

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF THE AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 2, 2009

Vice President Calabrese – Welcome to the February 2, 2009 meeting of the Agawam City Council. My name is Cecilia Calabrese. I am the Vice President of the Agawam City Council. President Gina Letellier will not be here this evening. She's not feeling too well.

Item 1. Citizen's Speak Time

Vice President Calabrese – We have one citizen signed up this evening and that is Corinne Wingard. Corinne, if you could just come to the microphone and state your name and address please? Thank you.

Corinne Wingard - Good evening. My name is Corinne Wingard and I live at 194 Elm Street in Agawam. I'm speaking tonight about the resolution on the Council Agenda opposed Governor Patrick's proposal to add a gasoline tax to the taxpayers of Massachusetts. Although an increase in the state gasoline tax has been talked about, the Governor has not proposed this increase in his budget. For the... 2009 and 2010...had a six billion dollar budget deficit. While the Governor's proposed budget, half of this is saved with budget cuts and the rest with cost saving reforms, new revenues and ...

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you Ms. Wingard.

Item 2. Roll Call

Vice President Calabrese – Will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL – 8 Present, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight present, three absent, we have a quorum. Councilor Young did have a conflict with a family function involving school this evening and Jill Simpson has lost her father-in-law. He passed away a couple of days ago.

Item 3. Moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance

Vice President Calabrese – Please rise and I'll ask you to please remember Councilor Simpson and her family this evening.

Item 4. Minutes

(a) Regular Council Meeting – January 20, 2009

Vice President Calabrese – Moved by Councilor Perry, seconded by Councilors Cavallo and Mineo. Any additions or amendments? Clerk, please call the roll to approve the minutes please?

ROLL CALL – 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight yes, three absent, you've approved the minutes.

Item 5. Declaration from Council President

None

Item 6. Presentation of Petitions, Memorials & Remonstrances

(a) Resolutions

1. **TR-2009-1 - A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Michael Morassi, 15 Old Farm Road, Agawam, MA. to the Agawam Planning Board to a Term Expiring on January 1, 2014 (Mayor) (Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – Moved by Councilor Rheault, seconded by Councilors Cavallo and Mineo. Mr. Morassi apologizes for not being able to be here this evening. He did make contact and said that he does appreciate our support for his reappointment this evening if you're so inclined. Will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight yes, three absent, we have approved the reappointment of Michael Morassi.

2. **TR-2009-2 - A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Vincenzo E. Ronghi, 55 Avalon Place, Feeding Hills, MA. to the Agawam Housing Authority to a Term Expiring the second Monday in January, 2014. (Mayor) (Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – Moved by Councilor Rheault, seconded by Councilor Cavallo. Any discussion? Seeing no discussion, will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – Eight yes, three absent, you have approved the Resolution.

3. **TR-2009-3 - A Resolution Designating a Certain Strip of Land on Main Street as Surplus and Authorizing the Mayor to Sell that Certain Strip of Land on Main Street (Councilors Perry, Messick and Young) (Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – What is the Council’s pleasure? Moved by Councilor Bitzas, seconded by Councilor Perry. Any discussion?

Councilor Messick – I make a motion to go into Committee as a Whole.

Vice President Calabrese – I have a motion to go into Committee as a Whole, seconded by Councilor Bitzas. Any discussion on going into Committee as a Whole? We will go ahead and take a vote on going into Committee as a Whole. Clerk, please call the roll?

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight yes, three absent, we are now in Committee as a Whole. Councilor Messick?

Councilor Messick – Okay, we have some people here from Easthampton Savings Bank who will do a brief presentation for us as far as the plans and what they’d like to do with the building. They’ve worked very closely with the Historical Commission and with Debbie Dachos in Planning and I thought we could give them a few minutes of our time to explain what this is about and why it’s beneficial for that area.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you is there someone representing the interested party who would like to step forward and say a few words?

