

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF THE AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

May 17, 2010

President Rheault – Good evening and welcome to the May 17th meeting of the Agawam City Council.

Item 1. Citizen's Speak Time

President Rheault – We have a few citizens wishing to address the Council this evening and by name I don't see anybody that has not addressed the Council but if you would, you've got up to five minutes. Please come to the microphone. Be sure the light is on. State your name and address for the record and the first speaker is Mark DelNegro who is speaking on the Agawam Veterans' Council.

Mark DelNegro – Mark DelNegro, 28 Losito Lane. I'm here tonight to speak in favor of the appointments of Rielly Longtin and Todd Crevier to the Agawam Veterans' Council. I am not speaking against the appointments of Mr. Mazzei or Mr. Sanchez but I am advocating for them as well and the Veterans' Council as a whole. As a post-911 veteran myself, I am very disappointed that veterans are turning against veterans and this needs to stop now. This is not helping anyone especially those who are currently returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. I am currently advocating for the rights of post-911 veterans at the state level as Governor Patrick's campaign staff has asked me to take part of their team and reach out to post-911 veterans. Part of my job is to make them aware of their rights and benefits while they return home. I am also working with Bernard Jones, a Viet Nam veteran, who is an executive at the Holyoke Soldier's Home. We recently had a veterans' round table discussion at the Mason Square Veterans' Building in Springfield this past Friday. Lt. Governor Tim Murray was in attendance as well as other local political leaders. It was decided that we need to make post-911 veterans aware of their benefits when they return home. Many are falling through the cracks and this is unacceptable for the standards of many including myself. This was one of the main reasons why Bernard Jones and other members of the Patrick campaign reached out to me because I am a post-911 veteran. If having post-911 veterans advocate for other post-911 veterans has been instituted at the state level then it should be instituted at the city and town levels. Post-911 veterans love to talk to other post-911 veterans and that is why Rielly Longtin and Todd Crevier are perfect for this position. When I came home in 2004, I felt as if members of the Agawam Veterans' Council from prior wars and conflicts could not relate to me. Granted the war was very young back then and there were not too many post-911 veterans however, nine years in the making there are many people like me who can relate to post-911 veterans and two people that come to mind are Rielly Longtin and Todd Crevier. The Mayor acted in good faith to appoint post-911 veterans to the Agawam Veterans' Council. I think the Agawam Veterans' Council should be expanded. We are all brothers so it does not matter how many are appointed and how many are confirmed. As far as I'm concerned the more that are appointed and the more that are confirmed, the stronger the Veterans' Council shall become. In closing, I would like to state that a vote against Rielly Longtin and Todd Crevier is a vote against the families of

every post-911 veteran. It is also a vote against me – a post-911 veteran and it is a vote against every post-911 veteran returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Aldo Mancini?

Aldo Mancini – Aldo Mancini, 482 South West Street, Feeding Hills. I am the President of the Agawam Veterans' Council. I think the Mayor offering to add two seats does not address the problem. The problem is the process. For what reason would the Mayor choose to not appoint two individuals who have served honorably for twenty + years between the two of them and instead politicizing a long established process inserting two people previously unknown to the Veterans' Council and its many volunteers. For what reason would the Mayor choose to not post any vacant seats on the Veterans' Council so that all veterans would have an equal opportunity to submit a letter of intention especially veterans who have helped the Veterans' Council in some or all of our endeavors over the years. You would think that the elected leader of this city would want to have a fair and impartial process. For what reason would the Mayor choose to not have the Veterans' Council or the Veterans' Council President/Chairperson on board as part of the process. It has always been done that way for at least the last decade. For what reason would the Mayor choose to have George Bitzas contact most of the Veterans' Council members to try to set up a meeting with the Mayor and omit an invitation to the Veterans' Council President. Does George Bitzas as a Town Councilor elected by the people of Agawam work for the people of Agawam or for the Mayor? You can look at any cemetery in our town or any other town and you will see flags on graves. These identify veterans. All veterans serve to afford us the right to stand up for what we believe in. To violate this process would be a shame and due process. I want to tell you something about – we have a kid that when he went in the Marine Corp, every time he was home on leave if it was a Veterans' Day or a parade he was there with us. When he got out of the Marine Corp for the last four years he has been at every, every Veterans' Day, every Memorial Day parade, he's gone to nursing homes with me and we did flag folding demonstrations and this kid had no shot. He's been helping us for four years plus and he's a post-911 veteran. His name is Brandon Donovan. He went to Iraq two times, has a purple heart and he did not get a chance to put his name in for a Veterans' Council seat. In speaking with the members of the entire Veterans' Council, all but one is against the actions of the Mayor. Only the Veterans' Agent has opted not to take a position on this matter. We urge you to continue questioning a distorted and cloudy process and vote accordingly. I just want to tell you how I was brought into the Veterans' Council. I used to work with Eddie Kellogg's father and whenever they were doing flags or whatever, Al Kellogg would say gee, you got time can you come down and help and I helped whenever I could. Then when a seat became available I put in a letter and I was interviewed by the Veterans' Council and then my name was forwarded to the Mayor and I was appointed to the Veterans' Council. We have a, and it's not only Brandon, we have a number of volunteers some of them are post-911 and they should have an equal opportunity to become part of this Council if so be it. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Priscilla Peterson?

