



**PERSONNEL ACTION COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes for FEBRUARY 7, 2019**  
**Meeting starting time - 6:30PM at City Hall**

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FEB - 8 2019

WESTFIELD CITY CLERK

Committee Members: William Onyski (present), Brent Bean (present), Cindy Harris, Chair (present)

Law Department asks us to note if anyone present is recording, audio, video or livestreaming this meeting – none.

**Agenda Item #1:**

*The reappointment of Mark Cressotti as City Engineer for a term to expire February 2022.*

VOTED 3-0 to recommend this reappointment.

**Discussion:**

Three years ago, City Engineer Mark Cressotti was vetted by the Personnel Action Committee, presented to the full Council for reappointment and every Councilor voted yes for that reappointment.

Mr. Cressotti has been Westfield's City Engineer since Sept. 1989 – over 30 years. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and is a member of the Professional Engineers of the Commonwealth of Mass. He also belongs to the Mass. Highway Superintendent's Association, Pioneer Valley Transportation Committee, the Joint Transportation Committee, the Westfield Traffic Commission and Mass. DOT Baystate Roads Program. He continually participates in trainings that keep him updated in new and innovative ways to deal with Westfield's projects.

At his last reappointment 3 years ago, we discussed projects that included the Columbia Greenway, Gas Light District, North Elm St. Improvements and Franklin St. sidewalks. In these past 3 years he states that substantial advances in infrastructure investment brought new opportunities and challenges to the City. During this time he also states that the Engineering Dept. has maintained an average rate of return on investment at approximately 128%.

All Councilors were sent the Engineering Dept.'s annual report from City Engineer Cressotti.

Continuing work on Columbia Greenway, Western Ave, sewer projects on Joseph Ave. and Ridgecrest, sidewalk and pavement on Washington St, many traffic improvements around the City – including Springfield Rd. and Union Streets and Interchange 3, and other sanitary sewer improvements and enhanced pavement management, flood control – dams and levees, will realize positive results in a culmination of many years of effort.

Dept. of Public Works Director Billups, his dept. works closely with the Engineering Dept., has stated that Mr. Cressotti is a Professional Engineer, does an incredible job and uses the word integrity to describe him. Many Councilors also had positive remarks regarding Mr. Cressotti at his last reappointment, including Councilor Paul who thanked him for doing a phenomenal job.

Mr. Cressotti attends and participates in many meetings at night involving other departments, commissions and committees to explain fully items involving those groups which also involves the Engineering Department. Councilors who have been to those meetings have seen the professional manner which he presents information and the respect that is shown to him by those groups.

He has always welcomed Councilors inquiries and strives to fully respond to those. He has the

best interest of our citizens in all his decisions and conclusions, keeping in mind that he always must follow the laws and decisions by other state and federal authorities pertaining to all infrastructure projects.

He is in attendance here tonight and is looking forward to continuing on as Westfield's City Engineer and ask that Mayor's request for his reappointment be approved by this Council.

**Comments from attendees at this meeting who wanted to speak and additional comments by Committee Members:**

1. Committee Member William Onyski

Mark (Cressotti) does a great job. He gets back to you in a timely fashion. The Ward 6 sewer projects went great. I fully support his reappointment.

2. Committee Member Brent Bean

I've been on the Council for many years and throughout that time I credit Mary (Cressotti) for obtaining monies received by the City for projects. Things get done because of his working hard and pursuing all avenues for money. I fully support his reappointment.

3. Mr. Joe Giffume – Rail Trail

You would be hard pressed to find someone as important to the Community as Mark (Cressotti) is. He is a true professional and I fully support him.

4. Dan Call

The Engineering Department is an absolute pleasure to work with – particularly on the Rail Trail project. Mark and his staff are excellent in sharing information and very helpful and give you specific answers. That Department is superb.

5. Councilor Dave Flaherty

There's been many problems with the Engineering Department with finances and budgets. He doesn't accept Councilor input and taxpayers don't want to pay for items in his budget. Line item for travel was cut but he still went to a trade show. There are unnecessary bumps and infrastructure problems. He gave the chair a paper (both sides) of 10 comments. (This list is attached)

6. Mr. Dave Billups – Director of Public Works

I totally support Mark's reappointment. He is an exceptional Engineer and Employee. The Railway Project is excellent. He is great at mentoring younger Engineers in his Department. With total confidence I recommend him. He is a model to me and the entire City with his strong work ethic, persistence and intellectual integrity. (Note: Mr. Billups gave the chair a letter of support – This letter is attached.)

