



## Watertown Town Council

Administration Building  
149 Main Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470

### ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett,  
Vice President

John A. Donohue,  
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff,  
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,  
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,  
District A Councilor

Cecilia Lenk,  
District B Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,  
District C Councilor

John J. Lawn, Jr.,  
District D Councilor

## MINUTES

### SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2011 AT 7:00 PM RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO COUNCIL CHAMBER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

In accordance with provisions of Rule 2.6 of the Rules of the Town Council, and pursuant to the Call of the Town Council President, I hereby call a Special Meeting of the Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown to be held in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building on Tuesday, June 21, 2011 at 7:00 PM to consider the following matters:

1. **ROLL CALL:** A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 7:00 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors John A. Donohue, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Councilors Falkoff and Palomba arrived shortly after the call of the roll. Councilor Lawn was absent. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll and Council Clerk Valerie Papas.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **COMMITTEE REPORT:**
  - a) Budget and Fiscal Oversight [Report](#) on the review of the draft 2010 Audit; retirement benefits pertaining to a COLA request; and a proposed resolution regarding a Wheelabrator settlement – Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., - Chair. The Chair recognized Councilor Piccirilli who read the Committee report. Councilor Kounelis moved to accept the report, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,

Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

- b) PRESENTATION of the Fiscal Year 2010 Audit; [Financials](#); [Management Letter](#) and [Independent Audit](#) – Frank Biron, Melanson, Heath Co. Mr. Biron provided an overview of the three documents and stated that the Town has a surplus for the year; has strong reserves and is in very strong condition. There being no questions or comments, Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Single 2010 Audit and Management Letter, seconded by Councilor Lenk and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

#### 4. MOTIONS, ORDERS AND RESOLUTIONS:

- a) Motion to confirm the appointment of Melanson, Heath, Co as the outside audit firm to conduct the 2011 Audit. Councilor Donohue moved to confirm the appointment of Melanson, Heath, Co to conduct the 2011 Audit, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to Suspend the Rules and move forward agenda item 5C Consideration and action on Retirement law changes as it relates to Chapter 101 benefits and consideration of Retirement law changes as it relates to the base amount of COLAs, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

Mr. Thomas Tracy, Town Auditor noted and introduced members of the Retirement Board and lawyer Thomas Gibbons. He noted that Chapter 101 Benefits relate to disabled retirees prior to year 1996. A vote to adopt the Chapter would add \$114,000 to the unfunded pension liability or cost \$12,000.00 per year on a funding schedule.

The Chair recognized Retirement Board member Thomas Thibaut who noted that in October 6, 2010 the Retirement Board voted to accept the provisions which would increase the benefit from \$6,000 to 9,000 for the spouses of a few individuals. He lastly noted that this benefit will eventually no longer require funding.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt Chapter 101 benefits, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by a roll call vote of 7 for, 0 against and 1 present with Councilors John A. Donohue, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council

President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative and Councilor Falkoff voting Present.

Mr. Thibaut noted that the Retirement Board voted favorably to increase the COLA for retirees who are on fixed incomes. The amount would increase from \$12,000 to \$14,000 or up to \$460.00 per year increasing the amount by \$60.00 per year.

Councilor Piccirilli moved not to adopt an increase in COLA for retirees as recommended by the Budget, Fiscal Oversight Subcommittee, seconded by Councilor Falkoff.

Councilor Kounelis noted the difficult decision and indicated that she spoke at length about the matter in subcommittee.

Councilor Lenk stated that the COLA increase if adopted would add \$1.3 million to the Town's unfunded pension liability and further indicated that this is something we do not have to do tonight as it has no time limit and can be revisited down the road when the economy has improved.

Councilor Piccirilli thanked the board members and noted that this was a very difficult decision but that the COLA would add an extra \$90,000 to next year's budget. He noted that this is not the year and not the time to increase COLAs.

Vice President Corbett concurred and noted the bad timing of the request.

