

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF THE AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL**

**July 6, 2010**

**President Rheault** – Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the City Council meeting of July 6, 2010.

**Item 1. Citizen's Speak Time**

**President Rheault** – There are a few citizens wishing to address the Council this evening, the first being Forrest Bradford. State your name and address for the record if you would please.

**Forrest Bradford** – Hi. My name is Forrest Bradford and I live at 21 Oxford Street in Agawam. Good evening ladies and gentlemen or lady and gentlemen. Ohio State University did a study –

**President Rheault** – Excuse me, Forrest, is your microphone – I can't hear anything.

**Forrest Bradford** – It is – can you hear? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me from where I'm standing? We're having a problem with the microphones.

**President Rheault** – Is this better?

**Forrest Bradford** - Testing. Testing. What sounds better? This or this? This maybe?

**President Rheault** – I guess you're gonna have to stand closer.

**Forrest Bradford** - It gets worse when you're closer. Well, maybe you could extend my time a little bit due to the malfunction. Ohio State University – can everyone hear me now – Ohio State University did a study where for urbanization and they discovered that for every home built the tax payer in that home does not pay the taxes to support the town services to that home so for every dollar that they pay, the \$1.05 to \$1.50 the town has to pay back in services including education, fire and police. In other words, developers who build homes in this town are subsidized by the town. That is a fact. That is true. We have limited resources of land and how much do we want to build? We're dealing with a Stretch Code here where we have laws that are going to be in place three years down the road any how. I'm pointing out this study done by Ohio State to make a point that this Stretch Code does not harm the Town of Agawam in any way. If there are a few developers among the 30,000 citizens in this town who object to it, well you are representing the thirty thousand citizens in this town and I hope that it's not where people might be lining pockets or things like that from the developers where you wouldn't vote for something for our environment – for America. The Gulf of Mexico is in a major crisis and anyone who thinks that it's amusing to say drill baby drill maybe they should go down and have to clean up the pelicans and seals and all the wildlife that's dying. This is about our responsibility for our children and our futures. This isn't about sitting

on a fence to decide what should I do? The citizens of this town elect the officials to do the right thing. If you are up there to be buddy-buddy with some developer who's trying to convince you not to go for what's the right thing for our environment and declare Agawam green, then you are up there for the wrong reason and you should step down or back off of this vote. We need in this country right now; we need the citizens to band together as they did in Rosie the Riveter days when everyone works together for the future of this country to get independence from foreign oil, to save our troops. No one can come up there, up there and vote no on this and tell me that they're patriotic! No one up there who would vote no on this can tell me that they support our troops. You absolutely do not. We are in wars because we are irresponsible as a whole as a people. In the Town of Agawam you can do your part. We can all our little part. You sit up here as representatives of the 30,000 people in this town. It isn't bureaucracy. It isn't a Democrat or Republican issue here. It is an issue of doing the right thing responsible for our country, for our nation, for our town, for our children, for the future generations to come and those people who have sat up here and have said things against this Stretch Code have not come up with a better idea. It's the case of those who complain the most do the least. Anyhow thank you very much.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Wesley Bradford?

**Wesley Bradford** – I'm Wesley Bradford and I live at 21 Oxford Street in Agawam and I would suggest that you would vote yes on this Stretch Code so that the homes in Agawam will have decent energy twenty years from now. Not electric – gas – but something better. I'm not sure what it is but I hope that you vote yes. Thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Ann Mary Bradford?

**Ann Mary Bradford** – Good evening. My name is Ann Mary Bradford and I live at 21 Oxford Street with that man and I would ask that you support the Stretch Code by voting yes so that Agawam can finally declare itself green and we can move forward protecting our future generations. It's really; I mean we really have to think about the young people that are coming after us when we decide these things. Thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Barbara Moriarty?

**Barbara Moriarty** – Hello. My name is Barbara Moriarty. I live at 28 Oxford Street and I would ask that you support this Stretch Code by voting yes so that Agawam can finally declare itself green and we can move forward protecting our future generations. Thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you.

### **Item 2. Roll Call**

**President Rheault** – Barbara, would you call the roll?

**ROLL CALL – 9 PRESENT, 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Simpson)**

**President Rheault** – Nine present, two absent. We have a quorum. Councilor Simpson and Councilor Letellier are both away on vacation and will not be in attendance this evening.

**Item 3. Moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance**

**President Rheault** – Please rise for a moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item 4. Minutes**

**Regular Council Meeting – June 21, 2010**

**President Rheault** – Moved by Councilor Perry, seconded by Councilor Messick. Any discussion or corrections? If not, voice vote is sufficient. All those in favor say Ay? Opposed?

**Item 5. Declaration from Council President**

**President Rheault** – I just to announce that we will – Committee Reports will be postponed until the first meeting in September so the second and third quarter reports due to the severe heat this evening and one quick announcement from the Emergency Management Director. If you know of anyone in need of transportation to the cooling center which has been designated as the Senior Center, you may also contact Chet Nicora, the Emergency Management Director, via his cell phone which is 531-5479. That's 531-5479.