Susanne Ziencina – Good evening. I am Susanne Ziencina, Facilities Manager at Easthampton Savings Bank. We have along with me, Ken B. as Senior Vice President at the bank and Kevin Riordan, architect from Dietz & Company Architects. In 2007, before we purchased the property in Agawam on 768 and 770 Main Street, we did a feasibility study and it should that we could put a branch bank on the property. After we purchased the property we went to the Historic Commission to find out that one it’s a historic area and finding out you know what they saw as going there. They pointed out to us that the C.W. Hastings store was there previous and they would like us to emulate that type of building if possible. At that point we gave the direction to Kevin Riordan from Dietz to putting that on the property. The bank is very committed to being a good neighbor and to fitting into the neighborhood and what goes into the neighborhood. Other meetings that we had were with the Mayor, with the church, the First Baptist Church next to it because we share easements, they park on our property during church services and they cut through to their parking in the back. We met with a gentleman with the Historic Commission to show him the plans. They liked what they saw and then we met with the Department Heads. The Department Head meeting and at that point we found out that it would not be possible to get a variance because in order to have the building that Kevin proposed, we would need additional frontage. So Kevin will give you a few more of the specifics of that and the bank has had experience in building this type of building. We just renovated and added on to a building in Westfield and we did a historic similar building in Hadley. So I will turn it over to Kevin Riordan from Dietz.

Kevin Riordan – I don't know if this is a good thing to present right here. I guess in trying to be brief about the whole thing cuz I could probably go on for half an hour but the C.W. Hastings store historically was the building that was oriented perpendicular to the road. In order to create the design of –

Vice President Calabrese - I'm sorry. Could you just give your name and address for the record?

Kevin Riordan – What's that?

Vice President Calabrese – Just give your name and address for the record please. Just state your name and –

Kevin Riordan – Oh, Kevin Riordan, Dietz & Company Architects at 17 Hampden Street in Springfield. All right. The C.W. Hastings store is a building that is oriented perpendicular to Main Street or was oriented perpendicular to Main Street. In order to recreate the proportions of the building, we needed to make the building long and narrow, facing the street with the ...on the front, the front facing Main Street. The bank also has some certain driveway requirements that require cars to drive around to get to the drive up windows. In order to get the proportion of the building to match the historic building and all the driveways in place, it pushed the building forward on the site which is pretty long and narrow and has a parallel proportion to Main Street and it pushed the building farther to the front than the required setbacks would allow so in order to allow the building to be built on the site, we required additional property at the front portion of the site along Main Street. The amount of property that we're looking at or looking at needing as far as getting going on the site is about 25 feet along the entire frontage of the property. We're trying to approach the whole decision as fitting in with the historic aspects of the district that we're proposing on building in. The building is going to be built out of clapboard siding, a shingle roof that is either slate or appears like slate as asphalt shingle and has historic or traditional design features. I guess portions of the building do stick out at each side of the building but the main portion to match the C.W. Hastings store is the main portion of the building and will be the focal point of the design. Along with the historic aspect on the building itself, we're going to be putting in I guess improving the sidewalk along the front side of the building and having historical lighting and more traditional signage as well. I don't know if you have any other questions about the design. I don't want to go on too long but –

Vice President Calabrese – Any questions? Yes, Councilor Rheault?

Councilor Rheault – Yes, the question in front of the Council is authorizing the Mayor to sell a strip of land, has there been a price established on that piece of property, do you know?

Kevin Riordan – I don't know if there has been a price established for the piece of land. I'm not a property evaluator but I guess, I don't know if anybody has done that yet?

Vice President Calabrese – Yes, Ms. Dachos?

Debbie Dachos – Attorney Johnson is going to be requesting an appraisal be done on the property and then it'll be put out to bid, basically.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Cavallo?

Councilor Cavallo – Yea, I'm just wondering, when do you anticipate breaking ground?

Susanne Ziencina – Currently, we still have a tenant. Keller/Williams is still our tenant and they are there until at least the end of September this year and the expectation is after that either it depends on the weather and how we go, whether it's this year or the beginning of next year.

Councilor Cavallo – Did you say September?

Susanne Ziencina – September, the end of September, yes. Keller/Williams still has a lease and we own that property, that's part of this property.

Councilor Cavallo – You mean it will take that long if the Mayor agrees to sell it to you-

Susanne Ziencina – We have a lease with them so they will remain there at least until September.

Councilor Cavallo – Oh, thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Councilor Mineo?

Councilor Mineo – Yes, Debbie, when is Chris gonna let us know on the price?

Debbie Dachos - I'm not certain if he has actually requested the appraisal yet but that was going to be before the property was put out to bid. So you would get it as soon as – he indicated that it would be fairly quick that we could get the appraisal on the property.

Vice President Calabrese – I'm sorry, Councilor Bitzas actually put his light on first.

Councilor Bitzas – Debbie can answer or the gentlemen from the bank. First of all I'd like to thank the Easthampton Bank for the cooperation you have shown so far with the boards and us and the people, so we appreciate that and I hope you continue to be a good neighbor to us. If this Council, I know this Council will vote in favor of this, but without the vote, you won't be able to put the bank there, is that correct, because you're not going to be, the setback will be different? Debbie can answer or the gentleman can answer, so this is a must for us to sell this land.

