



Tanya Lane
Acting Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR ROY ZARTARIAN

MINUTES

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Conference Room L-101 Lower Level – Town Hall
7:00 P.M.

March 8, 2016

Mayor Zartarian called the meeting to order at 8:25 p.m.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilor Anest
Councilor Budrejko
Councilor DelBuono
Councilor Klett
Councilor Manke
Councilor Marocchini
Councilor Nagel
Councilor Serra
Mayor Zartarian

Staff Attendees:

Tanya Lane, Acting Town Manager
Dr. Collins, Superintendent of Schools
Jaime Trevethan, Asst. to the Town Manager – Administration
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Havital Miltz, 168 Nicholson Street: She wanted to talk about the MDC and Bloomfield was entering into a contract with Niagara Bottling Company. She stated the creation of a water bottle needed four times the amount of water that went into the bottle itself. Niagara would be getting tax breaks, and she felt this agreement should not be approved since there were many carcinogenics that would be released into the air and indicated there would be other chemicals that would end up in the water system. She indicated

that MDC land was being surveyed for the possible creation of a pipe line that would be used for the waste water created by fracking and was concerned about this.

Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street: He asked the Town Council to consider changing the makeup of the Environmental Quality Commission. He indicated it was hard to get a quorum since there were currently 11 members on it. He thought it might be a good idea to disband the Commission and create it again with fewer members.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She indicated there had been a lot of chatter on Facebook disparaging some of the speakers that had the courage to speak to the Council. She asked people to stop and encouraged everyone to go to a meeting and have the courage to speak to the Council so everyone could hear their comments.

Peter Arburrr, 133 Tremont Street: He stated that the BOE would receive a rebate in September for claims against the insurance premium. On March 20 the Town would know the amount of the rebate and felt it should be used to balance the budget. Last year the BOE budget was cut and people predicted devastation in the schools but the superintendent came up with cuts and was able to absorb the reduction of the budget.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She agreed with the comments made by Maddy Kenny and encouraged people to attend meetings or to write their Council members.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Update: MDC Water and Sewer Improvement Project – Cedar St./Willard Ave. area

Mayor Zartarian stated the Council had approved for the Acting Town Manager to proceed with an easement that the MDC needed for the work. Mrs. Lane indicated she had met with the representatives of MDC to brainstorm ideas regarding the homeowner at 711 Willard Avenue. Discussions would continue.

V. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken by Waiving the Rules)

A. Board of Education Budget Presentation

Superintendent Collins and Mrs. Petronio presented the proposed Board of Education budget, which is attached.

Councilor Klett asked the Superintendent about the site services of \$23,828 and this year only amounted to \$9,500. Dr. Collins said it depended on the needs of the department in a given year, and this year the testing material that had been purchased last year enabled them to reduce the amount needed. The Councilor said that Mr. Silvia had spoken at a meeting about the CIP fund and that there was \$1.4 million after revenue that came in and according to charter should only be \$1.2 million. Dr. Collins said that the information given to the Council was not correct. The items listed were anticipated as possible revenue but what was not deducted were expenses charged to it. The Board and the Council would be getting a report on the actual balance.

Councilor DelBuono asked about the purchasing of new busses. Mrs. Petronio indicated seven had been purchased at the end of the year with deferred funds from other areas like special ed costs and a surplus in one area.

Councilor DelBuono said that the BOE CIP account balance had been growing. It was used for smaller projects in the past. She indicated the balance for tuition receipts in 2014 was \$417k and in 2015-16 the balance was \$100k. Dr. Collins said the \$100k was the typical tuition receipt. The open choice enrollment was doubled a few years ago and students were taken in multiple grades and there were significant

special needs students. That caused an excess cost rebate from the State, which was not anticipated. It was put into the tuition account. In a few years the current students would have cycled through and the amount should go back. Several years ago there was a charter change that enabled the BOE to accumulate larger amounts, which helped in doing projects where extra money was needed.

Councilor DelBuono indicated under code 2310 there was an increase of \$459,320 and asked what it was related to. Dr. Collins said the magnet tuition was listed and all new proposals. The \$394k was in that account so that all the money would be in one place so that when approved, the dollar amount would be transferred out. She asked about the STEM building costs and was told \$2.1 million, which came from the Town CIP. The Councilor asked about any savings the BOE saw from heating in the coming year. Dr. Collins indicated they anticipated an increase in fuel costs and did not see the same savings as the Town received.

Councilor Budrejko asked about the costs of special ed and that no increase was seen in the budget. Dr. Collins said the Board got a handle on some of the costs by hiring a behavioral analyst, which saved a lot of money for the Town. She asked about the magnet school tuition costs, and Dr. Collins indicated it was \$45k which was just the increase in tuition for the students that were there. The increases were between 5-10% a year.

Councilor Nagel said that more money had been spent in the past for magnet schools and yet some children were returning from the magnets. The money spent was still more and asked if it cost more to send a student to a magnet. Dr. Collins said each year the tuition went up and would not know what the actual cost would be until October 1. If a student came back to Newington on October 2, the Town would have to pay for the full year of tuition. Councilor Nagel asked about the health care rebate and what the projection might be. Dr. Collins said it was an agreement with the Town and there might be a surplus or there might not. In the past, they had to over budget because they were required to budget whatever the Town agent of record told them to.