**Item 6. Presentation of Petitions, Memorials & Remonstrances**

1. **TR-2010-33 - A Resolution Accepting an Easement for Storm Drains by Joe Tirone Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 14 for the Town of Agawam (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – Moved by Councilor Perry, seconded by Councilor Messick. Any discussion on it? If not, Barbara, will you call the roll please? Six votes required.

**ROLL CALL – 9 PRESENT, 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Simpson)**

**President Rheault** – Nine present, two absent. You have approved the Resolution.

**Item 7. Report of Council Committees**

**Postponed and to be combined with the third quarter reports.**

**Item 8. Elections**

None.

**Item 9. Public Hearings**

None.

**Item 10. Old Business**

1. **TO-2010-20 - Transfer of \$6569.49 from Fire – Regular Permanent (12201-51010) to Fire – Protection and Safety (12203-52410) (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – Moved by Councilor Perry, seconded by Councilor Messick and Councilor Mineo. Any discussion on that? If not, Barbara, will you call the roll?

**ROLL CALL – 9 PRESENT, 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Simpson)**

**President Rheault** – Nine present, two absent. You’ve approved the transfer.

2. **TO-2010-21 - Transfer of \$129.55 from Fire – Uniform Allowance (12201-51070) to Fire – Protection and Safety (12203-52410) (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – Moved by Councilor Walsh, seconded by Councilor Mineo. Any discussion on that? If not, Barbara, will you call the roll please?

**ROLL CALL – 9 PRESENT, 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Simpson)**

**President Rheault** – Nine present, two absent. You’ve approved the transfer.

3. **TO-2010-22 - Transfer of \$5285.17 from Fire – Regular Temporary (12201-51020) to Fire – Protection and Safety (12203-52410) (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – Moved by Councilor Rossi, seconded by Councilor Perry. Any discussion? If not, will you call the roll on that Barbara?

**ROLL CALL – 9 PRESENT, 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Simpson)**

**President Rheault** – Nine present, two absent. You’ve approved that transfer.

4. **PH-2010- 5 - (TR-2010-34) Public Hearing Date set for August 2, 2010 in the Matter of a Petition of Western Massachusetts Electric Company (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – The date has been set for August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Any questions? That’s acceptable? Barb?

5. **TOR-2010-4 - An Ordinance Adopting the Stretch Energy Code for the City of Agawam (1/2) (Councilor Messick)**

**President Rheault** – This is the first reading. I'm sorry?

**Councilor Perry** – Point of privilege, Mr. President? This is an Ordinance correct?

**President Rheault** – Yes, the Ordinance Committee has a report to give.

**Councilor Perry** – But shouldn't there be a public hearing?

**President Rheault** – We had a public hearing for the same substance under -

**Councilor Perry** – Under a different resolution number – a totally different item that was removed from our Agenda by this full Council. We need to have another public hearing legally in my opinion.

**Councilor Bitzas** – I make a motion to table that.

**President Rheault** – Move to table by Councilor Bitzas, seconded by Councilor Messick. All those in favor of tabling? Ay.

**Item 11. New Business**

1. **TO-2010-23 - Transfer of \$130.00 from Line Items – Reserve Fund (16605-57300) to Auditor – Regular Permanent (11341-51010) (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – Next Agenda.

2. **TR-2010-35 - A Resolution Authorizing the Reservation and Appropriation of Funds from the Community Preservation Fund (Mayor)**

**President Rheault** – Next Agenda.

3. **TO-2010-24 - Order Granting or Renewing a Junk Dealer's License – Baki's Fine Jewelry, Oussoud Abdul Baki, 360 North Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA (Clerk)**

**President Rheault** – Next Agenda.

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

**President Rheault** – We'll start with Councilor Rossi first tonight.

**Councilor Rossi** – Thank you Mr. President. I make this statement to my fellow colleagues on the City Council as well as to the people out there listening – the viewing public and I will speak tonight in view of what had happened at the public hearing on June 21<sup>st</sup>. I want to eliminate some misconceptions that are out there and give you a