Debbie Dachos – Right. If you envision the buildings that are currently there, they would not meet today's zoning requirements. The treebelt, the road layout, in front of the

building is tremendously wide. It basically goes up to the front stairs of the market and the front of the real estate building. So to meet that requirement, the current zoning requirement, the building would have to be set considerably further back which would make it a very long and narrow building like the 1950's strip buildings as opposed to what we're trying to have placed on that site. So the new building would actually on the same footprint at least with regard to the setback, that the current buildings have. They could build the bank, it would not be I think what we would all like to see on that site and it would be long and narrow and not very attractive. I mean I'm sure they can make it look attractive but it wouldn't be as nice as the proposal that they have before you tonight.

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you and I hope and I think that the Council will pass that. The other question is the land that we are talking about that was the former Hampden County land?

Debbie Dachos – That's correct. About a year and a half to two years ago, there was an act of the legislature where all the Hampden County land that had to do with roads reverted to the municipalities so the Hampden County layout on Main Street is now town owned land. There is quite a wide stretch out there also so it compounds the issue and many of the houses on Main Street actually have virtually no land in front of them that they own.

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you Debbie.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Rossi was next?

Councilor Rossi – Yea, Debbie, if I may, are we talking about a strip of land that's in front of the building towards Main Street?

Debbie Dachos – Yes.

Councilor Rossi – Okay, I thought –

Debbie Dachos – It's basically right now pavement, it's where the driveway is –

Councilor Rossi – Where the driveway is in the front, that's where we're talking about?

Debbie Dachos – Yea, that's the town property currently.

Councilor Rossi – Okay, thank you.

Debbie Dachos – And it would be maintained as a driveway and parking under the new proposal but they're talking about enhancing the landscaping and some of the visual aspects of the site.

Councilor Rossi – Okay, thank you. The other question I have would anybody here have a pencil drawing of the building? Is there anything like that here?

Debbie Dachos – I didn't give it to you?

Councilor Rossi – If I had it I don't know –

Debbie Dachos – In the package I gave you? It should have been but –

Councilor Rossi – I don't have it. We had one? Did we have one?

Debbie Dachos – There should have been an elevation in it perhaps-

Councilor Cavallo - It's right here.

Councilor Rossi – Oh, okay. All right and the other thing I had here and I guess – okay, thank you very much.

Vice President Calabrese – Councilor Cavallo?

Councilor Cavallo – Yea, Debbie, did you say that the piece of land that it has not been determined, the value has not been determined yet, is that correct?

Debbie Dachos – That's correct but it will be before the town put it out to bid. So these-

Councilor Cavallo – I didn't hear you. Before what?

Debbie Dachos – We can't sell the land directly to the bank. We have to make it available to anybody who's gonna offer the highest price. We would like to know obviously what the value of the strip is, this 25 feet deep and it goes along the frontage of the parcel, so it's likely that there won't be that many people interested in the property but to, there was also discussion on having possibly a minimum amount, a minimum bid, and that hasn't been determined but we could give you that information before it's put out to bid.

Councilor Cavallo – Well, I'm a little uncomfortable in that we're authorizing if we vote in a positive way tonight that we're saying we're authorizing the Mayor to sell that certain strip of land but we're not gonna be voting on the amount that in other words, she'll just go ahead and sell it, right? We have no influence at all on the value, or the value will not come before us for a vote?

Debbie Dachos – It has to go to the highest, if you offered up a surplus land then it goes to the highest bid on the property. There is a possibility that we could have a minimum bid on the property and that's what we discussed in getting the appraisal for the property so we have a general idea of what the property is worth – the value of the property but it would go to the highest bidder.

Councilor Cavallo – Before it goes up for bid?

Debbie Dachos – That’s correct and there could be the potential of putting the minimum bid which would match the appraised value.

Councilor Cavallo – Yea, but what I’m saying is if we approve this tonight, we won’t know, will we know what the minimum bid was?

Debbie Dachos – The minimum bid –

Councilor Cavallo – Will we know what the minimum is established before it goes up for bid?

Debbie Dachos – We can show you the full bid package, correct.

Councilor Cavallo – Okay, thank you.

Debbie Dachos – And that would be I would assume at the next meeting I could have that material or if not that meeting, the next one.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Anyone else wanting to ask any questions while we’re in Committee as a Whole? Motion to come out of Committee as a Whole by Councilor Bitzas, seconded by Councilor Mineo. Clerk, please call the roll? This is to come out of Committee as a Whole.

