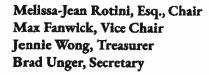
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BY:

Wilton Town Hall 238 Danbury Road

Wilton, CT 06897 EDC@wiltonct.org





## **MINUTES: SPECIAL MEETING** February 27, 2019, 12:00 p.m., Comstock Community Center - Room 13

## I. Call to Order

Members Present: Melissa-Jean Rotini (by phone), Brad Unger (by phone), Jennie Wong (in

person), Christian Bilella (by Phone), Prasad Iyer (by phone)

Non-Voting Members Present: None Commission Liaison Present: None

Members Absent, Excused: Kimberly Ann Purcell, John DiCenzo, Tracey Serpa

Members Absent, Unexcused: Michael Hund, Max Fanwick

Public Present: None

## II. New Matters

A. Letter to the State Education Commission regarding School Consolidation Bills

#### **Member Comment(s):**

Discussion primarily revolved around talking points about the impact of how these proposals would hinder economic development.

Moved: Jennie Seconded: Brad

Vote: Unanimous (5-0)

## III. Adjournment

A. Next Meeting Scheduled: Wednesday, March 13, 2019

#### Member Comment(s):

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting

Moved: Jennie Seconded: Brad

Vote: Unanimous (5-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Bradley C. Unger Secretary, Wilton EDC

Melissa-Jean Rotini, Esq., Chair Max Fanwick, Vice Chair Jennie Wong, Treasurer Brad Unger, Secretary



Wilton Town Hall 238 Danbury Road Wilton, CT 06897 EDC@wiltonct.org

# Wilton Economic Development Commission wiltonEDC.#rg

#### VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Gov. Ned Lamont- Through Website

Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz-LtGovernor.Bysiewicz@ct.gov

Speaker Joe Aresimowic-Joe. Aresimowicz@.cga.ct.gov

Pres. Pro Tempore Martin Looney-Looney@senatedems.ct.gov

Chair Douglas McCrory- Douglas. McCrory@cga.ct.gov

Chair Robert Sanchez-Robert.Sanchez@cga.ct.gov

Rep. Gail Lavielle Gail. Lavielle @cga.ct.gov

Education Committee- EDTestimony@cga.ct.gov

Re:

Education/School Regionalization Proposals

File To: SB454; SB457; SB738; SB874; and HB7150

### Dear Elected Officials:

The Town of Wilton Economic Development Commission ("EDC") submits this letter in strong opposition to the above-referenced Bills.

Wilton EDC conducted a survey in 2016 that included questions with respect to why residents moved to town and why they leave. The number one response on both questions was schools. People moved to town for our excellent school system, and people left when their children graduated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Data was based on real estate transactions between April 1, 2015, and March 31, 2016. Available online at: http://wiltonedc.org/WP2/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/finalEDCforum\_102016version.pdf, last accessed February 27, 2018.

Businesses looking to open or relocate search for communities in which their employees are comfortable residing. Interviews conducted for an EDC video reflect this important consideration.<sup>2</sup> Large and medium sized companies seeking to attract qualified talent both internationally and from large cities throughout the United States, know the quality of the local education system is paramount. Furthermore, the ability of highly educated employees to be involved in the educational decision-making process on a local level is a key benefit. Bills such as the ones identified above intended to force school consolidation, regionalization, or a study regarding these issues would only result in additional difficulty for small and medium sized towns trying to attract residents and businesses.

The proposal regarding pension cost redistribution to the local municipalities would also negatively impact the economy in Wilton and other towns. Such a redistribution of debt is an additional tax burden on businesses and their employees, driving more business out of small and medium sized towns, and out of Connecticut as a whole.

While there is no evidence that consolidation creates any cost savings, the negative impact to the ability of small and medium sized towns to attract business and residents is self-evident. Many small and medium sized towns need to differentiate themselves from their neighbors in order to attract residents and businesses. Removing the ability of towns to differentiate themselves through school management would destroy this important economic driver.

We hope that you consider the negative economic impact that would be incurred by small and medium sized towns, and vote no on each of the above-referenced Bills.

Sincerely,

Melissa-Jean Rotini

Melissa-Jean Rotini, Esq., Chair Wilton Economic Development Commission

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> EDC Video, available at: https://vimeo.com/216907505/462fe875f2, last accessed February 27, 2019.