

OFFICE OF THE  
FIRST SELECTMAN

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William F. Brennan  
*First Selectman*

Susan A. Bruschi  
*Second Selectman*

Richard F. Creeth

Harold E. Clark

Ted W. Hoffstatter

TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, CT 06897

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2008  
WILTON TOWN HALL, ROOM B**

**PRESENT:** First Selectman William Brennan, Second Selectman Susan Bruschi, Selectman Hal Clark, Selectman Richard Creeth, Selectman Ted Hoffstatter

**GUESTS:** Schools Superintendent Dr. Gary Richards, Board of Education Chairman Karen Birck, Jim Saxe, Gil Bray, Dick Dubow, Mark Esposito, Sean O'Toole, Ty Tregallas (Turner Construction), Bruce Hampson, Vin Tufo, Frank Gawle, Tim Canty, Philip Sharlach, Jim Lucey, Paul Burnham, Christian Planton, Marilyn Gould, Steve Hudspeth, Joe Dolan (CFO), Sarah Taffel (HR), Jan Andras

**OTHERS:** Brian Shea (Bulletin), Lauren Mylo (Villager)

Chairman Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

A. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Creeth, seconded and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

Minutes

- Board of Selectmen Special Meeting – November 3, 2008

Tax Refunds

- Motor Vehicle Tax Refunds as outlined in Tax Collector's memorandum dated October 31, 2008
- Motor Vehicle Tax Refunds as outlined in the Tax Collector's memorandum dated November 10, 2008

Gifts

- Donation of \$720 from Wilton Baseball/Softball Association for sodding of JV and Varsity Baseball fields at High School.

The Board indicated that the gift from the Baseball/Softball Association was very much appreciated.

## B. Discussion and/or Action

Before discussing the first item on the agenda, First Selectman Brennan reported that Governor Rell had made a teleconference call to all mayors and first selectmen today to advise of the state financial situation. There are two major issues – a steep revenue drop off and current state services. The Governor wants to avoid tax increases at all costs. The financial firms and insurance firms in the state are suffering. There are layoffs and losses in tax revenues, resulting in a widening deficit. Mr. Brennan also stated that at the last Board of Selectmen meeting, it was agreed to hold off on the community center capital project because the Board does not feel this project can go forward at this time.

### 1. Wilton High School Renovations Project

Board of Education Chairman Karen Birck stated that the Board recognizes the financial challenges facing the town, the state, and the nation, and appreciates the steps the Selectmen have taken, including the three board meeting. The Board of Education has taken a step by reducing costs in the current fiscal year. Spending on all discretionary accounts has been frozen. A status report and recommendations were prepared after the Building Committee on November 6, at which the recommendations being presented tonight were unanimously adopted.

The Building Committee plans to have a bid opening in January so that they bring hard figures back to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Brennan stated that when the figures come back in January, a decision will have to be made about whether or not to scale back the renovation of the science rooms and the Little Theater. Ms. Birck feels that talking about scaling back may be premature at this time. The bids will be structured so that the different components will be priced separately and we will know what might be deferred. In summary, the plan now is to:

- a) Complete the construction documents
- b) In January 2009, be able to discuss hard figures with the BOS and have a better feel for the bond market in order to make a prudent business decision.
- c) Bids are to be structured so that components of the science rooms, Little Theater and HVAC will be broken out in order to know what would be involved in scaling back, if necessary.

### 2. City Carting, Inc. Agreement- Municipal Solid Waste

Mr. Brennan advised that he cannot go into details of the terms of the agreement because he does not yet have a signed, executed copy. Today, the remaining issues were resolved and he will give the details at the December 1 meeting.

### 3. Re-appointments of three members to the Social Services Commission

Ms. Bruschi advised that these three individuals were unanimously recommended by the RTC and that they should be thanked for their willingness to serve the community on this important commission.