ROLL CALL – 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight yes, three absent, we are now out of Committee as a Whole. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – So we have the motion moved now? Can we discuss it?

Vice President Calabrese – We need to move the motion and then we can discuss it.

Councilor Bitzas – Okay, just to clarify -

Vice President Calabrese – Excuse me. Are you moving the motion? Okay. We have a motion by Councilor Bitzas, seconded by Councilor Mineo. Thank you. Go ahead Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – To clarify now, this resolution is not to sell the land. It’s not to sell the land to the bank, to sell the land to anybody. So what we act now, not to sell the land to Easthampton Bank. I believe this is in the best interest of our town to have this strip sell and I hope of course the bank would get it and I hope it will be a fair price and I believe so and we should have faith to the administration and to the Solicitor Johnson to

do the negotiations. It's not our part to do that. We are here today to vote in favor of that and I believe they will do the fair job and get a fair price for the bank and the sooner the better to get the bank open. I saw the plans. They're absolutely fantastic! And we should thank them for coming down to us and to present that. It blends very well with the historic district, blends well with the fire station, the new senior center, all the buildings on Main Street, I think what we have now next to the beautiful churches there, it's an eyesore. It would be a beautiful addition to our Main Street for the thousands of people that are going by to Six Flags everyday during the summer months. So I believe and I know that this Council full support this resolution and for that I thank the Easthampton Bank and I'd like to welcome them both to our town and I wish them well with the business. We have difficult times now, not doing business with the banking, but I hope you are successful here. Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Perry?

Councilor Perry – Yes, thank you Madam President. I just want to point out also that basically what we're doing this evening is we're voting to designate this property as surplus land that the town really has no use for. It will go out for a bid process at a fair market value. As a Council, we don't have a right to determine the cost of that. That's up to the appraiser and things of that nature. It's up to this Council to designate it as surplus land. It's land that was inherited by the town through Hampden County which basically I think three years ago as Debbie stated, we inherited that property. There's also in the resolution an easement stipulation back to the town for any public works work that may have to be done so it's not gonna be private property. There's gonna be an easement for the town to be able to do what they need to do along Main Street. There are plans that someday may come to fruition with the state and Debbie for redesigning Main Street and things of that nature which allows us to be able to do that on that property also. I think it's a win/win situation for the community. Easthampton Savings has done a great job. They came to us first to move forward and this is the first step in the process for them besides the design process. To get this land, and put the building up that's been presented to us which has the full support of the Agawam Historical Committee, to fit into that neighborhood. I think it's in the best interests of us to pass this, this evening. Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you, Councilor Perry. Anyone else wishing to speak on the item? Councilor Messick?

Councilor Messick – I'd just like to thank Easthampton Savings Bank for the care with which they've started this process and specifically for their work with the Historical Commission. I have been to see the other two buildings that they worked with, with historical buildings and they're just absolutely beautiful and if we come up with anything even half as lovely for Main Street, I think we'll be steps ahead of the game. This is a piece of property that otherwise is gonna be just in disuse. I think that declaring it surplus and allowing them to work their magic on it is a very good proposition and I'll be supporting it. Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you Councilor Messick. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Yes, I’m gonna have to agree with everything I heard tonight and if we as a Council are gonna be concerned with improving our store fronts and getting our base back up, I think this is a necessary step for not only Easthampton Savings Bank but for others who want to come in and do the same type of stuff here. This authorization to sell this property by this Council, I think is a no-brainer and hopefully, that the bank will prevail. I can’t see a need for anyone else to come in and wanna buy a strip of property there but I’m fully in favor of this, of allowing this to go forward and I wish you well.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Cavallo?

Councilor Cavallo – Yea, I am support of it as well. In fact, I get kind of tired seeing I live at that end of town, driving by and seeing that steaks cost \$1.89/lb. and the stickers are still on the windows there. It certainly right now has become a big eyesore and I wish you luck and there’s no question about it because that’s in one of the historical parts of town, it really is gonna be a big improvement and I wish you luck.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Any further discussion? Seeing none, will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL – 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – Eight yes, three absent, you have approved the resolution. Best of luck to you folks.

4. TR-2009-4 - A Resolution Amending the Rules and Regulations of the Agawam City Council (Councilors Calabrese, Perry and Letellier) (Referred to the Rules Sub-Committee) (Majority of those present and voting)

Vice President Calabrese – Moved by Councilor Rheault, seconded by Councilor Rossi. Any discussion? Councilor Rheault?

