert both agreed that now is not the right time for this. Fred Daniels said he felt we should

encourage longevity with the 5 yr vested plan and not change it at this time. MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle moved the following resolution:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the amended 401a Adoption Agreement with ICMA-RC which includes an accelerated vesting schedule and authorizes Steven R. Werbner, Town Manager, to execute said agreement on behalf of the Town of Tolland.

Harvey Gilbert seconded. No one was in favor of this motion. It was defeated 7-0.

- 8.7 Appointments to vacancies on various municipal boards/commissions.  
Appointed: Sudha Nagardeolekar of 283 Grahaber Road and Eric C. Weiss, of 122 Reed Road with current terms expiring 2/28/09 to the Economic and Community Development Corporation. Their new terms will be 2/28/09 to 2/28/14. Seconded by Harvey Gilbert. All were in favor.

9. **OLD BUSINESS (ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS):**

- 9.1 Consideration of a resolution to approve the Settlement Agreement between parties relating to the 6/23/06 and 7/29/06 water damage at Tolland High School and designating the \$28,000 settlement amount within fund balance for future Board of Education capital projects.

MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle read the following **REVISED** resolution,

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Tolland Town Council that it hereby approves the Water Damage at Tolland High School Settlement Agreement between parties and designates **\$28,000 to the fund balance.**

Seconded by Harvey Gilbert.

Steve Werbner said the town already received some funds back from the insurance, and some were received from the State reimbursement, and in a mediated settlement this is the final portion of the claim. **Dale Clayton was in favor of this but requested an amendment to the motion that the funds get appropriated to the fund balance period**, instead of designating it to the BOE under the current economic climate. **MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle and Harvey Gilbert accepted the change as noted.**

All were in favor.

10. **REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER (A WRITTEN REPORT SHALL BE PROVIDED THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MONTH ONLY)** Steve Werbner said he has been reporting monthly about a potential shortage of \$200 to \$300k and has been on a hiring freeze as well as a spending freeze. They were waiting to see the Jan. collection of taxes. In prior years the taxes have come in so strong and they would offset any shortage. Unfortunately, the tax collection % rates are down, and they could potentially be faced with \$379k additional shortage from collections of taxes. This is based on conservative numbers, and they have the potential to be \$750k short. If they are they have to use the fund balance and if they do that could affect the rating they get and it would affect the rates they receive for future borrowing. Steve Werbner has recommended some changes that he will implement as of March 1<sup>st</sup> to capture some savings and will remain on a spending freeze for the remainder of the year. There is hope that they will receive more revenue from taxes than they are estimating but he can't wait until May to find out. So he has to take actions now. He also didn't feel that the town can create all the necessary savings when they are only 1/3 of the expenses. They have considered several changes including a single collection date for taxes instead of two collection dates so they have more money upfront and a better % of receipts. It was also

recommended that they implement a new policy where any person who tries to apply for a building permit must be paid up in full on taxes and other community fees such as water and electricity which is done in many other communities. He brought up some other ideas for cost savings as well including referendum costs and recycling options such as single stream recycling which could increase the recycling rate by 10% or more. This is substantial since they are paying for solid waste per ton and any thing they can remove from this would be a savings. They are suggesting to go to the 65 or 95 gallon bin. Ellington is doing this every other week and many homeowners are already filling up the 95 gallon bins early resulting in more garbage going into the other bins. Steve Werbner said he would like to move forward with this immediately to have the Willimantic Recycling Co. purchase the containers for us for a 3 year contract. Dale Clayton asked if he can provide a breakdown of the savings for his and Steve Werbner said yes. They agreed they will add this to the next agenda. Steve Werbner wanted to hear from the council regarding their thoughts on spending the money for the design work on the geothermal system for the Town Hall. Fred Daniels said they need to be prepared if grants become available and would like that added to the next agenda as well. Steve Werbner also stated that the revenue collections have reduced since people are not buying new cars. He also brought up OPEB for the BOE and Town employees. They looked at fully funding, 3 yr and 5 yrs. They decided to go to a 3 yr program, resulting in over \$223k per year in cost. The Superintendent asked if they could change to a 5 yr phase in provision instead. The 2<sup>nd</sup> yr payment would be \$95k and either scenario would be acceptable. Neither amount was included in the Superintendent's budget and must be added in and will be paid out of current dollars instead of budgeted dollars. The Superintendent requested this change to 5 yrs and Steve Werbner provided a breakdown of this for the council members. If the phased in amounts are never budgeted, the BOE will have a \$500k amount due and will take a hit. He suggests that this become a line item in the budget so they are not left with a large amount of debt with a short time to pay. Fred Daniels said he agreed they need to start budgeting for it and MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle agreed. They were surprised it had not already been budgeted. The consensus from the council members was that they move forward with this item in the budget for the BOE.