Priscilla Peterson – Priscilla Peterson, World War II veteran of the Coast Guard. I am not angry but disillusioned that the accepted process of posting openings (?) in the Veterans' Council was not followed. There are people who have volunteered for years who would have applied had that been done. Disappointment is what I feel in not re-appointing Chris Sanchez and Frank Mazzei – two such capable people who have proven their value on the Council. All members of the Council willingly volunteered before becoming members and we waited for openings. I think that the extenuating factors of a health problem in Chris Sanchez may have delayed his entering a request for re-appointment. Frank and Chris should both be re-appointed. We would also welcome newcomers but like I say we all volunteered before we ever and did so gladly. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Frank Pignatare?

Frank Pignatare – Good evening. My name is Frank Pignatare. I reside at 685 Suffield Street for the past 41 years. I have a business here in Agawam on Main Street for the past 31 years. I am also a Navy veteran. I served five years during the Viet Nam era. I am not here tonight to beat a dead horse on how to select someone from the Veterans' Council. You all know how most of us feel about that but I do want to set the record straight. It was brought to my attention that one of the Town Councilors made the comment that I was elected to the Veterans' Council a year ago and did nothing to warrant it. Maybe so. Okay now pay attention George so you can relay this to whomever you got your information from. Before I was selected, I helped my wife to plant flowers at the Veterans' Green many times and then took it upon myself to water them, weed them, clean up around the gazebo all the trash that was left out there. I also helped flag Main Street. I patrolled the street while the flags were up there to make sure they were all displayed properly and if they fell down I picked them up and brought them back to Aldo. I also helped flag the six cemeteries here in town – over a thousand some odd flags and got some of my friends to help me do that, okay? Many times I stopped at the green and picked up the wreaths that were blown over from the storms before the permanent hold downs were put in place, okay? I volunteer my time because I wanted to. I wasn't looking for or expecting any kind of gratitude or recommendation or anything for any of this. I did it because I wanted to and I will continue to do this as long as I can whether I'm on the Council or not. I was asked if I would like to join the Council, I said yes. I submitted the papers and gave them to the proper persons – maybe that's why then Mayor Dawson with the help of Chris Sanchez picked me to be on the Council. I'm an honored to be on the Council and proud to serve my country and I am forever grateful for those who served before me and who will serve again after me and with that said thank you and good night.

President Rheault – Thank you. Doug Cesan?

Doug Cesan – Good evening. Doug Cesan from 173 North West Street in Feeding Hills. I'd just like to speak in support of Mr. Mazzei and Mr. Sanchez. I think they should retain their positions on the Veterans' Council after I don't know how many years of dedicated service not to mention their military service. This takes nothing away from the

new candidates, Mr. Crevier and Mr. Longtin, their military records and service speaks for themselves. I think they would be excellent candidates for future consideration for any openings that become available down the road but I think at this time it would be a shame to dismiss Mr. Mazzei and Mr. Sanchez so casually after their dedicating years of service and that's pretty much all I have to say. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Cecilia Calabrese?

Cecilia Calabrese – Thank you. Cecilia Calabrese, 75 Wagon Wheel Drive. To begin I'd like to thank Councilor Rossi for taking tangible proactive steps in his investigation of the alleged thefts at the Agawam High School. With news stations reporting on the rampant use of heroin in our town it is refreshing to see an elected official taking steps to try to remedy problems instead of pointing fingers and making excuses for failure to act. So Councilor Rossi I want to thank you for the effort that you're making. With regard to the Veterans' Council it is very unfortunate the characterization that has been tossed at the City Council tonight as being a vote against post-911 veterans if you fail to confirm Mr. Crevier and Mr. Longtin. I speak against the process as many people here have, not against these two gentlemen. It is shameful that the political posturing that has gone on has pitted veteran against veteran and again I would like to express my personal thanks to all veterans both pre and post-911 that have laid their lives on the line for the freedoms of our country. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Francis Curnow? Excuse me Mr. Curnow would you press the button to put the light on please? Thank you.

Francis Curnow – Got to be smarter than the buttons again. Okay. Mr. Chairman, Council members, my name is Francis Curnow and I live on Forest Hill Road in Feeding Hills. I've been a member of the Council for five years. I've served my country from 1966 to 1996 retiring as a Colonel in the United States Marine Corp. I've additionally served as Commandant to the Westfield River Valley Detachment of the Marine Corp League and have served in a number of different positions within the state helping veterans in various ways. Tonight I am here to support the Veterans' Committee and all veterans. It seemed that a process that is fairly simple has taken much time and energy from the Town Council, from the Administration and others with what in my opinion could have been handled by a simple phone conversation by asking if there is an issue administratively with handing in paperwork, etc. I as others have not always gotten that paperwork in on the moment and there never seemed to be a problem. I understand that a proposal to expand the Council is being considered. That's all well but we've always been able to take on associates and have public meetings with any veteran or any citizen of Agawam where they could be heard and take their step to do other things within the Council and within the Town of Agawam. The Council welcomes the help of all veterans and I would point out however one need not go to any special lengths for any political appointment, just come and see us, come in and make yourself known is what you need to do. What I really don't understand is what possible reason there may be to have a break in communication between the Mayor's office and the Veterans' Chairman. Why can't they communicate? The Council has veterans from World War II, Korea, Viet

Nam, and several of us have served Viet Nam, Desert Storm and Iraq. All are welcomed. There's nobody holding out anyone from 911 or any other time. We're all veterans and we all wish they'd come on board. So please do not understand that there is any variance between our veterans. There should be no bar between the Council and the City. Let us use the process that works. If we need to change by-laws within ourselves, let us do that where necessary. Let us serve the community. Those of us as veterans have earned the right to do so. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Vinny Tirone?