Councilor Rheault – The first time this was presented, I had only one page of agenda and I was not happy with that, that’s why I did not agree to sponsor it at the time but since then, it’s been improved and I certainly as a member of the Rules Committee be welcomed to join. We had an earlier meeting this evening but we’ve had several discussions before about changes in this procedure and our objective obviously is to minimize the amount of paperwork and extra language that’s in the Rules as well as to bring some kind of a happy agreement as far as necessary votes on the Council and by a body and many other things. So and I won’t do it now because somebody else may want to shed some light on this but we’re not certainly gonna adopt this this evening. I think we’ve got some more work to be done. We need another workshop and probably bring in legal counsel to explain the Council’s position as to why a Parliamentarian should be the person to declare the votes and not the attorney. So in lieu of that I’ll yield the floor to my fellow councilors if they want to input.

Vice President Calabrese – Councilor Perry?

Councilor Perry – Yes, I agree. We had a meeting, we've been working on this. I mean these are our Rules we're talking about – the Council Rules and I think that we don't at this point need to rush into anything. Do we need to clarify and update these Rules on the number of votes and so on and so far, yes, there's no question about it but I agree, I think this evening what's before us needs a little bit more work and I will definitely support tabling this to move on and have another workshop, as Councilor Rheault said, to clarify and be able to come before the Full Council with what we feel is the best package and what we need to do for our Council in the Rules.

Vice President Calabrese – Very good. I'll entertain a motion to table? Clerk, please call the roll for the motion to table?

ROLL CALL – 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight yes, three absent, you've tabled the item. Barbara, I'll be in touch with you. We're talking about doing something maybe in the afternoon. I'll be in touch with you about a couple of possible dates.

5. TR-2009-5 - A Resolution Opposing Governor Deval L. Patrick's Proposal to Add a Gasoline Tax to the Taxpayers of Massachusetts (Councilor Rheault) (Majority of those present and voting)

Vice President Calabrese – Moved by Councilor Rheault, seconded by Councilor Cavallo. Any discussion? Councilor Bitzas? Go ahead.

Councilor Bitzas – Yes, I fully support that and I think it's an excellent idea for the Council to send a strong message to our legislative body and to the Governor and we don't know yet if he will do that but that would be proactive rather than reactive. Because if he applied the tax then whatever we do would be water over the dam as they say. So, I am here to support that. I think we pay enough taxes and I hope we don't have any extra taxes come to us in the future and extra taxes no matter what they are would be extra taxes and in this time we cannot afford to pay more than we need to pay. So I hope the Governor listens to us. He can do the best he can to try to right the ship of the economy through the storm and I believe he can do it by cutting at the state level, all the bureaucracies in Boston and these taxes here to pay for all these things in Boston, I don't think it's fair for us in Western Mass especially to pay the extra taxes in gasoline. We pay enough. I think he should get the message and the people in Boston pay themselves for the Big Dig and all this extra, and pay extra in the tolls so I hope the Council support that. I hope Governor Patrick does not proceed with this but if he does, at least he's got the voice of the Agawam City Council that we are strongly opposed to the taxes. Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Councilor Rheault, I believe you had the next light?

Councilor Rheault – Yes. The procedure to put something on the Agenda to explain to the public was like three weeks ago I had to put this on. Preceding that at that time the

Governor was speaking in fact of increasing gas tax as well as in the MMA bulletins, they also quoted the Governor as saying that so I took a proactive stand to send a message down that I didn't believe that increasing gas tax if, in fact, he was going to do it was at that time. So he's gonna get a clear message I hope from this Council that that's not the avenue to go. People are having it difficult enough and you assess a gas tax at this time – what happens if gas is increasing which I see by the week and by the day, sometimes it's going and creeping up three and four cents a gallon and we're gonna be stuck with a high tax on top of it. So I don't think that's the road to go. He mentioned also about the toll roads. My philosophy on that is if you use them, pay. If you don't, don't charge us, if you have to in fact increase taxes at all. So that was the reason for putting it on. Hopefully it will also send a message to our State Rep, Rosemary Sandlin and to our State Senator, Steve Buoniconti, and the Governor and the Lt. Governor. So that's really where I stand as far as the increase on the tax and I don't think the people would support it and I think it's a bad move. The unfortunate part is in government from what I'm observing lately is if you're giving them a dollar they're gonna spend it so why not just give us a break rather than to put it on the taxpayer's back. So I will be fully supporting a resolution so he'll get a message that we're not in favor of a gasoline tax.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. I believe Councilor Mineo and then Councilor Cavallo. Go ahead Councilor Mineo.