Steve Werbner also brought up the salt piles being moved and now the same problem has occurred with the new location and people are trying to climb in to the larger main pile and someone almost got buried in the pile. So far it has cost the Town \$8k and he is suggesting that they cease the free salt to residents immediately for the rest of the year. Everyone agreed. Dale Clayton asked if we clearly note the "Town only" salt and Steve Werbner said yes. Dale Clayton said that we should be prosecuting people who steal the salt from the Town. Since they know the one person who was stealing, they should consider pressing charges. Steve Werbner said he would discuss this with the State Police in Town. \$20k in salt is being purchased. Surplus items were sold for \$9300. Steve Werbner wanted to know if they were in favor of the paper ballots instead of having the scanners for the budget referendums which is a cost of \$800 each referendum. They would be required to find volunteers instead. April Teveris said she was concerned about reliability and it seemed we were going backwards. Harvey Gilbert and Dale Clayton agreed they should try it to see if it works. Dale Clayton also wanted to know the delinquency rate on the vehicles vs. homes. He didn't want to put additional burdens on residents if the % was not that high. Fred Daniels asked if the grace period was through July 31<sup>st</sup> and asked if the statutes prohibit them from having a 2 month grace period and Steve Werbner said yes. April Teveris asked for this to be added to the next agenda for discussion along with background info. on delinquency rates & %.

## 11. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 11.1 January 27, 2009 Regular Meeting Minutes MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle moved to adopt. Seconded by Francis Kennedy. All were in favor.
- 11.2 January 27, 2009 Special Meeting Minutes MaryAnn Delaney Tuttle moved to adopt, seconded by Harvey Gilbert. All were in favor.

12. **CORRESPONDENCE TO COUNCIL**

- 12.1 Memo dated February 2, 2009 from Superintendent Guzman to Steve Werbner, re: Energy Accounts.
- 12.2 Fax dated February 4, 2009 from CCM, re: Governor's Proposed Budget Impact on Tolland.
- 12.3 Konover Construction is offering a \$1500 grant for small projects in town. Due Feb 16<sup>th</sup>. Letter was received from Eastern Highland Health District and from Comcast. A letter from Scott Tracey for resignation from BOE was also received.

13. **COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILPERSONS** None. Fred Daniels said the TTC/BOE hour will be at the library program room on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Wed, (tomorrow) from 6:15 to 7:15.

14. **PUBLIC LISTED PARTICIPATION** *(on any subject on the agenda) (5 minute limit)*

**Mathew Flor 14 Plains Rd.** wanted to discuss 8.4 through 8.7,. With all due respect, he felt they cut off their financial nose despite their face. The Town Manager recommended approving the contract and although it didn't get ratified, it was in good faith and most arbitrations would be in their favor. He said the FF are underpaid and pay too much for health care. He didn't think going against the contract would help to keep the FF's in town and they are going to pay the funds for attorneys to get the same contract in the end. He felt this was a financial mistake and 2.5% was not even the COLA.

**Tim Killion from 16 Hickory Court** is disgusted and they agreed to a fair contract less than a month ago and nothing has changed since Jan 13<sup>th</sup>. They are one of the lowest paid FF around and he is disgusted that people cutting grass make more than the FF's. They also have more open space than most and should sell some of it to fund the contracts.