Vinny Tirone – Vinny Tirone, 396 Meadow Street. I'm also here again in support of Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Mazzei. I still can't believe we're still having this discussion. I mean weeks into this? It's an amazing process. We have no issue with regards to the two individuals in which they continue to appoint or the two new individuals. This has nothing to do with them. I'm not even on the Veterans' Council. I've attended a couple things and I've assisted in various ways but again I haven't paid my dues with regards to even there was a position available for me that I wouldn't even want that position. I was, we have two guys right here with 20 something odd years of service and is our loyalty to these two guys contingent on whether they can hand in a letter of time and supposedly it disappeared and vanished and perhaps it passed the Bermuda Triangle on its route to the Town Hall? These letters can't be strategically picked when and when they can't disappear and vanish. I think that we owe the benefit of the doubt to these two people. We have to give them a little bit of latitude with regards to Chris; Frank did you turn the letter in? Did you not? Our loyalty should not be contingent on that exact date. Now this past week I was reading the Agawam Advertiser and I believe and don't quote me Mr. Bitzas' theory is to increase the number, the more the merrier. Well what happens when Mr. Smith on Smith Road would like to be on the Veterans' Council also and then this opens up a can of worms where everybody comes out of the woodwork and says hey I want to be on it also. This again has nothing to do with these two individuals. They're very qualified people. A lot of people are qualified. They just have to pay their dues. I think that's what the Veterans' Council is simply asking and what is the reasoning with regards to appointing a Chairman to the Veterans' Council when they can bypass him at any point in time with regards to making administrative moves? Also, when I was reading the Agawam Advertiser it said that "the more the merrier" well perhaps the City Council would take that approach also – the more the merrier. Maybe we can increase the number of the City Council also. I was right there with regards to our last fall's election. I didn't miss it by much and if I was elected or the more the merrier and I was that next seat, I'd actually respectfully request that seat right next to Mr. Bitzas where I can keep him in check. Thank you.

President Rheault – That concludes Citizens' Speak Time.

Item 2. Roll Call

President Rheault – Will the Clerk please call the roll?

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

President Rheault – Nine present, two absent, we have a quorum. Councilor Perry is detained in New Britain and I'm not sure if he's gonna be able to get here and Councilor Letellier according to our Executive Secretary – Administrative Executive Secretary – she called her and said that she would not be in attendance this evening as well.

Item 3. Moment of Silence and the Pledge of Allegiance

President Rheault – Please rise for a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. I'm sorry?

Councilor Bitzas – Mr. President? I think it's very appropriate we have all the Marines here and everybody knows I don't like to see what's going on here but one Marine came from Afghanistan; one hero came dead coming to Ludlow. Let's put our silence to remember them and

Item 4. Minutes

(a) Regular Council Meeting – May 3, 2010

President Rheault – Moved by Councilor Simpson, seconded by Councilor Messick. Any discussion, corrections, additions? No? All those in favor voice ay? Opposed? Unanimous.

Item 5. Declaration from Council President

President Rheault – I have one thing to mention under Declaration of the President. This morning I had the pleasure to co-sign with the Mayor a Proclamation at the Public Works dedicating May 16th through May 22nd as National Public Works Week and we jointly presented this Proclamation to the DPW Director Anthony Sylvia.

WHEREAS, Public Works services provided in our community are an integral part of our citizens' every day lives; and

WHEREAS, the support of an understanding and informed citizenry is vital to the efficient operation of public work systems and program such as water, sewers, streets and highways, public grounds, solid waste collection, and snow and ice removal; and

WHEREAS, the health, safety, and comfort of this community greatly depend on these facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, the quality and effectiveness of these facilities, as well as their planning, design, and construction are vitally dependent upon the efforts and skill of public works officials; and

WHEREAS, the efficiency of the qualified and dedicated personnel who staff public works departments is materially influenced by the people's attitude and understanding of the importance of the work they perform; and

WHEREAS, the Public Works Department shall strive to be a primary leader to implement the latest energy efficient techniques and systems for the Town of Agawam; and

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Mayor and the City Council of the Town of Agawam do proclaim May 16 through May 22, 2010 as NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK in Agawam, and call upon all citizens and civic organization to acquaint themselves with the problems involved in providing our public works and to recognize the contributions that public works officials and employees make every day to our health, safety, and comfort.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands and caused the seal of the Town of Agawam to be affixed this seventeenth day of May, Two Thousand Ten, Anno Domini

President Rheault – I just want to add a personal comment that I think that we all take our Public Works Department for granted and I think they stand tall next to anybody in town or in the surrounding communities. Our streets are well plowed and they are there at our beck and call at any time. So congratulations to them and it was my pleasure to sit with the Mayor and duly proclaim.

