

CITY OF RUTLAND, VERMONT
Committee of the Whole Minutes
Thursday, June 30, 2016

Members Present: President Notte, Aldermen Humphrey, Etori, Allaire, Bloomer, DePoy, Davis and Alderwoman Robertson. Also present, City Clerk Heck, and guest speakers Kathy Decarreau, Winooski Town Manager, Ray Coffey, Community Services Director and Dave Soloman, Police/School Resource Officer. Aldermen Larson, Donahue and Tommola were absent.

President Notte called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM. President Notte went over some ground rules as to the process of the meeting. The meeting was held at the Fox Room at the Rutland Library and was attended by approximately 50 people.

This meeting was the third for the Committee of the Whole on the Syrian Refugee re-settlement plan. The Board of Aldermen met to hear from representatives of the Town of Winooski who have been resettling refugees in their community for 30 years.

All three representatives introduced themselves and gave a brief history of their duties and ties to the community. At this point, the meeting became a question and answer segment with the Board first, then anyone from the audience who wished to ask a question of the panel. Questions ranged from the town working with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program and their communication process to language barriers. For approximately two (2) hours the panel discussed and answered questions from the following topics;

- ❖ Challenges that the Town of Winooski faced re-settling refugees
- ❖ Diversity among its schools, pros/cons
- ❖ How the demographics look today in Winooski
- ❖ How the school system changed/handled the diversity
- ❖ Cultural and Religious needs of refugees
- ❖ Language barriers and how it is dealt with
- ❖ Housing and population trends
- ❖ Public safety and Emergency (911) communications
- ❖ The social and economic costs associated with re-settlement
- ❖ Demographics of refugees, (White Collar, Blue Collar, Education, Age, Gender)
- ❖ Period of time it takes refugees to be independent, self-sustaining
- ❖ Refugee effects on the community
- ❖ How host family rolls are vital to re-settlement success

This is just a brief list of the topics discussed. At the end of the meeting, President Notte, the Board and all in attendance thanked the panel for their time and discussion. President Notte noted that this will be a continued topic of discussion and stated at the next BOA meeting on Tuesday July 5th there will be three items on the agenda to review and discuss including a petition requesting a vote on the resettlement of refugees in Rutland.

At 7:32 PM a motion was made and seconded (DePoy, Robertson) to adjourn. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Henry A. Heck
Rutland City Clerk