Councilor Mineo - Yeah, I just wanted to say that I do, I agree with everything that Councilor Rheault said tonight. This might not be part of the governor's plan at this point. We are I think every city and town in the Commonwealth is looking to take a budget hit at this point. We all know that for this year. I've also heard that there's a possibility that in April, there could be more budget cuts and the Governor has to come up with the money somewhere. I absolutely, I agree with what you said Don, the place where I get guess I believe it was about three weeks ago, it was \$1.53/gallon, today it's \$1.83/gallon. It's gone up .30 cents in three or four weeks. If we start putting taxes on gas, where are we going? Are we gonna go back to the \$3 and \$4 and \$4.50/gallon for gas? And the Governor – I believe at one point, he's gonna put that. He's gonna put that before the legislators and I think it's something that we do need to send a message. We absolutely need to send a message. This is absolutely the wrong way to go. I mean you look at what he's doing right now. He's gonna tax candy, he's gonna tax meals, hotels, alcohol, I mean my God, they're taxing everything! I mean we're already paying enough taxes on all these things and I do understand you gotta make up the money somewhere but it just seems like they're nickel and diming people to death and I just don't believe that that's the way to go.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Cavallo?

Councilor Cavallo – Yeah, I was going to, in reiterating what Councilor Rheault just said and he took the words out of my mouth regarding our state reps and state senators, that it's not just Deval Patrick that has to get the message, it's also State Representative Sandlin and also Senator Buoniconti. The think about the gasoline of course, and I watch CNBC and of course it's not so much the cost of a barrel of oil, closed at \$40.00 today,

but what they fool around with is the wholesale price of gasoline, it's that stuff. If you see oil going down that doesn't necessarily mean that gasoline is going down so it's the big boys, the Exxon's and the market people in the pits that are playing games with the price of gas. Again, you know I look at these politicians just like in our federal government who are advocating all of these programs that we should initiate and they're all pork-barrel initiatives as you all know, and I look at that and I look at what's going on in our state as Councilor Mineo pointed out you know – a tax on hotels and motels, what does Agawam have? A motel? What else do we have? So what are we gonna gain from a tax on a motel? I mean it's just getting to a point that I think the legislature and the administrative branch of the state government have to become a little bit more creative instead of just creating these packages and throwing them out and let's play with them for a while. I think they have to do a little bit more brain storming to come up with some realistic ways of raising revenue and if you probably heard on TV tonight, the casino is certainly gonna be a big play and on TV tonight they showed the Mohegan Sun has already opening up an office in Palmer and they're there today talking with officials so that certainly could be on the horizon with the new Speaker of the House. But again, I support that, Councilor Rheault, one hundred percent. Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Yes, thank you. I have to support Councilor Rheault's Resolution. I think the sad part about this whole thing is that I don't believe in the tax on the gasoline going up and I particularly think that 25 cents is a little excessive. As I read in the newspapers and I here all around of different fees and taxes that he's gonna impose, the sad part about those things is the we, the people here in Agawam and throughout the state, are gonna have to pay the bill for this. And it really wasn't this Council, the residents of this town, or the residents of this state, that got us into this mess. But they're asking the residents of this state and this city to pay the bill. And I take a personal affront to that. Now if they're looking for the increase in revenue from gas, why don't they go after the \$45 million that Exxon claimed for profits this year? That's just one man's opinion here. But the sad part about this whole thing is is they're asking us time and time again to pay the tab on this thing. And now I don't think that this Council, by sending this resolution, is really gonna make a big difference is somebody's judgment in Boston but I think that if everybody stood up and took the stance to say enough is enough and let's start attacking the problem in a real way instead of coming after the people all the time to pay the bill and be responsible for something that they had no way of controlling and I think it's about time things changed. Now Obama was talking about making some changes, I hope that's one of the changes he'll be looking to make. So I'm gonna be in favor of this Resolution and I would hope that the Governor and the legislature pays attention to us and I would hope that other cities and town throughout this Commonwealth will follow suit. I think that if enough did, I think something would be done.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas - Yes, I want to close with the remark that I think, as Councilor Rossi said, maybe nobody will listen to us, a small town council, but increasing the taxes is not a solution. It's the easy solution to the problem we have today; it's the spending also, irresponsible spending. Now talk about, some councilors, about taxes will come eventually but I hope, I hope they think twice because taxes maybe have negative effect in the long term in the economy. If you try to tax the soft drinks, the candy, the liquor, motel/hotels, restaurants, there's some people that debate this; maybe they wouldn't be good because of the businesses. So it is a two way sword, I mean it's tough, I sympathize with the Governor, but he should be very careful not to find just easy to tax the people to get the revenues. They had to be in Boston, very careful, how to spend the money and they should look at themselves...you've got some positions and some in the state government, it's too big, the government's too big. We have everybody...Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Any further discussion? Seeing none, yes, Councilor Rheault?

