



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

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

April 4, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:52 p.m.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilor Borjeson
Councilor Bottalico
Councilor Castelle
Councilor Cohen
Councilor DelBuono
Councilor Klett
Councilor McBride
Councilor Nagel
Mayor Woods

Staff Attendees:

John Salomone, Town Manager
Ann Harter, Director of Finance
Lisa Rydecki, Deputy Finance Director
Jamie Trevethan, Executive Assistant
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

IV. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor DelBuono wanted to remind the public that if they could not hear the Council meeting that evening they could go online after the fact to view the meeting.

Mayor Woods responded to several comments made by the public.

1. The Town Council shared Mr. Slusarski's concerns and tried to do the best they could but knew they were behind the eight ball on some items and in the future would try to catch up.

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2. Did not completely agree with the comment on CIP projects spending. He felt the amount was needed to manage the Town's needs and was a vital and important piece of the budget. Some of the problems stemmed from the lack of doing certain projects in the past and when the Town fell behind in road paving, buildings, and schools.

3. The Mayor was not aware of the public putting the idea of a CIP committee together and applauded the idea since it was an excellent way to run government, and offered stability and long range planning.

4. Mayor Woods stated he did not have the breakdown in salaries but would get that information for Mrs. Lyons. The Fenn Road account was \$430k, they took \$130k out, which left \$300k.

V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Adjustments to Town Council's Tentative Budget, if needed

The Council discussed the following proposed adjustments to the Town Council Tentative budget:

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
1	10191 8206	Reduce Utilites for water & electric due to closing Churchill Pool	(\$19,000)
2	10831 8102	Reduce P&G OT for maintenance on weekend	(\$5,000)
3	10831 8302	Reduce P&G Technical Supplies for pool chemicals and paint due to closing Churchill Pool	(\$11,575)
4	11100 8501	Decrease CIP for Library Automated Collection System	(\$65,561)
5	10212 8101	Decrease Patrol Full Time for breakage due to retirement	(\$16,042)
TOTAL			(\$117,178)

Councilor DelBuono made the motions for items 1 - 5:

Item 1.

Councilor Borjeson did not feel there was a safety issue but was aware of the leakage issue. Councilor Bottalico said one study indicated leaking pipes and there was talk of a camera being run through the pipes and said aquatics cost the Town \$129,358 in losses. The closing of the pool would save \$66k, the deck was dropping, and he was nervous there might be a cave in someday.

Councilor Nagel stated if the pool was closed for a year to determine what the real problem was, the savings would help the Town and also help to determine once and for all if the pool could be repaired or if it should remain open. He felt this and other proposals being submitted should be accepted.

Councilor Cohen felt that by closing one pool you would impact Park and Rec programs and would need to determine the impact on the department. Mayor Woods asked the Town Manager if he knew of any safety issue that concerned the pool. Mr. Salomone indicated no. The Mayor could not support the proposal and did not think the Council should decide to close the pool without input from the study and Mr. Till.

Councilor Klett asked if Mr. Till had indicated the deck was sinking and was told it had not sunk anymore in the past five years. Councilor DelBuono commented they had a similar discussion last year concerning the leaking of the pool and a year later the study had not been completed. She felt if it wasn't funded for

this year they could take a close look to figure out what was going on with Churchill, how to fix it, if it should be fixed and what the best plan would be.

Councilor Borjeson indicated that Mr. Till had commented that Churchill was the most frequently used pool and should not close the pool without finishing the study. He did not feel that Mr. Till would make the comments attributed to him since he clearly stated his position at recent meetings.

Councilor McBride said the clearest message he would get was from the completion of the study and felt the Council should wait for that.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Nagel and failed 5 – 4 on a roll call vote:

No: Councilors Borjeson, Castelle, Cohen, McBride, Mayor Woods

Yes: Councilors Bottalico, DelBuono, Klett, Nagel

Items 2 and 3:

The motion was seconded by Councilor Klett and failed 5 – 4 on a roll call vote:

No: Councilors Borjeson, Castelle, Cohen, McBride, Mayor Woods

Yes: Councilors Bottalico, DelBuono, Klett, Nagel

Item 4:

Councilor Borjeson spoke in favor of funding the item and felt it would move the Library forward. He was disappointed with Mrs. Miller's response to his question regarding cost savings beyond security issues. The money would allow for the speeding up of services and getting the Library into the next decade since the Town was behind the times.

