



John L. Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS**

## MINUTES

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

**May 14, 2013**

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The meeting was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:00 p.m.

### **I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Councilor Borjeson  
Councilor Bottalico  
Councilor Castelle  
Councilor Cohen  
Councilor DelBuono - absent  
Councilor Klett – arrived at 7:10 p.m.  
Councilor McBride  
Councilor Nagel  
Mayor Woods

### **Staff Attendees:**

John Salomone, Town Manager  
Ann Harter, Finance Director  
Lisa Rydecki, Deputy Finance Director  
Andy Brecher, Town Planner  
Corinne Aldinger, Revenue Collector  
Jamie Trevethan, Executive Assistant  
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

### **III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**IV. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Borjeson thanked everyone involved in getting the Town the \$2 million grant from the State, which would be used to demolish the National Welding site. The Councilor also thanked the individuals involved with Newington Junction.

Mayor Woods commented on the terrific news about being able to bring the National Welding building down and hoped to have it demolished within a short amount of time. He thanked the Governor and the State Commissioners involved as well as the Newington State delegation who lobbied heavily for the Town to receive the \$2 million.

**V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS**

**A Award RFP: STEM Academy Architect**

Councilor Castelle moved the following:

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Newington Town Council, pursuant to Chapter 8, Article X, Project Building Committees, of the Newington Code of Ordinances; and upon the recommendation of the School Career Technical Program Renovations Project Building Committee; hereby accepts the RFP of Quisenberry Arcari Architects of Farmington, CT to perform project architect services for the John Wallace Middle School and Martin Kellogg Middle School STEM Academy projects, for the fee of \$37,500 per school.**

Councilor Castelle indicated after the committee interviewed four candidates it was the unanimous decision of the committee to pick Quisenberry Arcari Artchitest. He stated they showed a real understanding of what STEM education was all about. Councilor Bottalico stated the committee had delayed for one year the inclusion of the high school.

The motion was seconded by Councilor McBride and the motion passed 8 – 0. (Councilor DelBuono absent)

**B. Municipal Affordable Housing Regulation Technical Assistance Grant**

Councilor Borjeson moved the following:

**WHEREAS, the Town of Newington has an opportunity to receive a technical assistance grant from CRCOG; and**

**WHEREAS, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission has unanimously approved the proposed grant;**

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the CRCOG Senior Affordable Housing Overlay Zone project application be approved and authorize the Town Manager to file such grant on behalf of the Town of Newington.**

Councilor Cohen commented the following (comments verbatim per Councilor Cohen’s request): “The goal of this study is to address the special housing needs of Newington elderly and growing elderly populations. We are proposing to permit a high density project as an inducement for a development to set aside 20% of the project for low income elderly with the other 80% of the high density sub-division selling

at market rate with no guarantee that many or any of the homes would be occupied by our current Newington elderly. Newcomers will be accommodated while our own people are left on waiting lists and the services that would be required by the new residents will be paid by the rest of us including our own elderly. Should we be putting our efforts into increasing our residential population to provide rides for the new busway rather than bringing in new commercial development near the busway station? Even with today's good news about National Welding, developments are still badly needed to increase our grand list that could be lowering the taxes paid by all of us, including our elderly population while also providing more jobs, more job opportunities in Newington.

This study does not commit us to anything but there is enough support to provide riders for the busway to make the study results a debatable issue. The study should provide helpful information for future budgeting and planning for future services needed. So, with hesitation, I will support going forward with this study but I feel that right now we should be concentrating on commercial development that will increase our grand list to help all Newington taxpayers. Why do we want to increase our residential population with high density market rate housing? We are on a roll with Foodmart Plaza, National Welding, let's continue. Thank you. "

Councilor Borjeson indicated an overlay zone would be created. If the report indicated that the demographics and demand would not work in Newington, the Council would stop the project at that point. If the recommendation was made and how potentially it could be done, the Council would then have a yes or no vote. He stated there were no strings attached to the \$20k and was just a way for the Council to get information.

Councilor Klett requested clarification on a newspaper article that indicated the people who did the study would rewrite the Town's zoning regulations. Councilor Borjeson stated they would make recommendations on how the Town could create an overlay zone. It would mean the existing zoning would stay and allow the senior housing to exist in the same zone. She questioned whether all communities were going to step up to the plate to create senior housing in their towns. Councilor Klett expressed concern that the senior housing would be bought by residents from other towns and current Newington residents would not be guaranteed senior housing. She also expressed concern that if the development did occur, the homeowners in the area would be notified of any zone changes. Mr. Salomone stated a public hearing would be mandated in the event of a change and that when a zone change was planned, adjacent property owners had to be notified.

Councilor Borjeson stated Ridgefield and Madison were towns that had already created this housing and he would get information to Councilor Klett. The Town could not guarantee who would get the housing, 80% would be market driven and the housing would be targeted for seniors. Mayor Woods stated the grant would identify need, desire and give the Town information to go forward. He stated that by 2020 the median age in Newington would be 46 and 25% of the entire population would be 65 or older.

