



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING 7:00 P.M.

September 18, 2012

Mayor Woods called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Helen Nelson Room, Town Hall.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

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

Staff in attendance:

John Salomone, Town Manager
Jamie Trevethan, Executive Assistant

III. AWARDS/PROCLAMATIONS

A. Constitution Week

The proclamation was tabled until after the completion of old business.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL - none

V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Veterans' Tax Exempt

PLEASE REFER TO AUDIO RECORDING OF MEETING (AVAILABLE IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE) FOR COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF DISCUSSION.

The Council resumed previous meetings' discussions about a proposed increase of the Veterans' tax benefit. Councilor Castelle indicated that Assessor Steve Juda has provided a table of various veterans' income thresholds, up to \$64,500, and the corresponding costs to the Town. He noted that raising the threshold by \$50,000 would raise the cost to the Town by about \$100,000 (table is attached) and noted the number of veterans that would be included in each threshold. Councilor Castelle noted that veterans who do not own a home but may be eligible for an exemption towards their car taxes and indicated that these veterans may not be included on the table and stated that any owner who pays taxes on any property may be eligible.

Phone: (860) 665-8510 Fax: (860) 665-8507
townmanager@newingtonct.gov
www.newingtonct.gov

Councilor Castelle asked Mr. Juda to create a study which looks at various levels of cost to the Town and the corresponding income levels. Councilor DelBuono stated that bringing it up to the \$50,000 household level makes sense and will not "break the bank". Mayor Woods noted that the increased cost to the Town will be an additional \$113,000 if the income threshold is brought up to the \$50,000 level.

Councilor Cohen requested to receive a study of what benefits veterans are currently receiving, the cost to the Town and State reimbursement. The Council discussed the information received from Assessor Steve Juda in which 188 veterans receive a benefit under the current situation (See attached Table 1 for information) Councilor DelBuono noted that veterans have to apply and qualify for the program, it isn't automatic. Town Manager Salomone stated that table 1 clearly shows the mix of the various groups, their income and the total number of exemptions and benefits. The Council expressed confusion over the number of qualifying versus total veterans and requested clarification. Mayor Woods stated that at the \$39,500 level there would be 187 qualifying veterans, with an increase of 433 qualifying veterans qualifying at the \$50,000 level and an additional increase of 188 qualifying veterans at the \$64,500.

Councilor Bottalico noted that the \$3,000 exemption is not included in the table, since the \$3,000 is automatic regardless of income. Councilor Cohen inquired about the level of reimbursement from the State. Town Manager Salomone stated that the Assessor was not available to attend this meeting, but can attend a future meeting to answer all of the Council questions in detail. Councilor Bottalico agreed with Councilor DelBuono that once all of the questions are answered, the \$50,000 level would be his preference. Town Manager Salomone stated that this would increase the number of qualifying veterans by about 433. Councilor Nagel agreed with Councilors DelBuono and Bottalico and stated that doing so would help a sizable number of veterans without a major impact to the taxpayers.

Councilor DelBuono inquired whether waiting to vote on the item at the next meeting would present a problem, since the next meeting is past the previously mentioned October 1 deadline. Mayor Woods replied that due to the revaluation process, the Grand List will not be finalized by October 1. He indicated that his understanding is that the resolution must state that the benefit is effective with the October Grand List, but the resolution itself may be passed after October 1. Mayor Woods indicated that he would like to take the item to a vote at an October Council meeting, preferably the next meeting. Mayor Woods stated the Council has already raised the limit to \$39,500 and that he is not in favor of raising the level to \$50,000, which would increase the cost to the Town three-fold over the current level. He stated that the Council may be in agreement to do something, but is not in agreement on the dollar amount. He requested that the resolution at the next meeting leaves the threshold level blank, to be determined after deliberations. Town Manager Salomone agreed and stated that Mr. Juda will address the Council's questions.

At the conclusion of the veterans' tax exempt discussion, Mayor Woods reverted back to agenda item III, Proclamations.

Mayor Woods moved the following:

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States of America, the guardian of our liberties, embodies the principles of limited government in a Republic dedicated to rule by law; and

WHEREAS, September 17, 2012 marks the 225th anniversary of the framing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary, and to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate it; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designating September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Mayor Stephen Woods, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the Town of Newington, Connecticut and on behalf of the Newington Town Council, do hereby proclaim the week of September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week and ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the Framers of the Constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties.

Motion seconded by Councilor Cohen. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Klett absent)

VI. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A. Salary Integration for Active Duty Military Service

Town Manager Salomone indicated that there is a current Town Police Officer who as been called to active military duty and indicated that the Town typically pays any differential between an employee's military salary and their Town salary during the course of active duty for a period of up to three months. He explained that per the Town's Personnel Regulations, salary differential payment for a period of more than three months requires Council approval. He indicated that this employee is expected to be deployed overseas for a year or longer and stated that there will be a resolution available for Council consideration at the October 9 meeting to approve an extension of the differential for the duration of the employee's deployment.