Councilor Rheault- One further point it appears that this is gonna come forward and be approved by this Council and it was my intention once it was to notify the surrounding communities and their legislative branches to also join us with resolutions and at that point, we'd become a little stronger and I think our voices will be heard a little stronger in Boston.

Vice President Calabrese – Very good. Will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – With eight yes, three absent, you've approved the resolution and I applaud Councilor Rheault for taking the initiative and drafting a fine piece of legislation if you will.

Item 7. Report of Council Committees

None

Item 8. Elections

None

Item 9. Public Hearings

None

Item 10. Old Business

1. **TO-2009-2 - Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Agawam Alexander's, 60 North Westfield Street, Feeding**

Hills, MA. (Clerk) (Referred to the License Committee) (Majority of those present and voting)

Vice President Calabrese – Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Thank you. If it pleases the Council, Madam President, I would make a motion to move these items to be taken in one parcel. And that is TO-2009-2, an Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Agawam Alexander’s, 60 North Westfield Street, Feeding Hills; TO-2009-3, an Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Friendly’s #1, 60 19 Springfield Street, Agawam; TO-2009-4, Bouch, Inc., d/b/a Home Plate Sports Bar, 827 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills; TO-2009-5, Polish American Club of Agawam, Inc., 139 Southwick Street, P.O. Box 94, Feeding Hills.

Vice President Calabrese – I have a motion to consolidating these four items? Motion and a second. Will the Clerk please call the roll?

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – Eight yes, three absent, you’ve approved the motion to consolidate. Let’s move on to the motion to approve those items. Any discussion? Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Yes, thank you, I met with the members of my committee, Councilors Cavallo and Simpson and there’s unanimous agreement that these should get a positive recommendation for renewal and as such, I would make a recommendation to this body that these licenses be approved as previously read.

Vice President Calabrese – Okay, seconded by Councilor Rheault. Clerk, please call the roll and that is to approve these licenses as consolidated.

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

Vice President Calabrese – Eight yes, three absent, you’ve approved the licenses.

2. TO-2009-3 - Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Friendly’s #1, 60 19 Springfield Street, Agawam, MA. (Clerk) (Referred to the License Committee) (Majority of those present and voting)

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

See Item #1 above.

3. TO-2009-4 - Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Bouch, Inc., d/b/a Home Plate Sports Bar, 827 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. (Clerk) (Referred to the License Committee) (Majority of those present and voting)

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

See Item #1 above.

4. **TO-2009-5 - Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Polish American Club of Agawam, Inc., 139 Southwick Street, P.O. Box 94, Feeding Hills, MA. (Clerk) (Referred to the License Committee) (Majority of those present and voting)**

ROLL CALL - 8 Yes, 0 No, 3 Absent (Councilors Letellier, Simpson and Young)

See Item #1 above.

Item 11. New Business

1. **TO-2009-6 - Transfer - \$2,341.00 from Reserve Fund (16605-57300) to Auditor – Regular Permanent Salary (11341-51010) (Mayor) (2/3 Majority Vote of the Full Council or 8 votes)**

Vice President Calabrese – Next Agenda.

2. **TR-2009-6 - A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Carla Vignato, 34 Day Street, Agawam, MA. to the Agawam Municipal Golf Commission for a Term Expiring December 31, 2011. (Mayor) (Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – Next Agenda.

3. **TO-2009-7 - CLASS II LICENSE for renewal – John G. Kudlic d/b/a Bear Auto Sales, 517 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. (Clerk) Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – Next Agenda.

4. **TO-2009-8 - CLASS II LICENSE for renewal – Agawam Tire & Auto Sales d/b/a The Car Connection, 820 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. (Clerk) Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – Next Agenda.

5. **TO-2009-9 - CLASS II LICENSE for renewal – Motor City Car Company, 91 Ramah Circle, Agawam, MA. (Clerk) Majority of those present and voting)**

Vice President Calabrese – Next Agenda. All these will be referred to the License Committee for review and the budgetary transfer I'll refer to the Finance Committee for review.

Item 12. Any other matter that may legally come before the City Council.

Vice President Calabrese – We'll begin with Councilor Mineo.

Councilor Mineo – Yeah, my condolences to the Simpson family.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Cavallo?