Ms. Bruschi moved to re-appoint Ms. Leslie Rogers, Mr. Ed Raposa, and Ms. Judy Mabley to the Commission on Social Services for a term to expire on December 1, 2010. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

4. Board of Selectmen – Operating Departments - Contingency Planning

Mr. Brennan advised that he met with all town department heads to discuss the rationale within contingency planning. Each department head will look at their current budget for a planning process that includes three scenarios - flat growth, a 2% reduction, and a 2% increase. Department heads will come back at the end of the month with a summary of the three scenarios, indicating areas to be reduced, the effect on manpower, and the impact on services to the community. The Library and Nursing and Home Care have been asked to do the same, and Mr. Creeth will be talking to the Teen Center. In addition, there will be discussions with the unions.

Mr. Clark suggested going back to the state regarding the elimination of unfunded mandates, and suspending the requirement for paying prevailing wages. Mr. Clark will prepare a draft letter to the state representatives requesting that they focus on this matter.

C. Public Comment

Ms. Marilyn Gould is happy to hear that the Board of Selectmen has made efforts to reduce the budget. Raising taxes at this time would be a serious concern for many in this town. The Board of Education headcount goes up every year. Mr. Brennan pointed out that the Board of Education is very aware of the problem. They know this is a crisis and that they represent 2/3 of the budget.

Mr. Stephen Hudspeth is very impressed with the quality of the dialogue between the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education. He feels that science is critical to the school system and that deferring the science room improvements portion of the high school project could have a significant impact.

D. Reports

1. First Selectman

Appointments – Mr. Brennan advised that the RTC recommends Donald Drummond for a vacancy on the Wilton Water Commission and Julianne Higgins for a vacancy on the Council on Ethics. Interviews will be set up with these two candidates as well as three more candidates for the position on the Library Trustees. Appointments will be made at the next meeting.

Future Meetings - At the December 1 BOS the agenda will include approval of the City Carting MSW agreement; a presentation by the Parks & Recreation Commission on Allen Meadows; and a proposal from the Commission on Social Services.

Holiday Walk - On December 5, the Chamber will hold the Annual Holiday Walk. At that time, the holiday lights will be lit, including the lights and decorations on the new lamp posts. Contributions include the large ribbons/bows by Young's Nursery, and the lights by the Ridgefield Bank, Equale & Cirone, LLP, and Angel Commercial Real Estate. Lucci Electric and the P&R crews will be installing the lights and bows.

State of the Town - Mr. Brennan has prepared the first draft of the State of the Town, which will be taped in December and aired in January.

Ambler Farm Historical Designation – Input has been received from the Historical Society and the Friends of Ambler Farm. The Trustees will be meeting in December, after which they will respond and the town attorney will be providing his thoughts on the matter

## 2. Selectmen's Reports

Ms. Bruschi – The Comstock Building Committee will continue to meet once each month with the anticipation of coming back to the Board of Selectmen for an update.

The Social Services Commission met last Friday and issues were raised. The Senior Center and Parks & Recreation will be in the same building for a time and they need to work out space constraints, heat, and water. They will be coming to the December 1 meeting with a strategy.

This week, Ms. Bruschi will be attending an Elderly Tax Relief Forum.

Mr. Hoffstatter – The troop box project is moving along. The teens will now be getting involved. He read a thank you note that was written by one of the recipients of a box.

Mr. Clark – attended a conference call by the United Way. In September 2007, the unemployment rate in Wilton was 3%. This September, even before the Wall Street crisis, the unemployment rate was 4.5%. There will be a regional meeting to discuss the problems in each community as social service needs will be growing.

Mr. Creeth – both he and Mr. Clark are now attending the Wilton Energy Commission meetings. The commission is preparing a plan which they expect to complete on December 18. He has spoken with John Savarese about having a “suggestion box” on the website in order to get input from some of the talented and creative residents of our town.

## E. Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Jan Andras, Recording Secretary