Item 6. Presentation of Petitions, Memorials & Remonstrances

- 1. TR-2010-26 - A Resolution Confirming the Appointment of Todd Crevier, 26 Yale Avenue, Feeding Hills, MA to the Agawam Veterans' Council to a Term Expiring April 1, 2012 (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Moved by Councilor Bitzas, who moved it? Oh, I'm sorry Councilor Bitzas moved it. Is there a second? No? I'll second it.

Councilor Bitzas – Point of information Mr. President?

President Rheault – What's your point?

Councilor Bitzas – The point is we have a letter from DA office and we're supposed to have open meeting and vote with discussion in the issue and I hope you don't violate the law.

President Rheault – The floor is open. I just called for it. Any discussion?

Councilor Bitzas – We must have discussion. We have so many people here to make clear up, it's not fair if this Council votes no or votes yes without discussions. We have two names on the Agenda and those names there not Mr. Mazzei's nor Mr. Sanchez. Those names are for Mr. Crevier and Mr. Longtin. If Mr. Mazzei and Mr. Sanchez name was there I would vote one hundred times like I did in the past. No questions asked. It is a process that Mr. Mancini was the Veterans' President did not say it correctly and I make that clear tonight. The Veterans' Council has nothing to do with the process. The Veterans' Council should not politicize that. This is the first time in twenty years that the Veterans' Council politicized that. They have no right. We can do that the previous speaker said with one phone call. I know those two gentlemen they dislike the Mayor and they dislike me. They attack me. They attack the Mayor. They never liked the Mayor. And the mayor in the past, they appoint them. So let's not politicize that. The

Mayor has the right to whatever he like to do and the Council has the right to do to vote yes or no. It's not make it clear. Mr. Mazzei and Mr. Sanchez they deserve to be in the Council and they will be in the Council serving no matter what and also we have a lady who spoke to them the father for Sgt. Donovan and another Mr. McLean he wants to serve and I asked him send a letters – the more the merriers. Yes, Mr. Vinny the more the merriers if you want to be a councilor, go and run again and come down here. We'd love to have you but don't distort the truth sir. I respect you as a veteran but as a candidate no I don't. You don't speak a truth and my son-in-law is not Mr. Longtin but you wrote and say out he's not my son-in-law. He's a friend of my daughter yes. Now I respect you. I respect you as a veteran but as a person, no sir I'm sorry. You don't speak the truth. I have a letter and for the records – at the recent meeting the Agawam City Council May 3, Veterans' Council Chairman Aldo Mancini stated that neither he nor the Veterans' Council were consulted or keep in the loop with regard to the recent Mayor's appointments to the Veterans' Council. It is the Mayor's sole responsibility to appoint new members or are members of the Veterans' Council the chair included in the process? Are there by-laws stating the process of such appointment? What part do the Veteran Agent play in this procedure? Would you kindly respond in writing and include a copy of the by-laws so to provide information to City Council? And thank you. And we got all the by-laws in here and said nothing that the Council had to do it. The Veteran Agent, even the Veteran Agent has nothing to do with it and as you know 1991 my sister-in-law Ruth Bitzas the Veteran Agent asked for some people to help put a flowers in the graves and flags in the parade, that's why we formed this. What's wrong to have more veterans to come down here to serve us? What's the problem with it? We should thank them to come to do it to have volunteers it don't cost the town a single penny for that. We should thank them to be here and vote no? And Mr. Aldo Mancini said no it's not good...for to do that? Is that the politics? Is that political? That's for the Mayor to look good? I am not going to criticize anyone's motives, when the Council vote the last time against the appointment of these two qualified veterans to the Veterans' Council. I'm not going to criticize the political motives of the members of the Veterans' Council who met with some Councilors in the hallway before the meeting asking them to vote no for the new appointees. A no vote for those veterans who put their lives on the line protecting our country and our freedom is not no vote for the Mayor. His name wasn't on the Agenda. The no vote is a plain and clear no vote against the two well-qualified veterans. We can't spin it any way you can but the no vote was a rejection for those two particular veterans who are willing to volunteer their time to serve our town and their fellow veterans. A yes vote tonight would be a yes vote and a thank you for those veterans and all they've done for us and for our country and are willing to serve the town and their fellow veterans. A yes vote would not be a yes vote for the Mayor but for the two men that he recommended after they requested in writing an interest to be appointed to the Veterans' Council. A vote in favor of every single new appointment I voted in favor of every single appointment that our former mayor, Sue Dawson, sent to us even if I was not a political supporter of hers. She won the elections and she was our mayor and I had to work with her for the good for the citizens of Agawam and I did work with her very well many issues. Every mayor has the right to appoint the people that work with them, with him, and not against him. It happens all the times in federal, state, and local level. Any new administration has the right to make new appointments. The appointments are not for

lifetime – all they have limits. Only the judges are lifetime appointments. We would have the opportunity next time to vote and support the ordinance to increase the number of the Veterans' Council. We can vote yes for more veterans to be part of the Veterans' Council. God Bless all the veterans who are willing to volunteer their time and save our country and thank all the veterans that serve the country in Afghanistan, Iraq and everywhere. God Bless them all! Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Walsh?