Councilor Nagel commented there had been an extension by the State to May 31 for the grant and that the total dollar amount available was \$118k to all applicant towns.

The motion was seconded by Councilor McBride and passed on a roll call vote 8 – 0 (Councilor DelBuono, absent)

## **VI. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Year-End Transfers**

Ann Harter and John Salomone gave an overview of what they intended to do to balance out various accounts. She indicated that for salaries and various departments approximately \$54k was needed, the extra primary cost \$23k, the elderly tax relief program cost about \$8k more than predicted, legal costs of \$50k, several recruitments during the year that cost \$15k, fire pay-for-call and stipends were higher than anticipated by \$36k, Conservation Commission meetings were an additional \$5,300, the Development Director had a need of \$15k and the Fire Department requested additional funding for access control locks in the amount of \$26k. The total amount was \$234,300. Mrs. Harter indicated \$49,300 from contingencies was being used for salaries and the general services line item saw a savings of \$24k. The Emergency Medical Service department had a stipend program and had less participants for a savings of \$5k, the Highway Department and the Human Services Department saw savings and the Solid Waste

Department saved \$90k. She indicated the Debt Service, due to refunding, needed less money for interest and there was a savings of \$11k.

Councilor Bottalico stated the budget was short \$234,300 and Mrs. Harter indicated in certain line items that was true. He thought the salary increases were taken care of by the 2% across the board increase voted on by the Council. Mrs. Harter explained the increases were in the contingencies fund and had to be moved to the appropriate departments.

Councilor Klett asked who the \$54k in salary increases were for and Mr. Salomone commented it was for administrative salaries, which included approximately 40 people. The item would be on the next meeting agenda

## **B. Suspense List**

Corinne Aldinger and John Salomone explained that each year a certain amount of taxes were transferred to the suspense list. Once on the list, it changed the way the Town accounted for it. The Town would continue to try to collect on them but it was simply a matter of accounting principles for the finance office. What are not collectable are by State statute any items 15 years old. When the new Grand List is developed, all items from 1997 will not be collectable and everything else can continue to be collected. A couple of small parcels were sold during the year to interested individuals. The total real estate amount came to \$7,764.76 and personal property amount was \$38,359.29. The Motor Vehicle amount was \$64,739.85 for a total of \$110,863.80 to be suspended.

Councilor Bottalico asked about the tax sale conducted recently and was told both sales had brought in over \$600k. Mrs. Aldinger indicated they would do it more often since they had such success this year.

Mayor Woods indicated it would be on the next Council agenda.

## **C. Discussion: Appoint Auditor**

John Salomone commented that every three years the Town went out for an RFP for auditors to test the waters to ensure everything was competitive. He said that if they went less than three years, auditors would not eagerly apply to take on a Town for only a one year term. Councilor Castelle stated the Committee interviewed Blum Shapiro (current auditor) and Cohn Reznick and found both were very capable auditors. He felt Blum Shapiro was more impressive since two of the auditors had extensive experience in Information Technology and auditing fraud. The other firm would send in a team of experts who were not directly related to the firm. Councilors Nagel and Ann Harter agreed with Councilor Castelle's comments regarding Blum Shapiro. Councilor McBride felt Blum Shapiro had done a good job and rotated auditor's to ensure fresh eyes doing the auditing. The item will be put on the next Council agenda.

## **D. Economic Development Update: Northwood Plaza**

Andy Brecher gave an overview and slide presentation on Best Market, which will be the new tenant at Northwood Plaza. Once the property is closed on, the plaza will be renamed Best Market Plaza. The closing was planned for next week. Best Market has hired architects and designers, has been doing research and marketing into the local market and is looking at several new tenants for the plaza.

## **E. Discussion: Police Budget**

Councilor Bottalico thanked Ann Harter for getting him all the information he requested to try to find out the amount of breakage in the Police Department. He was trying to find out the difference between salaries and benefits between retired and new officers. Councilor Bottalico indicated he found the difference to be \$181,055.32 in salaries and the difference in benefits was \$57,402. The total was \$238,457. Councilor Bottalico did not include overtime or vacation time in his figures.

John Salomone indicated that some of the difference between a new hire and a senior person who was being replaced in the Police Department was that the space was filled from within the ranks through promotion. He gave the example of a Sergeant who was promoted to Lieutenant and depending on the

years of service would be appointed at a second or third step. The position would not be filled by an entry level officer.

Mr. Salomone explained that benefits were not budgeted on the basis of individual employees but on the basis of the aggregate amount of medical costs during a year. They budget on the amount that is actually spent since estimating what each employee would spend would vary quite a bit. He also indicated they had reduced the medical budget by approximately \$600k which more than accounted for the \$50k difference Councilor Bottalico talked about. Mr. Salomone stated that this year they anticipated a saving of approximately \$90k savings in the patrol budget and next year a \$60k savings. He felt the numbers Councilor Bottalico talked about and the savings already accounted for were fairly close.