Councilor Klett asked about the duties and responsibilities of the resource officer at the high school. The position might be put back in the Police Department budget and asked Dr. Collins why this was a valuable position. Dr. Collins indicated having a direct line to the Police was essential since communication was very important. Councilor Klett asked about the extra \$934k in the budget for math and reading as indicated by a taxpayer. Dr. Collins said that if you looked at just math and reading the answer would be yes but if all the other accounts were added with it, the answer would be no. He did not feel you could look at just one account. She indicated that if any department was cut, she wanted to ensure them that there would be discussion prior to so that there were no surprises at the end.

Councilor DelBuono asked how many Chrome books would be rolled out and Dr. Collins indicated they would roll out as many as they had money for. Councilor Anest asked if the Superintendent had researched grants for the books, and he said they had and had gotten the grant.

B. Discussion: Renewal of Kellogg Eddy House Lease (Tabled 2/9/16 & 2/23/16)

Councilor DelBuono said the Town Attorney had reviewed the lease and had no issues with it. If the Council wanted to take action during the meeting, they could. He indicated the Town Manager and the Council might at a later date want to discuss the possibility of reinstituting a caretaker for the property. The Councilors stated they still wanted to continue the discussion at the next meeting with the Town Attorney present. Councilor Nagel did not want the residents to think there was a problem with the Historical Society. The discussion centered around what should or should not be included in the lease. Councilor Anest wanted to ensure the Town Attorney would be at the next meeting since it had been tabled twice.

C. CRCOG Regional Performance Incentive Grant Program

Mrs. Lane said the Council had acted on it last year. There were seven different initiatives and three Newington might qualify for. CRCOG was applying for the grant and if received, the Town could then take advantage of the initiatives. The Town at present was under no obligation.

VI. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (Action May Be Taken) - None

VII. TAX REFUNDS (Action Requested)

Councilor DelBuono moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$24,051.41 are hereby approved in the individual amounts and for those named on the “Requests for Refund of an Overpayment of Taxes,” certified by the Revenue Collector, a list of which is attached to this resolution.

Councilor Manke seconded the motion and the motion was approved 9 – 0.

VIII. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. Regular Meeting, February 23, 2016

Councilor Manke moved to accept the meeting minutes and was seconded by Councilor DelBuono. The motion passed 9 – 0.

IX. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC

None

X. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Nagel said it was a good thing the Town was not with the trash collector associated with CRCOG since they were having financial difficulties. Controller Lembo indicated at a CRCOG meeting that the State budget looked very bleak.

Councilor Budrejko attended the TPZ meeting recently regarding the hot dog vendor on private property and it was suggested zoning regulations be developed that would allow by special permit these type of vendors. They would also be reviewing the streets where vendors were allowed. There were currently seven places allowed in Town. At the Economic Development Commission meeting they were told the new restaurant planned for the Best Market plaza would not be going there.

Councilor Klett, Councilors Anest and Nagel would be meeting tomorrow regarding the search for a new Town Manager. Part of the discussion regarding the process would be open to the public and hoped the

public would attend to give any comments. The remainder of the meeting would be held in executive session.

Councilor Klett reminded everyone the Parade would be held on Saturday.

Councilor Manke said the Hoopla basketball game was scheduled for March 24 and urged everyone to attend.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Jay Bottalico, 37 Valley View Drive: He was shocked about the question of purchasing busses last year and the fact Dr. Collins was able to come up with that amount. He indicated that one of the BOE members had asked the same question and did not receive an answer.

Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge: She indicated there was a trend in the budget that the same amount of money was spent year after year. She asked what was done with the excess of money in math and reading. The residents did not know what it was spent on. The amount budgeted was in excess of what historically was spent in teaching those two subjects. Mrs. Foley indicated the other town departments had been squeezed for years and were sliding backwards. If the Town had great schools and if the rest of the town was terrible, nobody would move to town.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She thanked the Town Council for all their work since they missed out on a lot of things in their personal lives.

XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Anest had received a plan from a resident that outlined a way to realign Maple Hill and Alumni Road. She thought that since the DOT planned to renovate the bridge perhaps it was a good time to revisit this. She suggested the Council review this to determine the best way to proceed.

Councilor Budrejko agreed with Mr. Fox in suggesting that perhaps having 11 members was too many for the Environmental Quality Commission. She thought the co-chairs of the commission and Mr. Fox could develop a plan for the Council to review. Tanya Lane stated the commission had been created by the Code of Ordinance and would require an amendment to the code. Councilor Klett agreed with the comments and thought it would be a good idea to put it on a future agenda for the Council. She also commented about the disparaging remarks made by members of the public on social media regarding the public hearing. She said in a quote from Mrs. Roosevelt that “great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events and small minds discuss people.”

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Marocchini moved to adjourn at 10:25 p.m. and was seconded by Councilor Manke. The motion passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk
attach.