Councilor Cavallo – Yeah, I have a couple of items. First of all, we have not yet received any response regarding my request with Steve & Barry's? At the last meeting I requested to know and to find out if in fact since they've liquidated and gone out of business if the owner of that real estate okay is now going to pay the regular business rate for taxes and I think that possibly the Mayor or the tax Assessor I'm sure he will be the one. I didn't receive an answer. And the next item that I have is that if you recall at the last meeting I questioned and asked the President about my status on being chairperson of the Condominium Sub-Committee. I have since received a ruling from our City Solicitor and it's in the best interest and in my best interest to remove myself as chairperson of that sub-committee simply because I own a condominium. Well, I do hope this committee remains intact if you noticed there's been several letters from the same person who lives at one of the condominiums on Suffield Street regarding some issues ...and also a situation with the condominium owners on which...City of Agawam. My advice to the Council...was that I think you should take these concerns very seriously because...I am now on the Board of Trustees in my condominium complex and I think that we're really concerned about this, the fact that the Mayor responded to that letter there were some inaccuracies, that there are cities and towns in the Commonwealth that were granted some kind of benefit to condominium owners because of the fact that they don't receive all the benefits that a town or rather a homeowner receives. So again, I think this committee should become an active committee even though I cannot be on it because I can indirectly profit from that but at this point I think that it should be addressed in some matter. And the other thing I have, I did visit with Cheryl our Auditor and I was really concerned about how much we have in our accounts and just so ...I met with Cheryl this week or last week rather, we have \$5,823,000.00 in that fund and the stabilization account we have almost \$4 million, so there is quite a bit of money in there. And the other question I asked her how did we make the first payment to Tennessee Gas and she told me that the way it was paid was from the abatement money that was set aside. I was not aware of that and I'm trying to get answers to some of these things and apparently there was enough money in there to make that first installment. Because I was wondering is it coming out of free cash? Is it coming out of stabilization? Or whatever it may be. That's all I have, Madam Vice President.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you Councilor Cavallo. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – I have nothing this evening and my condolences to the Simpson family.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Rheault?

Councilor Rheault – Nothing this evening and my condolences also to Councilor Simpson.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Perry?

Councilor Perry – Two quick items. One, my condolences to Jill and her husband Dave for their loss. The second is and I'm not sure if I'm stealing this from you or not (Jill Messick), I just wanted to pass congratulations on to Henry Kozloski for the award he got for Long Time Service given by the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissioners and I think it's well deserved. Henry goes a thankless job on the Conservation Commission, believe me, and he does it well and he works very hard at everything he does so I just wanted to pass congratulations on to him. Thank you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Messick?

Councilor Messick – No, Dennis, that's great. I'm glad you brought it up. I'm looking forward to seeing Henry receive that award at the Mass Association Annual meeting in February. And again, he does deserve all the kudos that we could possibly give him. The man is out in all sorts of terrible weather, inspecting properties and running around town meeting with people and doesn't get paid a red cent for doing it. He just does it out of the kindness of his heart. My condolences to Jill and her family of course and also to Michael Morassi, who was reappointed to the Planning Board and I just wanted to say that I've gotten to know him fairly well this last year and he is doing a fantastic job on the Planning Board. He is willing to take on additional duties, to stick his neck out to make sure that things are done right. I'm just really impressed with his abilities and with his willingness to help out so congratulations to Mike. And that's it.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you. I just want to extend my deepest sympathy to the Simpson family and I went to the wake and I was very impressed with the so many medals that this gentleman had. They should be proud of their father, there were so many. I never so anybody with so many medals. Thank you and my deepest sympathy to you.

Vice President Calabrese – Thank you and again I'd like to also send out condolences to Jill and the Simpson family and Gina I hope you're feeling much better. With that I will entertain a motion to adjourn. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Briefly it might be a nice gesture on behalf of this Council if we could put something together for Henry when he receives his award on behalf of the City Council showing appreciation for his years of service. If that requires a vote of the Council I would be more than happy to make a motion to that affect.

Vice President Calabrese – Very good. We'll see what we can do. Any further business?

Councilor Mineo – Can I just – something that Paul had brought up about the condominiums. Remember our state rep had mentioned something about the condos – is there a possibility we could get a letter out to Rosemary? Just saying where that stands with the condos. I know she had spoke about this a couple years ago. If we could just get a status update of what's going on. Thanks.

Vice President Calabrese – Very good. Anything else? Motion to adjourn? Okay, all in favor? And we're adjourned.

Adjournment.