

Joint Meeting of the Waterbury Select Board and Village Trustees
April 25, 2011
Wesley Methodist Church ~ 7:00p.m.

Present: Rebecca Ellis, Chair; John Grenier, Pam Clapp, Bob Butler and Karen Miller, Select Board; P. Howard Flanders, President; Natalie Howell-Sherman and Lawrence Sayah, Trustees; William Shepeluk, Municipal Manager; Chris Preston, Waterbury Record; and Carla Lawrence, Town Clerk.

Public: Jim Chalmers, Sally Dillon, Anne Imhoff, Chris Viens, and Everett Coffey.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05p.m.

The agenda was reviewed. Most members of the public stated they were present because police issues have hindered the merger process in the past.

R. Ellis reviewed her notes from the last merger meeting. Options include full merger of town and village with town-wide police department, full merger with special services district in village for police, full merger of town and village with no police department, no merger but adopt a town wide police department, no merger but add 1 or 2 town police officers, local options tax for the village and/or town to support the police department (with or without merger), and a water & sewer merger.

W. Shepeluk explained the second option, full merger with a special services district. The Board of Trustees would be eliminated, the Select Board would oversee the police department, and the people who live in the service district would pay a tax for the service. Who would oversee the water/sewer district? It was discussed as to whether a Village based local options tax is possible.

R. Ellis polled Board members on what they feel is the most productive way to move forward in terms of the options listed above. By consensus of the Boards, the option to merge with a special services district in the Village for police was eliminated. Select Board members indicated they were for merger, with a police force (although not expanded), and interest in some form of a local options tax. What would it take to get the Town residents to be in favor of merger? One member suggested addressing head on a Town wide or mixed police department as a step toward merger.

The Trustees polled were in favor of merger, having a police department be part of a merger document, and showed diverse views on the local options tax. There was concern that a local options tax might sway people to vote no on merger.

Concern was expressed from some members of the public about the existing personnel. It was suggested that the Town might not want the existing police department, and that if a merger occurs the existing department will cease to exist and the officers can re-apply for a job with the Town-wide police department. It was also suggested that several merger proposals have been defeated over the past couple of decades and the police department has changed over that period. Perhaps some Town residents just feel that they do not need a police department as long as there is one in the Village.

Discussions continued as to how to make a Town wide police department more palatable to Town residents. To date, no Town residents have approached the Board with a request for a police services, other than some concerns about speeding.

The next steps were discussed. One idea is to have a Town referendum; educate and ask Town voters their views on merger, police, and local options tax. Another idea is to have different forums or focus groups to open discussions, or to create surveys or something less formal. If a survey was designed, there was concern that people would vote multiple times. Another idea is to have a police study group (formed from members of the Boards). A third idea is to have a water and sewer merger, where the users would be protected. This step could come at a later date. Another step would be to get the business community involved in talking about a local options tax, and get RW involved in that process.

With regard to the police study group, topics and speakers of interest might include the Village Trustees and Manager, the Police Chief, someone from the Department of Public Safety about partnership possibilities, Kym Craven from Public Safety Strategy Groups LLC (who wrote a legislative report about various communities police support), police chiefs from comparable communities, staffing options, budget and coverage comparisons, and online community surveys.

It was decided to try to gather information, through survey monkey or paper survey, before spending time on a police study group. J. Grenier indicated he would work on the survey with help from N. Howell-Sherman, K. Miller and A. Imhoff. The goal is to have the survey written and completed within the next two weeks. B. Butler volunteered to generate a list of email addresses.

The Trustees were invited to join the Select Board on Monday May 16th to review the survey and continue discussions.

The CDBG Initiative was discussed, in trying to determine what to do with some of the money. P. Clapp will be a subgroup committee member along with N. Howell-Sherman.

W. Shepeluk requested that the Boards jointly discuss his salary. The Select Board is interested in having evaluations done on more Town employees, evaluating the Municipal Manager and vice versa. They had evaluation training in March. They discussed forming a subgroup to work with the Municipal Manager on the evaluation process. P. H. Flanders suggested a 360 degree evaluation form.

B. Butler made a motion that the Select Board move into Executive Session at 9:00p.m. The motion was seconded by J. Grenier and approved by all. L. Sayah made a motion that the Trustees move into Executive Session at 9:00p.m. The motion was seconded by N. Howell-Sherman and approved by all.

The Boards came out of Executive Session at 9:30p.m.

P. Clapp made a motion to give the Municipal Manager a 45 cent per hour raise retroactive to the pay period ending April 2, 2011. The motion was seconded by K. Miller and approved by all.

Last year's permit for Tom Murphy's comedy festival was discussed. It was decided to issue the permit again this year, specify the order of parking lot usage, and specify that the last show start by 7:00p.m. and end at 9:00p.m. The Municipal Manager will work with him on the placement of the tent. L. Sayah will check on the decibel level of the music event, limited to 85 decibels at the perimeter of the park.

J. Grenier made a motion to approve the permit as amended. The motion was seconded by B. Butler and approved by all.

The proposed stipulation concerning Waterbury's request for a property value redetermination was briefly discussed. The Town appraiser does not want to stipulate. The Board was in agreement.

The fire department has asked for an amendment to the site plan review with regard to the lighting. They cannot see the security code keypads to enter the buildings at night. They have asked for additional lighting operated by a photocell so that they can see the keypads to get into the buildings. They have also requested the installation of two solar powered lights in the front corners of the bell tower to illuminate the bell. The Board asked the Municipal Manager to check on using motion sensors. There were three votes against the lights in the bell tower, but the Municipal Manager was asked to gather more information.

Grenier Consulting made a plan, under the direction of S. Lotspeich, for a dog and bike park so that Act 250 can make a determination to approve the amended site plan. How should this cost be split? The Boards decided to split the cost down the middle. P. Clapp made a motion to split the cost with the Village. The motion was seconded by K. Miller and approved by 4 members, with J. Grenier recusing himself. L. Sayah made a motion to split the cost with the Town. The motion was seconded by N. Howell-Sherman and approved by all.

There project to put a new roof on the recreation building has begun.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Lawrence

Approved at a meeting held on:

May 11, 2011



Nathaniel Sherman