

# ROME McGUIGAN, P.C.

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December 28, 2005

Ms. Bonnie L. Therrien  
Town Manager  
Town of Wethersfield  
505 Silas Deane Highway  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

RE: Proposed New Format for Meeting Minutes

Dear Bonnie:

Thank you for forwarding the proposed new format for minutes to me today for review.

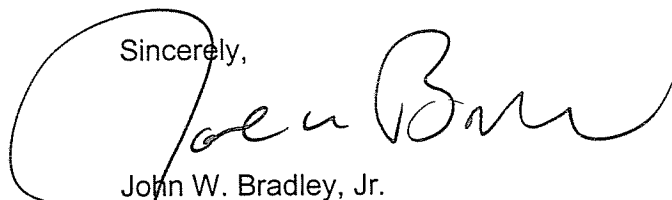
As a legal matter, the proposed new minutes comply with the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA," C.G.S. 1-200 et seq.). As far as the statutory requirements for minutes are concerned, FOIA requires only that the "votes of each of member" be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within 48 hours. The votes must be included in the minutes. The minutes must be available for public inspection within seven days. These requirements are contained in C.G.S. 1-225(a). There are no other specific legal requirements for minutes.

Of course, it has long been the tradition and custom of the Council to have more extensive minutes than is currently proposed. The purpose of narrative minutes, among other things, is to create a historical record of the proceedings of the Council. Detailed minutes can provide great assistance in ascertaining legislative intent i.e., in determining why the Council passed a certain ordinance or took a certain action. Likewise, information gleaned from the minutes can be very useful in interpreting the meaning of ordinances and resolutions.

Having served as secretary of various groups, I understand that the preparation of minutes can be labor intensive. In addition, editorial judgment necessarily comes into play and there are occasional disagreements over what should or should not be included in the minutes. As is the case in most other matters, it is for the Council to try and strike an appropriate balance between the bare bone minutes required by FOIA and a near verbatim transcript of the entire meeting.

Please let me know if there are further questions.

Sincerely,



John W. Bradley, Jr.

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