**Mike Pascuzzi 55 Avebury Lane** he has been coming to these meetings for the past 7 years and has agreed with them always, except for tonight. He said it was only a couple of weeks ago that they stood here in front of the Town and agreed to the contract in good faith. He felt they should have approved it.

**Chris Alexander of 81 Evergreen Drive** is very disappointed they didn't approve the contract and he has family that works in town and brothers in the Fire Dept. this was small compared to the larger picture. What you have done is successfully eliminated their ability to come back and faithfully negotiate again. He is a Tolland resident and the local President of the IAFF 115 and represents 7 Fire Depts. In CT and a State contract. He also ratified a contract to 2011 and he would have been open to reopening the contract for discussions in the future years. All this has done is caused more damage for negotiations in the future.

**Joe Duval of 113 Crystal Lake Road** lived in town for over 40 years and has been on the Volunteer FD for last 15 yrs and is now a paid FF. He has never done a grievance beyond the Fire Chief's level. They joined the Union so that they get the proper safety they need. They have sacrificed and signed up for an 18% insurance and were told everyone would be at that level and no one else is at that high of a level to pay for insurance. They got new equipment and training and have to keep up on this training on his own time and he has to be up to date on 15 pieces of equipment. While he served in the military, the Town stopped his insurance and pay while he spent 18 months in Afghanistan. The money should have been put into a fund to cover the raises, but it wasn't. He had no representation from the Town except for the Fire Chief and the Fire Dept while he was getting shot at in a trench in the heat of the desert. He is asking for help and every couple of years the Commission Members change and they don't know the history of what has transpired in Town. The Firefighter's have to do go from working as EMS to Firefighter's, and the job requirements are many. The grass cutters in Town make more than them. He gave his heart and soul to this town and he knows what sacrifice is all about.

**John Littell of 40 Woodland St**, Tolland Fire Chief, said since he was mentioned tonight several times and wanted to speak. He had a battle 9 or 10 yrs ago and got his certifications to be where his is today. He said there are not too many depts. in the state that have this close of a comradary and they have lost some guys to other towns and some are looking to go to another town and he is losing so much training and experience and getting a new person is not the same. Having volunteers come up through the ranks of volunteers saves the Town thousands in training and if he has to replace them again it is not only a huge loss but an expense. These guys love the job and the community and are not getting paid to do certain things like the Explorer post and this is a huge benefit. He apologized to the guys for some of the things he had given to them and he usually handles 90% of what he has in town with his own people and they have stepped up o the plate and there are very few positions in town that have to meet the physical demands of a FF or the EMT recertification and all the other requirements to keep their job. You are getting a big bang for your buck with these people and it's a huge loss to lose them. His goal was to cover 6am to 6pm. The dept received 167 calls for Jan which is the highest in over 20 years. He is hoping they can move forward and get over it.

**Ben Christensen of 279 Gehring Rd** joined the dept/ about 7 months ago on the volunteer side and he learned more in the past 7 months than he did in the last 6 yrs from college and HS and hopes they get the respect they deserve.

**Tim George of 65 Bonair Hill Rd** spoke on behalf of the two union contracts that were turned down. The Town in good conscience passed this contract and agreed on it and all of a sudden the world is in an economic crisis. They have been talking about this recession for the past 2 years and this is not brand new in the last 3 weeks since they agreed on the contract. If you want to go back to the tables for a 1 yr contract, it could be March. By the time they might agree to a one yr. contract it will be over and they will have to start over again for a new year. This all comes down to money since it costs the Town's representative each time he meets with them. This will cost more to disagree with than it would have to approve the contract. To retain employees you treat them well and give them job security.

**Pam Reynolds** spoke in favor of the FF and supports their contract.

**Sam Belsito of 55 Lee Lane** – said it was a great presentation on debt service. The best strategy is to avoid debt. Reduce debt service and structure the purchases with the reduction in the debt.

**A resident from town** stated that this has already gone to a mediator and that now it will go to arbitration and will cost far more than the raises would have been.

## 15. ADJOURNMENT

Harvey Gilbert moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Dale Clayton at 10:35 pm. All were in favor.

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Frederick M. Daniels, Council Chair

Sarah Bollinger  
Commission Clerk