Councilor Bottalico stated he was working with the numbers he was given and did not look into the overtime situation, which he felt was ridiculous since the total overtime hours last year were 14,729. Mr. Salomone explained the more vacancies there were the more overtime there would be. Councilor Bottalico also commented on the dog warden position which went up \$7k after being told the amount would drop this year. He also stated the Town spent \$20k on uniforms and asked where the savings were. Mr. Salomone explained the Town had double the coverage because they had two part timers at 20 hours each and a Wethersfield officer as well. He said they had 80 hours of coverage for 40 hours.

Councilor Klett commented on the seven retired officers with base pay of \$77k - \$89k earning between \$169k - \$140k last year. Even if promoting from within she felt that no one would step into a position and earn \$169k. She felt someone had to take a look at the management of personnel and overtime. Mr. Salomone stated the Town should take a look at overtime especially when officers get closer to retirement and there is a surge in overtime hours. He explained overtime was done on a rotational basis, cannot be required except in rare circumstances, and officers could refuse the overtime. Special expertise, like communications, require a dispatcher who was trained which limits the number who could fill the overtime. Councilor Bottalico felt there was a discrepancy in the number of hours various officers work. Some were putting in 22 hours of overtime and others over 600 hours.

Councilor Nagel agreed the number of hours worked by an officer was a safety issue and would like to see more information on officers who worked double shifts. He asked for the Council to get information on how steps and breakage work and figures periodically to review.

Councilor McBride wanted to remind everyone that officers who work 16 hour days or multiple 16 hour days, were doing a difficult job with many challenges and spending time away from their families. He wanted to ensure everyone remembered what a good job the officers in Newington did.

Councilor Klett requested a review of all administrative employee job descriptions to ensure they are current and up-to-date.

## **VII. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS**

None

## **VIII. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Action Requested)**

### **A. April 23, 2013 Regular Meeting**

Councilor Cohen moved to accept the minutes from April 23 and the motion was seconded by Councilor Borjeson. The motion passed 8-0 (Councilor DelBuono, absent).

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

John Salomone indicated the grant from the State to demolish National Welding would require doing the documentation to obtain the money, which could take between three and six months. Demolition would hopefully be completed during the current construction season. He explained that once the building was torn down it would have a better value. The assessed value would be determined after negotiations with the builder. Hazardous material would be removed from the building and within the structure. Any

hazardous material in the ground yet to be identified would be included in the next phase of the project. Studies have shown there was no migration of pollution so there was no ground water contamination.

## **X. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilor Borjeson commented on a recent Fastrack meeting he attended. Safety and Security were discussed with police and fire represented. Discussion centered on the safety of the pedestrian walkway and how to respond with the correct equipment since the walkway would be separated from the busway. He stated the marketing was on-going with presentations at CCSU and the Chambers of Commerce getting together for discussion. Councilor Borjeson stated there would be another meeting on June 5 and urged any in the public to attend who were interested.

Councilor Cohen stated the Chamber of Commerce would be honoring Dial-A-Ride with their Public Safety Award, the Public Service Award would be going to Bob Seiler and the Youth Service Award would be going to Tim, Chairman of the Youth/Adult Council. She recently attended a Fire Department training session and urged all Councilors to attend when it was offered again. It was very impressive and showed the devotion and amount of time and training the volunteers went through.

Councilor Nagel explained planning by NCTV was on-going for the annual Memorial Day Parade regarding technical items. He reminded everyone the parade would be May 25 at 10:30 a.m. He mentioned the most watched show was the April Talk to the Mayor Show on Fastrack and economic development.

## **XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL**

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Mrs. Lyons mentioned the municipal parking lot and the change in attitude of Newington residents toward the busway brought up by Councilor Klett. She wanted to know if a study had been done on the parking lot and how many new businesses had gone into the area since the money was spent.

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive: He commented that he was still not in favor of the busway but since they were spending \$10k a foot he hoped the idea worked. Mr. Slusarski said he had done a tour of the Marcap property and was surprised the Town paid \$100k an acre since the area backed up to the State Humane Society and was very steep.

## **XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Nagel said he had received an email regarding Church Street and MDC construction. He wanted to know if it was possible for notification of the construction to be put on the Town website. He wanted to thank past council members, Mr. Salomone, former and present Mayors for the purchase of the National Welding site property.

Councilor Borjeson wanted to remind everyone that the Newington Art League exhibit was on view until May 22 in the Lobby.

Councilor Klett mentioned that although she was not in favor of the busway she was encouraged that the area was beginning to be cleaned up. She requested John Salomone provide a list on blighted properties in Town since she had received calls regarding property on the Boulevard and Maple Avenue.

Mayor Woods attended the Fire Department awards dinner which was well attended. He said several individuals were honored for years of service, and bravery. He praised them for their devotion and all they gave to the Town and wanted to thank their spouses as well. Mayor Woods attended the Chamber Comedy night, which was a good evening and also well attended. He also wanted to thank past Councilors and Mr. Salomone for having the foresight to purchase the National Welding site. He hoped the building would be taken down shortly, turned over to a builder and put back on the tax rolls of Newington.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Bottalico moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. and the motion was seconded by Councilor McBride. The motion passed 8 – 0 (Councilor DelBuono, absent),

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson  
Clerk of the Council