7. Councilor John Beltrandi

Mark (Cressotti) and I go back a long way. As a contractor it has been very good doing business with him. His office is responsive. His office does a really good job. Some of the designs that may not be

liked by all were dictated by all the Mayors he had to work for. The designs are the former Mayors decisions and Mark had to accommodate them. I support him. We may not agree on everything but we always work together and I support his reappointment.

**Mr. Mark Cressotti made a few comments, including:**

- He stated he reports to the Mayor (any Mayor) as well as the Council and he must do what the Mayor wants. I am attempting to do the very best I can.
- The City is in a new direction. Many want it to be more like Northampton and in some small ways it is going in that direction.
- I don't make these decisions alone, especially budget and design.
- You will not find a more committed individual that I am to work for the City.
- I've lived here my whole life and want to do only good for the City.
- I'm trying to make Westfield a vital City.
- I sincerely thank you for consideration for my reappointment and want the reappointment to continue serving our City.

The minutes of 2/7/2019 were approved on a 3-0 vote on 2/7/2019.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55PM

Submitted by Cindy Harris, chair  
2/8/19

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February 7, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am privileged to write in support of Mark Cressotti for reappointment as City Engineer. I have known Mark for several years and can state without reservation that he is an exceptional engineer and employee.

Mark's achievements are well documented and he has contributed as much as anybody to the growth and development of Westfield. I am amazed at the negative reaction to projects such as the Great River bridges, the beautiful parks surrounding them, the Gas Light District and the City Green that Mark helped bring to fruition. For all the great work Mark has done I believe his crowning achievement is the glorious Westfield Rail Trail.

Mark is still not unwilling to vocally express his opinion if projects are moving in the wrong direction. I have personally witnessed his skills as a mentor to younger engineers that has put the city on a path to success for years to come.

I recommend Mark for reappointment with absolute confidence. He has been a model to me and the entire city with his strong work ethic, persistence, and intellectual integrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak

Sincerely,

David S. Billips  
Director of Public Works  
City of Westfield

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From Councilor  
Dave Flaherty  
see both sides

- Repeated problems with budgets, overruns, and late submission of bills.
- Seems to outsource just about everything and has a steady stream of expensive change orders. Engineering companies are making a fortune off taxpayers. For example, Western Avenue. The people wanted their road surface fixed, and storm water and sewers addressed – not the chopping down of trees, the widening of the street, and the addition of all these traffic control devices or measures.
- Disregarding specific budget cuts of Council and moving money to do what he wants. For example, we cut discretionary travel and tradeshow/junkets one year. Mark used another line item to pay for it. Another year he requested about 6 line items for construction. Council specifically denied a few of them. He moved money to do one that we specifically denied.
- Not going thru council for appropriations for projects – going to treasurer and suggesting funds will be reimbursed from Chapter 90.
- Advocates for crazy designs, unnecessary fluff, or things that should never be done: rotary in a rotary, big speed bumps in the middle of town, fake brick sidewalks, parking area bump outs, water cannons, tunnel under bike trail, naming every square foot of grass some kind of park, meaningless “districts”, granite obelisks, clock tower, white elephant on the green, teletubby park, elevated green, water cannons, crazy bike lanes on North Elm, placement of 911 Obelisk, etc...
- Does not listen to our priorities, or the priorities or concerns of citizens who have to pay the bills. For example, he downplays the problem of trucks coming off Union and Mechanic Streets. He said if they can't make the tight turns thru the rotaries, they shouldn't be driving a truck. That crazy design has pushed trucks onto sidestreets, or otherwise changed their travel patterns. Same kind of answer to the parking bumpouts.

see other side  
also

- Does not seem to consider annual operating costs or burdens placed on DPW to adequately maintain things.
- Does not prioritize necessities over niceties. For example, pressing for millions and millions into the bike trail while our roads and bridges need significant investment.
- Providing misleading information on costs and sources of funds to City Council and special interests. For example, he led CGRT folks to believe that almost all of the money was state or federal grants and that we didn't use local funds or Chapter 90 money that could have been used on roads.
- Seems to take the tact of getting a project approved knowing that it will cost more, and that the city will have a hard time saying "no" when a half-cooked project needs more money.