Councilor DelBuono explained it was not a question of whether or not she supported the Library but whether this year was the right year to fund just half of the system. She stated the budget next year would be a difficult process and by funding half the system this year, would be required to fund the other half next year or leave the system incomplete. Councilor DelBuono felt the projected \$3k savings against the cost of \$65k was not a good investment at this time.

Councilor Castelle said he did not think savings was the major issue. The best presentation he heard was from the Board of Trustees. He commented that walking into a library that did not have the system was like walking into a classroom that did not have a whiteboard. The system would allow the Library to be efficient and able to keep up with the times.

Councilor Klett commented the savings that were identified might be moderate at best and the savings could be more than those that were identified. It would make the library more efficient and would discourage people who misuse the library.

Councilor Bottalico stated the Council had to satisfy 30,000 citizens, could not see spending \$130k for a program and did not know where the savings were or if there were any savings. He felt the Library did a terrible presentation and demanded money without giving the Council full answers to their questions.

Councilor Borjeson indicated the \$3k was the amount lost to theft. They could do a better job of measuring and managing and did not think the Council should hold the Library to a level of scrutiny that the Council did not hold other areas to. Councilor Cohen stated the Library provided a service and should look to see if the program would improve service and not if it saved money.

Councilor Nagel said he supported the Library and the services but during these economic times the expenditure of \$65k and the money needed for next year to fully implement the program is not one he felt was absolutely necessary this year. He hoped that sometime in the future the Council would not be as hard pressed with what needed to be funded and what could be funded.

Councilor DelBuono took exception to Councilor Borjeson's comments implying lying and misrepresentation by another Councilor, which she said was offensive and had no place at the table. She took exception to the statement that the Council was scrutinizing one department more than the other and felt each department was scrutinized by all of the Council.

Councilor Cohen asked if the Library could come back to the Council for another presentation and table the item until the next meeting. Mayor Woods asked the Town Manager if someone from the Library could go to the next Council meeting to make a presentation and if Councilor DelBuono would withdraw the motion. Councilor DelBuono felt by having the Library make another presentation would be unfair to other departments.

Councilor Bottalico stated the salary amounts in the Library were high and they had enough people. Councilor Castelle felt the Library was one of the most important institutions in Town and was less than 2% of the budget. Half the residents in Town had a card and the Library was heavily used. Councilor DelBuono did not feel there were citizens in Town who would stop using the Library if the Council did not fund the \$65k.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Klett and failed on a 6 – 3 roll call vote:
No: Councilors Borjeson, Castelle, Cohen, Klett, McBride, Mayor Woods
Yes: Councilors Bottalico, DelBuono, Nagel

Councilor Klett asked about breakage and the memo regarding \$16,042 in breakage for a Police position. The email stated there might be some need for overtime and she felt the Council should reduce the amount.

She moved the following:

To reduce in the amount of \$16,042 for the breakage for the Full Time Patrol Officer due to retirement (patrol acct: 10212 and Full time 8101).

John Salomone stated the budget was \$2,750,000 and there were ebbs and flows during the year but the cut could possibly be handled. The amount could vary during the year and would not say the budget could not absorb the cut. He stated there were contingencies they would not know about, like overtime, which could go up. Mr. Salomone explained the overtime could go up and use the \$16k while the new officer is trained and that no budget could be exact.

Councilor DelBuono commented that even small amounts in the budget mattered and if the budget could absorb the \$16k, she would be able to support the motion.

The motion was seconded by Councilor DelBuono and failed on a roll call vote 5 – 4.
No: Councilors Borjeson, Castelle, Cohen, McBride, Mayor Woods
Yes: Councilors Bottalico, DelBuono, Klett, Nagel

VI. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of Canceling the April 9, 2013 Town Council Meeting

1. Cancel the April 9, 2013 Regular Meeting

Mayor Woods explained he was asking for the cancelling of the April 9 meeting since he expected to be out of town and would reschedule the meeting to April 11.

A motion to suspend the rules so a vote could be taken on the cancelling of the April 9 meeting was made by Councilor Borjeson and seconded by Councilor Castelle. The motion failed on a roll call vote 5 – 4.

No: Councilors Bottalico, DelBuono, Klett, Nagel
Yes: Councilors Borjeson, Castelle, Cohen, McBride, Mayor Woods

2. Schedule a Special Meeting on April 11, 2013 (no vote)

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – ON AGENDA

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She wanted to thank the Council for keeping the money for the automated collection system in the budget. The Library was beneficial to all residents with programs and activities for all.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She stated the more she heard about the CIP budget the more confused she got. If the Library needed the automated collection system, the money could be found to do the entire project by taking the money from the \$35k in town building and \$50k in Police records. She stated the issue about the pools had been ongoing for years with many studies already done. Restaurants and businesses were closing with very little new business coming to Town. The Town did not put any money into Northwood Plaza and still got results.