Councilor Walsh – Yes, regarding the vote that we took and the vote we will be taking tonight, I happen to have been a veteran pre-Viet Nam, post-Korea so I was in the middle. I didn't get shot at by anybody. The procedure we've had for the Veterans' Council seems to be quite clear that in the past the head of the Veterans' Council, the President, would confer with the Mayor or the Mayor would confer back with the Chairman with the Veterans' Council to agree upon an appointment and generally taken from within the volunteers of the Council. Now I see, I've heard no good reason on why the procedure was suddenly changed by the Mayor. He decided to appoint two people that have had no ties to the Council so he's unilaterally changed a procedure which has been in existence since the Veterans' Council had been formed. I'm not sure why. I haven't heard a good reason. Also, he now wants to expand the Veterans' Council by two members so that the two individuals that he has named would be put on and he would also then like to appoint Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Mazzei. My feeling is the Council has acted; they've acted very well within themselves. There's been no issues that I can see prior to this coming up and I really see no need to even change the procedures or and I happen to be against appointing these two individuals not because they are veterans. I thank them for their service as veterans but I think they really should come in as volunteers to the Council and prove their interest. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Thank you. I wasn't here at the April 20th meeting when these two gentlemen first came before us for confirmation but I'm here now and I've listened to all of the arguments on both sides and as a veteran myself, my career started with the Cuban embargo. A lot of the people in this room probably don't even remember the Cuban crisis but I started my Navy career there with that and it went right into the Viet Nam era. So I'm a proud veteran myself and as a veteran I look at this Veterans' Council and what they've accomplished over the years. As a police officer in this town for over thirty years, I've marched in an awful lot of Memorial Day parades and I don't think any of those parades would have ever taken place without the help of the Veterans' Council. They do an awful lot of good work in this community. There is a procedure in place that I happen to agree with and I don't think the Veterans' Council themselves have enough authority or power to decide for themselves how they want to operate that Veterans' Council. I think a lot of it's been taken away from them – a lot of power has been usurped but they do an awful lot of good work and I happen to know the two gentlemen that they want to take off the or take out in some kind of unilateral decision to have those people not be reappointed and have someone with very little to no experience with the

Veterans' Council appointed in their place. I really can't see a reason for that. I think that the Veterans' Council should remain the way it is. I see no reason for that to be changed. If the Mayor in his wisdom finds that he does not want to reappoint those two people I would believe in my heart that those two people would still remain active, loyal and dedicated to this Veterans' Council and I think that displays an awful lot of character on their part and I would commend them for that. And I want to thank them all for the job that they've done over the years and what they will continue to do in the future.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Magovern?

Councilor Magovern – I don't have too much to add except again I had a long talk with Rielly Longtin and I tried to convey to him my feelings about this issue and I'm very, very sad that this has come to this point. We have two very distinguished veterans, we have two veterans that deserve to be rewarded, thanked and given all the kudos in the world for their service to the military and I'm very, very, very bothered by the fact that they're caught in the middle of a political buzz saw. I mean Frank and Chris have served for years on the Council. They have been loyal to the Council. I have seen them out in the rain putting up the flags. They've washed the flags. It's just an unbelievable chore what the veterans have done in this town to flag the graves, to put the flags up on the poles and everything else that we do – the Memorial Day celebrations are unreal and to remove these two gentlemen for political reasons is just beyond the pail as far as I'm concerned. Again I tried to explain that I think we have two great veterans that are trying to apply and it's not their fault that they're caught in the middle of this but I think that a message has to be sent. The Veterans' Council organization in this town we should be proud of. There should be some autonomy there to choose the people that they want on the Council. I think this is very, very important and I will be supporting Chris and Frank for their hopefully reappointment to the Council. Thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Will the Council allow me to speak from this microphone or do you want me to turn it over to Vice President? You already spoke once George.

Councilor Bitzas – I can speak second time too.

President Rheault – Well, not before I speak the first time.

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you.

President Rheault – All right. First of all let me very clearly state that I personally have nothing against the two candidates. I think they are well deserved, well earned for everything they did for our country and I commend them for it. What does disturb me is just to let you know I called the Mayor the first time that this was rejected and asked if he would meet with me, Aldo and Mr. Sanchez and he said no I will not meet with them. Because I tried to reconcile this before it got to where it is right now so he said that he would meet with Mr. Sanchez after he got appointed but not before for what reason that disturbs me. But then I personally made a phone call to both the candidates and as