Retirement Board member, Duke Arone stated that the increase in COLA would represent a \$5.00 per month increase in a retiree's pension and asked if the Town Council would consider a \$13,000 increase rather than \$14,000 which would lower the increase per retiree to \$2.50 per month.

It was noted that the Budget and Fiscal Oversight Subcommittee discussed the lower amount and voted against it.

Upon a roll call vote, the motion not to adopt a COLA increase was adopted unanimously 8-0-0.

b) Consideration and action on a proposed [resolution](#) regarding a Wheelabrator settlement. The Chair recognized Councilor Palomba who noted that the resolution would support a one-time allocation of monies for temporary employees to assist the Public Works department on catching up on the back log of work. He reiterated that these would not be permanent jobs.

The Manager stated that on page 16 of the Budget Message the NESWC Stabilization fund has a balance of \$58,000 and the Town was looking for an opportunity to make a transfer of monies into this account for Capital Projects. The account currently has a shortfall of \$440,000. It was further noted that the account is a piggy bank for street and sidewalk repairs.

Councilor Piccirilli noted that \$500,000 from the Stabilization fund was used as a revenue source to balance the budget and indicated that the account is similar to a savings account or piggy bank and should not be used for operating expenses.

Vice President Corbett complimented Councilor Palomba for seeing a problem and coming up with a solution; but noted that he would not want to set a bad precedence and go down that road and undermine the overall budget process.

Councilor Falkoff asked how the Town funded capital projects prior to the NESWC Stabilization Fund.

The Manager noted that capital projects were funded by the Arsenal Gift fund until the end of 2005.

Councilor Falkoff suggested the account should be renamed “Capital Funds Stabilization account” to indicate the purpose rather than the source of the funds. She further stated that there is a process for defining capital needs and prioritizing capital projects and spoke in favor of the money going for capital projects and against funds going for specific pet projects.

The Chair indicated that the name change would be taken up at a future meeting.

Councilor Kounelis commended Councilor Palomba for thinking outside the box but concurred with Councilors in placing the award in the Stabilization fund.

Councilor Lenk highlighted the Town’s unfunded liability and indicated that a plan should be made to tackle OPEB and that we should continue with our process and place the award in the Stabilization fund.

The Chair commended Councilor Palomba but indicated that the Council should continue with the current process and formalize a policy going forward when a matter such as this comes up.

Councilor Palomba noted the fine arguments presented tonight and thus withdrew the resolution.

The Chair indicated that he received an email from a resident asking that the monies go toward funding solar compactors for the Town.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to deposit the Wheelabrator award in the NESWC Stabilization fund, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

- c) Economic Development and Planning update and action on a [Map](#) and [Town Hall Campus parking plan](#). The Chair recognized Vice President Corbett who reviewed

the parking plan and map and noted that he is looking for a motion to support the plan and not approve it; as the parking bylaws have to be modified first. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report, seconded by Councilor Donohue and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

Councilor Kounelis asked if there were enough parking spaces for all employees.

Councilor Donohue stated that parking spaces were added totaling 99 for employees.

Councilor Donohue moved to support the concept, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

The Chair noted that the MBTA had a community meeting recently regarding bus service and asked that the matter be jointly referred to the Public Works and State, Federal and Regional Government for further discussion regarding Bus Route #71.

Councilor Piccirilli moved the referral, seconded by Councilor Lenk and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

The Chair recognized the Manager who indicated that the Fire Department may require an additional transfer of funds which will be placed on the Town Council on June 28<sup>th</sup> if it is determined that additional monies are needed.

The Manager indicated that with respect to agenda item 5B, the award will be coming to the Town in July and deposited in the treasury with an amendment to the budget sometime in the Fall.

The Chair recognized Thomas Thibaut who indicated that the Fire Department is at a 15 minimum manning level.

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Councilor Donohue moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

[Addendum](#)

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by unanimous voice vote on June 28, 2011.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President