chronological order of events that occurred and I say to you here tonight that I say this at a public meeting to show you that my intentions are honest and that my statements are true. On Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> I believe it was, the City Sub-Committee met to discuss the School Budget. In attendance were four City Councilors and no school officials so the meeting could not be explored. There was no – although it was a legitimate public hearing there was no action that could be taken and the meeting was adjourned and the Sub-Committee Chairman, Mrs. Simpson, was to contact the Superintendent of Schools to ask her to attend a meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:15pm – that the Committee had some questions that they wanted to have answered and some options that could possibly be explored. The following day on Thursday I received a call from the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Mary Czajkowski. She had asked me about a one million dollar cut that the City Sub-Committee was planning to make. I assured her under no uncertain terms in any ways that this Sub-Committee was not entertaining any thoughts of cutting our School Budget by one million dollars. There was no formal vote taken. No formal action taken. The only action that was recorded in the minutes of that meeting was the suggestion that the Superintendent of Schools and/or other members of the School Council be present at that meeting to be convened at 6:15. On Friday, robo-calls went out from the school's automated calling system where the Superintendent of Schools made a statement that said that I, Councilor Walsh and Councilor Magovern had demanded \$1.1million in cuts and that cut would be disastrous to the school system. That statement, that broadcast, was totally untrue. That message was never conveyed to Dr. Czajkowski. On the contrary, she was given assurances that no million dollar cut was ever to be considered by this Council and further that no members of this Council that I am aware of was willing to make any cuts that affected students, programs or activities. In the Sunday Republican, a story was issued and quoted by me as saying that one million dollar cut is unrealistic and in my conversation with the reporter for the Republican I said that the Council does not intend to cut a million dollars, that one million dollars was unrealistic although they were looking for something substantial and that substantial cut in my view was that I thought that the step increases should be incorporated in the level-funded budget. To me level-funded budget meant level-funded not level-funded plus \$400,000. That was my view. On Monday calls went out to members of the school staff, teachers and others asking them to appear at a public hearing to show the unfairness of members of this City Council namely Magovern, Walsh and myself, that we were unfairly cutting this budget by one million dollars when she was told on Thursday that was not the case, when it was published in the newspapers on Sunday that was not the case and she went ahead and made those calls asking those people to be here and as most of you are aware who were paying attention you will see that most of those people showed up ...with prepared statements as did members of the School Committee. That evening of June 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:15 prior to the City Council meeting, the City Council Sub-Committee met with Laurel Placzek who pointed out that there was a discrepancy between the Operating Budget and the school-side budget. That discrepancy was straightened out. We were made aware of the fact that the budget was level-funded and the City Council Sub-Committee gave unanimous approval for recommendation to the body of this Council. Armed with that knowledge, the Superintendent of Schools and other members of the School Committee sat there idly by while everyone in this auditorium took turns slashing away at members of this City

Council - that all was untrue. Everybody sat idly by while that occurred and I am here to tell you that those broadcasts made by Dr. Czajkowski on Friday and another broadcast made on Sunday by School Committee member Diane Juzba who has no direct knowledge on this I might add and had no reason to believe her statements were true, made those statements anyway and I am saying right now that whatever happened was unfortunate. I can't imagine why anyone would want to do such a thing and incite the community as it happened, to give false information, misleading information about the intentions of this City Council especially those Council members that were named publicly as the ones that wanted to cut this budget. I hope I have cleared this up. If anybody has any questions and want to directly speak to me, I would be more than happy to anyone on a personal level. As I stated before just to reiterate one more time, I make this statement here publicly so you know my intentions are honest and my statements are true and that it be recorded in the minutes of a legal meeting. Thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Mineo?

**Councilor Mineo** – Nothing tonight. Thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Magovern?

**Councilor Magovern** – Thank you, Council President. I would just like to commend Councilor Rossi for his comments and his statements and I just wanted to second everything he said as being truthful. I too was very, very upset by what transpired. Nobody on this up here has been more educationally-minded than I have. I have run all my career politically on a strong educational system with realistic spending of taxpayers' dollars. We ask questions which is what we are elected here to do, ask the questions, and try to get the answers and that's all we did at that sub-committee. We did not have the answers to those questions which is why we postponed it 'til before the Council meeting to get those questions answered. We had the questions answered the way that we expected them to be. We never ever discussed cutting anything from the students' side of the budget and as a matter of fact all of us went out of our way to say that absolutely no penny, nickel, dime, dollar was to come out of the students' side of the budget. If anything was to come out it could come out of the administrative side of the budget. After we met with Laurel Placzek it was determined that nothing had to come out. We agreed totally, we voted unanimously to support that budget but I for one was very upset over the fact that I would be named in a robo-call like that by a School Board member which she did it for what reason I don't know. She had no input, she had no knowledge, no understanding as to what happened and then after they knew we had taken the vote to sustain the budget one hundred percent, she got up and they lambasted us and those City Councilors excuse me, those School Board members that criticized this sitting City Council, both Mr. Walsh, Councilor Rossi and myself. I think it was just unforgivable that they would do this. There was absolutely no reason for them to say what they said and I thank those people who have come up to me while I've been out shopping and the people who have called me on the phone and said gee, we never understood and they apologized for their elected officials for what was said. So again thank you and I appreciate the positive comments that I've received but again we're here for the students

of this town and we're here for the taxpayers of this town to make sure that we get the best quality education for the best dollar spent. Thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

**Councilor Bitzas** – Nothing this evening.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Perry?

**Councilor Perry** – Nothing this evening, thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Messick?

**Councilor Messick** – I have nothing this evening.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Cichetti?

**Councilor Cichetti** – Nothing, thank you.

**President Rheault** – Thank you. Councilor Walsh?

**Councilor Walsh** – I think we oughta have an adjournment!

**President Rheault** – Motion made to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Rossi. All those in favor? Opposed? The Council is now adjourned. Thank you and good evening.

**Adjournment.**