Council President my job is to be sure that the Rules of the Council are followed and I asked each gentleman – I never questioned the fact that they were a veteran – NEVER – in our discussion. I called Mr. Crevier and asked him if he had an honorable discharge because our Town Code requires that you must have an honorable discharge to be selected. He said yes he did and I said would you be kind enough to mail it to me which he did and I thought our conver- he thanked me for calling him – our conversation was very cordial and I thought it ended there. Now this is on a Wednesday morning. Thursday morning I picked up the Agawam Advertiser and I saw a slammed article against me from him and I said woah, time out. First of all the deadline for the Agawam Advertiser is Tuesday at noontime so how did he get the article in? I don't know but he made some statements which are pretty positive that disturbed me which tells me somewhat about the character of somebody that we're going to appoint. So I wrote him a letter after I read that article and I said Dear Mr. Crevier – quite surprised. I thought our brief conversation yesterday morning that you understood the reason for my call and even thanked me for calling you – which he did – and I thought that was very nice of him. Let me be clear I never questioned your veteran status and for you to insinuate that is simply untrue and I would like to thank you for your service. I have no control over whatever rumors you may hear. You may not want me to do my job as Council President but I still have to do it. The City Council looks to someone who can work with people and be positive as well as productive. I'm not sure what you mean in your email by your "good ole boy comment" and I'll give you that quote in the paper. The City Council has no desire to pit veteran against veteran. We're interested in making sure that those who are dedicated and worthy members are not railroaded off the board. This would be a sign of disrespect to their commitments. If you were on the board I'm sure you would expect the same protection. Signed over my name as Council President. Then I picked up the Advertiser, well I picked up the Advertiser then, it was Thursday, friendly fire vets battle over appointment process. To me that's the biased headline that a newspaper could write. They are making a war out of nothing. In fact, if you read the Advertise I'm quite disturbed with them as well because it's totally prejudicial and there's never the second side of the story given. They didn't call me. They said I was unavailable for comment. My phone is there. There's a message machine on there. People can call me anytime of the day, twenty four hours a day and I'll answer it. So that's totally untrue that they tried to reach me but Crevier wrote that he was shocked to hear that either, naming me, either Rheault or other members of the City Council contacted the state's Attorney General's office for determination on veterans status. That is an absolute unaltered lie and it really disturbs me when people are doing this and quote I understand that the fact that I'm currently – well he's got in there that he's a veteran – nobody ever questioned the fact that he's a veteran so I take offense to the newspaper article and in good conscience I cannot cast my vote for him because I don't think he's objective. I think he certainly deserves to volunteer his services which I'm sure the Veterans' Council would welcome him and earn your keep just like everyone else but this whole process really stinks in my opinion and it could have easily been rectified right up from the beginning when I called for a meeting and resolved and put the cards on the table. That's my style but that didn't happen so here we are. Thank you.

President Rheault – Councilor Mineo?

Councilor Mineo – Yea, I just wanted to go on record as saying I have nothing against Rielly Longtin or Todd Crevier. I want to thank them for serving our country. I just want to follow the process the way the process has been. I just hope some time in the future this could be resolved. Thanks.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you Mr. President. It's a simple, plain common sense. If you really are for the veterans, unity for the veterans, you are and I believe we all will be. We have the opportunity to us, eleven of us, to amend the ordinance. We did it two years ago when Mr. Pignatare came to for a vote with another gentleman. I vote in favor and I vote again for your appointment and continue to vote for them. They are excellent people. Good veterans. Good family people. Good friends and I'll support them again.

President Rheault – Councilor Bitzas the issue in front of us is whether you're gonna confirm Todd Crevier.

Councilor Bitzas – Yes, because that –

President Rheault – Adding to the Council has got no bearing on that decision right now.

Councilor Bitzas – Mr. President it's a part of the Veterans and I have the right to praise the veterans. If we want to help the Veteran Council, the Veteran Council they have no teeth – I mean the Veterans' Agents don't want to make the policies. It's not like the Council. When we have the Ordinance for the by-laws are page and a half very simple nothing. They said the primary purpose of the Agawam Veterans' Council is to work together in the best interest of the welfare of the veterans of the Town of Agawam to organize and implement Memorial Day activities in the Town of Agawam, to organize and implement the Veterans' Day activities for the Town of Agawam and to –

President Rheault – Councilor Bitzas that has no bearing on whether you're in favor of Mr. Crevier or not.

Councilor Bitzas – Because this is bearing because the ordinance we have front of us we can amend to this and we have more people to come and serve, to help Mr. Donovan

President Rheault – We have –

Councilor Bitzas - and help Mr. Longtin and help the other person and have three other – BEEP

Microphone shut off

President Rheault – You have no control over that by-laws, that's the –

Councilor Bitzas – Mr. President - BEEP

President Rheault – Council –

Councilor Bitzas – Mr. President it's freedom of speech and stop me. I will continue.

President Rheault – I have a right to press this button any time I feel you're out of order.

Councilor Bitzas – No, I am talking about the issue and I'm talking about like you did about to appoint the people and that's what we here for and I have a right to speak.

President Rheault – Speak on the confirmation.

Councilor Bitzas – Thank you. Continue. Then we have easy way to put altogether like a brothers and sisters veterans. I'm a veteran. Not an American veteran but veteran's a veteran and I did more for the veteran than anybody else but I want to make sure that this council has the opportunity and I want to make a motion next time to increase to not the Mayor said two more I said two extra for those. So we have all those four people Mr. Donovan that he willing to teach send a letter to appoint it and Mr. McLean is willing to serve and if a Mr. Tirone like to serve I have no problem but I would ask for his credentials and if I see it fits that I would vote for him too. Thank you.

Councilor Rossi – Move the question.

