

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

**To: Members of the South Windsor Town Council**

**From: Matthew B. Galligan, Town Manager**

**Subject: Town Manager's Report for 10/17/16 Town Council Meeting**

**Date: October 14, 2016**

### **Pending Items**

The Clerk of the Council has brought to my attention some items on the Town Council's Pending List. Nobody, including CRCOG, has specific information regarding the amount of letters sent to the Governor. They are currently working on this issue, and the minute that I receive information, I will send it to you. I do know that there are least twelve towns that have responded.

The Pond Lane project has been completed. The individual just needs to get a permit if they wish to widen their driveway.

The Grand List impact will be discussed at the November Council meeting. This will affect our budget process. Some new businesses have increased our assessment and could alleviate any concerns on the impacts of crumbling foundations. We are also in the middle of the revaluation process, so it is a numbers game at this point. After the October Grand List we will have a better idea of the situation.

I met with Fred Shaw to talk about the CRCOG Textile Recycling Program. It was bid for all towns. Murtha Cullina, a previous Town Attorney, said the Town has to bid these items. I am not sure I agree with Murtha Cullina as when CRCOG goes out for a regional bid, it takes South Windsor's requirements into account. I am waiting for the new Town Attorney to review this issue so we can finalize that program.

### **Proposed Health Department Consolidation**

I know there is discussion concerning the local health consolidation status. I have enclosed for you a copy of the draft regulations as well as comments from our

Environmental Health Officer, Heather Oatis. CCM and I both have concerns about this proposal. Each town gets to appoint the board, but the district may borrow money for the purpose of carrying out and administering district projects, programs, and other functions authorized under the chapter of law. They can borrow money with mortgages, bonding, indebtedness, putting property up for collateral, etc. I am concerned because they are taking away the Town's ability to finance its own health obligations, so the Town could be paying for the failure of other municipalities to budget appropriately for health issues. This scares me because if someone has a pet project and can muster enough votes, many towns would be paying the price.

Another alarming aspect is that their upfront cost requires 1.5% of the Town's operational budget as the initial investment. If this calculated with the entire operational budget which includes the Board of Education and General Government of about \$100 million total, that would be a \$1.5 million investment. There has to be some clarification regarding operational budget. Is it the money spent only on health issues from the Board of Education and the Town or the total combined budget? I think there are many flaws with this proposal, and there needs to be communication to municipalities about the costs. The Mayor has recently sent me an email asking me about these costs, as the Journal Inquirer recently published an article saying that South Windsor and other towns would be looking at enormous fees.

Although this law may be intended to provide for the health and safety of the community, I do not feel that South Windsor should be saddled with other communities who do not take their health needs seriously like we do and end up paying for the shortcomings in a district-wide format. The health needs of South Windsor are quite different than the health needs of towns such as Manchester and Hartford, as our population and demographics are different. There are certain towns, like Windsor and South Windsor, that could create its own health district and be able to serve its population in the best possible way.

We have previously looked at regionalizing health districts, and there have always been issues about service and reviewing plans. There have been complaints that there is not enough staff to service the type of people in the various towns. That is one of the reasons we did not join that district, but I would have no problem getting together with two or three similar towns where we could reduce costs and provide services that our citizens have been accustomed to.

I am prepared to discuss this matter along with the attached draft regulations further at the October 17 meeting. The terminology needs to be redefined and there should be better controls on the ability of this district to borrow funds before we could ever consider approving this proposal.

#### **MDC Rate Increases**

I have been attending the budget meetings of the MDC, and it looks like there will be increases for both member and non-member communities. I have enclosed for you the budget presentation of September 26<sup>th</sup>. I took some notes on page 32 regarding the water rate increases for 2017. There will be public hearings, and as they approach, I will let the Town Council and public know so they may be able to participate in those hearings.

#### **Emergency Operations Center Grand Opening**

Due to the fact that Town staff would like to spend an extra week in the Emergency Operations Center to ensure the bugs are out of the system, I would like to reschedule the Grand Opening of the EOC to November 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. I will go back and reconnect with the Governor's Office, and we will also be inviting many local and regional dignitaries and coordinators so they can see our operation firsthand. When an emergency arises, we may be able to help each other's communities in the EOC. I will send out an e-vite to all those concerned, but the date will be changed to November 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

**Town Attorney Transition**

Town Attorney Morris Borea has met with Town Attorney Keith Yagaloff to review pending matters in this transition. I have also met with Town Attorney Borea to review pending and upcoming matters, and I believe there is an agreement between the three of us. We will meet once more regarding this transition from Town Attorney Yagaloff to Town Attorney Borea. Everyone has been very cooperative, and I do not see any downtime or issues with the transition as we move forward.

**Barber Hill Substation Meeting**

There will be a meeting on Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. with the residents in the Barber Hill Substation neighborhood concerning the noise from the new installation of the transformers. I have asked the affected neighbors to participate with Eversource at this meeting. The Mayor has asked Eversource to provide a noise study in advance so it can be discussed at the meeting. We should be receiving it on October 14, and as soon as it is received, I will send it out to all parties involved.