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane: He wanted to clarify the Parks and Rec Department position regarding the pools in Town after a recent conversation with Mr. Till. Mr. Woods stated there was a study to determine the viability and issues with the Churchill pool. Mr. Till would not accept a report based on a pressure test for leaks so the contractor must develop a report to give the Town an answer as to where the leaks were. Regarding the decking, he stated it had been sinking for 12 years and in the last five years had not gotten any worse. Mr. Woods indicated there were no safety issues the Town was aware of at Churchill. He also stated they did not want to see the pool closed, which would impact summer programs. Regarding the high salary figures he stated a lot of the expenses were due to life guards, which came out of the Special Revenue Fund. It was generated by money from the Park and Rec programs.

(Inaudible name and address): She urged the Council to put back the money eliminated from the Board of Education budget. If the Board of Education was continually underfunded she felt it would do a disservice to the children of Newington.

VIII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Cohen stated she was very disappointed with the Council refusal to waive the rules to allow the April 9 meeting to be changed to April 11 since the budget was due to be voted on at that time. She felt the Council should have accommodated the Mayor who had a great part in coordinating and getting people together from both sides of the aisle and the Board of Education. The Council agreed on most of the basic issues and should have been able to accommodate the Mayor.

Councilor Klett indicated she voted No on the waiving of rules because she had not been notified ahead of time of the proposed change, and she had a prior commitment that could not be changed. She appreciated the Mayor's role in the budget and the concern that he be part of the process when the budget was adopted but felt she equally should have been considered when a change was proposed to ensure she could be present at a meeting. She indicated that the Mayor thought Councilor DelBuono notified her of the change which she was originally told would be on Wednesday. Councilor DelBuono indicated she had a conversation with the Mayor regarding the change to a Wednesday evening and when she received the agenda she emailed the Mayor regarding the change from a Wednesday to Thursday evening. She and Councilor Klett had talked prior to the meeting about the change and Councilor DelBuono did not feel it was proper to waive the rules when all Councilors did not have the opportunity ahead of time to discuss it. The Mayor indicated he had thought Councilor DelBuono copied Councilor Klett on all correspondence but Councilor DelBuono stated she was only copied others when there was a specific reason.

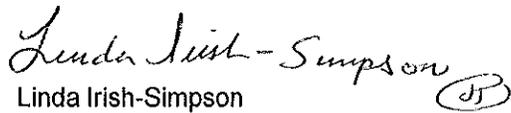
Councilor Bottalico addressed the comments made by Mr. Woods. He requested three years ago that IT generate a program to indicate Park and Rec Dept's revenue sharing programs. As of this date, he had not received this report. He had received a report from the Finance Department and a report from Mr. Till with conflicting figures on both. He wondered why the revenue was put into two different accounts. Councilor Bottalico stated the golf tournament was not in the same account as the revenue and could not understand why.

Mayor Woods read a letter from Dr. Finkelstein into the record. The letter is attached.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Bottalico moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Borjeson and passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson 

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council

Attach.

Woods, Stephen

From: marc [marcbfct@cox.net]
Sent: Monday, April 01, 2013 2:58 PM
To: Woods, Stephen
Subject: Fw: Budget.-Please read at public hearing on April 4
Didn't get through to other address below

From: marc
Sent: Monday, April 01, 2013 2:44 PM
To: towncouncil@newingtonct.gov
Subject: Budget.-Please read at public hearing on April 4

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me once again reiterate what I've publicly stated last week. As both the Chairman of the Newington Board of Education, and a 40 year Newington Resident, I'm heartened that this council was able come to a bipartisan agreement on the 2013-14 budget. Your negotiations with the Board of Education resulted from compromises by both sides that enabled the Board to fulfill our obligations of required state and federal mandates, yet still move forward to continue " a culture of excellence " in Newington schools. Unlike the federal government, the different parties, and different branches of government were willing to do what was in the best interest of the community. We all look forward to a bright future for Newington

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Marc B. Finkelstein
272 Candlewyck Drive
Chairman, Newington Board of Education

I will be in Chicago starting 4/3. Please read this on 4/4