President Rheault – Question's been moved by Councilor Rossi, seconded by Councilor Bitzas. All those in favor? Ay? Opposed? All right, if you're in favor of the confirmation vote yes, if not vote no. Barbara, would you call the roll please?

ROLL CALL – 1 YES (Councilor Bitzas), 7 NO, 1 ABSTENTION (Councilor Simpson) and 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Perry)

President Rheault – One yes, seven no, two absent, one abstained, you have defeated the Resolution.

2. **TR-2010-27 - A Resolution confirming the Appointment of Rielly Longtin, 469 Corey Street, Agawam, MA to the Agawam Veterans Council to a Term Expiring April 1, 2012 (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Council's pleasure? Moved by Councilor Bitzas, seconded by Councilor Messick. Any discussion?

Councilor Bitzas – Yes, again, I'm not going to repeat whatever I said before counts for Mr. Longtin. He's a great veteran. He's served our country well. He deserves to be there like anybody else and we thank him for his service. It's unfortunate that some members of the Veterans' Council turned it to be a political football and you are the players there down here and I'm saddened to see that. It's absolutely shameful to play

veteran against veteran and I'm so mad because I those veterans we ask for the credentials, they more than enough I mean we never ask anybody for credentials before but we try to find something wrong to vote no for them. It was nothing to vote no. No reason to vote no. They all deserve that. They all good veterans. He's a good man like the previous one. Frank Mazzei is a good man. Sanchez a good man and I vote for them. We can prove it. If you support for Mr. Mazzei Mr. Sanchez vote for the ordinance to increase the number. It's not a big deal. We do that every times. They don't have no legislation bodies don't make any laws and we did not as Mr. Magovern said the Mayor I'm not sure about the Mayor but we did not remove them. They expired the term and they have any administration the right to appoint and I hope the Mayor's appoint them again and I hope this Council change its mind and support the Ordinance and I hope those veterans that spoke against the Ordinance to stop politicking and support their fellow veterans if they're really true want the people to serve the community. The veterans is one ...all of us let's do it. Thank you.

President Rheault – Question moved by Councilor Rossi, seconded by Councilor Magovern and Bitzas. All those in favor of moving? Ay? Opposed? Question's been moved. Barbara, would you please call the roll?

ROLL CALL - 1 YES (Councilor Bitzas), 7 NO, 1 ABSTENTION (Councilor Simpson) and 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Perry)

President Rheault – One yes, seven no, two absent, one abstention, you have defeated the appointment.

Item 7. Report of Council Committees

None.

Item 8. Elections

None.

Item 9. Public Hearings

None.

Item 10. Old Business

1. **TOR-2010-1 - An Ordinance regarding Drag Racing within the Town of Agawam (1/2) (Referred to the Ordinance Committee) (Councilor Magovern)**

President Rheault – Moved by Councilor Magovern, seconded by Councilor Simpson. Mr. Magovern, a report from the Ordinance Committee first?

Councilor Magovern – The Ordinance Committee met and we had a lengthy discussion about the Ordinance and basically what it is is the, it’s a copy of what they have in Springfield and the main reason why I brought it forward was that I was watching TV one evening and the state police were on the television talking about the drag racing that had just taken place on Route 57 and they, which was a very dangerous happening. I’ve heard from several people that were on 57 that early morning hour coming home from work and it was rather frightening to have these cars dragging and the state police officers stated that the reason they were on Rt. 57 was because there was an Ordinance that had been passed that I was aware of in Springfield a few years before that led to the confiscation of cars should they be stopped in the time of drag racing. And I said well if Springfield can pass an Ordinance to curtail drag racing then I think that it was only prudent that we look into here in Agawam and pass the same Ordinance before somebody gets killed on one of our streets with drag racing. So we got a copy and we brought it forward. We had a discussion like I said at the Ordinance meeting and it was passed unanimously by the Ordinance Committee, by Councilor Cichetti, Councilor Letellier and myself and we’re bringing it forward this evening for more discussion and hopefully a positive vote. Thank you.

President Rheault – It’s fully drafted?

Councilor Magovern – Yes, it’s fully drafted and you should have it in your packets and there is a letter also from Lt. Gillis where he spoke in favor of the Ordinance.

President Rheault – Yes, all right. For the first reading as attached, we don’t need to read the whole thing. Any discussion on the Ordinance? If not, Barbara, I am determined to call you the Clerk.

Barbara - That’s okay. I’ll answer.

ROLL CALL – 8 YES, 1 NO (Councilor Messick), 2 ABSENT (Councilors Letellier and Perry)

President Rheault – Eight yes, one no, two absent, you’ve approved the first reading.

2. **PH-2010-2 - (TR-2010-24) Public Hearing Date of June 7, 2010 for a Resolution Adopting the “Stretch Energy Code” for the City of Agawam (Councilor Messick)**

President Rheault – That public hearing’s been called for the Stretch Code on June 7th.

3. **PH-2010-3 - (TR-2010-25) A Resolution Adopting the Fiscal Year 2011 – 2015 Capital Improvement Program (Public Hearing Date of June 7, 2010) (Mayor)**

President Rheault – That Capital Improvement public hearing has been called for June 7th as well.

Item 11. New Business

1. **TOR-2010-2 - An Ordinance Amending Section 61-1 of the Code of the Town of Agawam Increasing the Size of the Agawam Veterans' Council. (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Next Agenda. Let's send that over to the Ordinance Committee.

2. **TR-2010-28 - A Resolution Adopting the Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Operating Budget for the Town of Agawam (Set Public Hearing Date - Suggest June 21, 2010) (Mayor)**

President Rheault – Next Agenda. Public hearing needs to be set for the 21st of June. Barbara, you will handle that? Thank you.

3. **TO-2010-15 - Order Granting or Renewing a LICENSE for an Automatic Amusement Device(s) – Six Flags New England, 1623 Main Street, Agawam, MA. (Clerk)**

President Rheault – Next Agenda. Send to the License Committee.

4. **TR-2010-29 - Reappointment of Richard Bennett representing the Historic Commission on the CPA Committee for a term expiring April 30, 2013 (Council)**

President Rheault – Next Agenda.

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

President Rheault – And our favorite subject, Item 12, and I'll start to my furthest left, Councilor Messick?

Councilor Messick – Thank you. I have a couple things tonight. First, we had a very informative meeting earlier starting at 6:00 about the Stretch Code which we will be having a public hearing about on June 7th. I'd like to thank Councilors Cichetti and Walsh for attending. I think it was important to get more information about it. It's a fairly complex issue and I would like to invite anyone who is a builder, a contractor, anyone who's doing HVAC or anything to come to the meeting, the public hearing, on June 7th. We will have people available to answer questions who are very knowledgeable and who will be from the state. People who have actually worked with the Code. Also, on May 19th, there'll be a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center at 6:00pm about the proposed improvement to School Street Park. Where there's a project we're calling the Agawam Bike Loop Project which will allow people to cycle from Main Street down to School Street Park, along School Street and then onto the River Walk safely and so we're talking about improvements to School Street at that meeting. Again, it's May 19th. It's a public hearing. Mass DOT will be presenting the project at 6:00 at the Senior Center. And also too we had a memo from Vince Gioscia the Town Attorney about the

School Street property that Fether, Inc. wants to donate to the Town and I'm wondering if we're gonna be putting that on the Agenda shortly for consideration.

President Rheault – I'm sorry, what was that for?

Councilor Messick – There was land that's being donated by Fether, Inc. on School Street? It's been through Planning, it's been through Conservation, it'll need to come onto the Agenda for the Council for acceptance of the parcel?

President Rheault – Then I would think he would have put it on, wouldn't he?

Councilor Messick – Okay, I'll contact him about it then. Thank you. That's it.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Cichetti?

Councilor Cichetti – Nothing tonight, thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Walsh?

Councilor Walsh – Nothing tonight, thank you.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Rossi?

Councilor Rossi – Nope, nothing.

President Rheault – Okay. Councilor Mineo?

Councilor Mineo- Yes, just one thing. I would like to wish my wife a Happy 29th anniversary tonight and thank her for putting up with me for the last 29 and especially the last eleven years on the City Council. Thank you.

President Rheault – We thank her and we congratulate you! Councilor Magovern?

Councilor Magovern – I'd like to pick up a little bit on our Veteran's theme this evening again and just remind everybody that we have our Memorial Day Parade coming up on the 31st of the month and the celebrations on Veteran's Green. And I consider it one of the highest honors of my life to be sitting up here as an Agawam City Councilor and I love this town and I go back as a child remembering Memorial Day as one of my fondest memories and I hope that we can bring our children up with the same feeling. I can remember decorating my old Columbia bicycle with streamers and stickers and whatever and riding in the Memorial Day Parade and I hope that it's a tradition that every parent will try to get their children up to Veteran's Green, see our soldiers and honor our veterans. So I hope I see you there. Thank you.

President Rheault – I'm sorry. Councilor Simpson?

Councilor Simpson – Thank you. Since we don't meet again til June 7th, I'd like to say congratulations to the Class of 2010. They'll be graduating on June 6th so I am sure they are very excited and really have senioritis at this point so congratulations and good luck in the future.

President Rheault – Thank you. Councilor Bitzas?

Councilor Bitzas – Yes, I would like to echo Councilor Simpson's the best wishes all the graduates and aim high and also Mr. Magovern said about the veteran's parade. I hope everybody show up. I hope the weather's good and let's put politics aside and all you veterans united and be all together, okay? Let's stop this and make some sense there, common sense, that's what I ask for. Thank you.

President Rheault – Just a comment, to let the Council know, I found our banner! (You did? Where was it?) It was mixed in with my old mayoral signs – the same color themes but I'm gonna bring it down to Barbara and I don't know what condition it's in, I didn't have a chance to unroll it but..

Councilor Rossi - You just have to get somebody to carry it now.

President Rheault – Oh, we have. We'll have a couple of –

Councilor Rossi – You need some volunteers to carry it.

President Rheault – We need two volunteers to carry it.

(Conversation off microphone)

President Rheault – Okay, I have nothing this evening other than thank you all for coming and I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. All the Council moved to adjourn and seconded by the Council. All those in favor? Ay? And the Council. Thank you and good evening.

Adjournment.