Councilor Bottalico inquired whether the differential payment would include base salary or overtime. Town Manager Salomone replied that the differential would pay to the base salary only. The Town Manager and Council wished the employee and his family well and thanked him for his service.

VII. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

A. Town Plan and Zoning Commission

Councilor McBride moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of Mike Camillo as an Alternate member of the Town Plan and Zoning Commission in accordance with correspondence dated September 12, 2012.

Motion seconded by Councilor DelBuono. Motion passed 8- 0 (Councilor Klett absent).

Councilor McBride moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby appoints the following to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission:

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Michael Camillo	126 Willard Avenue	D	IMMED -- 11/30/15	Dana Woods (res. 9-12)

Motion seconded by Councilor Cohen. Motion passed 8- 0 (Councilor Klett absent).

VIII. TAX REFUNDS

Councilor DelBuono moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$10,607.04 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.

Motion seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Klett absent)

IX. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS - none

X. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC - none

XI. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Castelle reported on the Library Board:

- Library Director Donna Miller gave a presentation on the Library's annual report.
- The Board elected officers
- The Board has received several grants and donation from area businesses
- The Board recognized outstanding volunteers
- There will be a fundraiser in collaboration with the Outback Steakhouse on Saturday, October 27.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: Ms. Lyons complimented the Town on the new directory signs in Town Hall, but indicated that it is still difficult for people attending meetings in conference room L-101 to see non-electronic presentations. She also indicated that the presentations can't be seen on television, for those watching meetings on NCTV.

XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Bottalico inquired about the accident at Fire Company 2 in which a trainee hit the building while backing in the pumper truck. Town Manager Salomone stated that the pumper and doorway to the building both received damage, which will be paid through CIRMA, minus the deductible. He confirmed that this incident occurred during a training session. Town Manager Salomome stated that the pumper will be out of service during the repair and that a spare truck from Company 3 will be used while the pumper is under repair.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Nagel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Motion seconded by Councilor Borjeson. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Klett absent).

Respectfully Submitted,



Jaime Trevethan
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk

Memorandum

To: Newington Town Council Members
From: S. Steven Juda, Assessor
Date: August 28, 2012
Re: Veteran's Exemptions Amended

This amended report will be the focus on my presentation on August 28, 2012.



Sec. 12-81f of Connecticut state law allows municipalities by local option to provide additional exemption for veterans or spouses eligible for exemption under section 12-81. This enabling legislation allowed towns to extend this exemption to veterans that make up to **\$25,000 over the income limits. This would increase the income levels to \$57,300 for single people and \$64,500 for married couples** from the current income level of \$32,300 and \$39,500. There would be no reimbursement if the town adopted a higher income level.

Currently there are 187 veterans that meet the income levels, or 9% of all veterans. The table below shows you the number of veterans you would reach at various income levels of \$39,500, \$50,000, and \$64,500:

	Number of Veterans	2,026	Percent	Cumulative
<\$39,500	187		9.2%	9.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	433		21.4%	30.6%
\$50,000 to \$64,500	<u>188</u>		<u>9.3%</u>	39.9%
	808		39.9%	

The cost for these additional exemptions is found on the next page. **Since this is an exemption it is a loss revenue item rather than a budget expenditure. It would appear as a reduction to the grand list and not as a line item budget entry. Each incremental tax loss of \$50,000 would reach about 200 additional veterans.**

These exemptions are all means tested and in order to qualify the veteran must fall below the income levels in household income. There is no statutory authority to provide any exemption beyond this. All exemptions in Connecticut apply to owners of property who reside in town. **Property includes real estate, personal property and motor vehicle. Younger veterans typically do not own real estate therefore they would receive the this exemption on their motor vehicle.**



Table 1 Amended Newington Veteran Home Ownership				
Number of Households	12,131			
Number of Veterans	2,026			
Percentage of Homes with Veterans	17%			
Percentage Used for Calculation	15%			
House Hold Income - 20110 Census		Homes	% Homes	Homes with Veterans
Less than \$10,000	318			
\$10,000 to \$14,999	360			
\$15,000 to \$24,999	722			
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,035			
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,722	4,157	34%	620
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2,494	5,404	45%	810
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2,085			
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2,207			
\$150,000 to \$199,999	813			
\$200,000 or more	<u>375</u>			
Total households	12,131			
Table 2 Amended Additional Cost of Local Option Veteran Exemptions				
Current				
Mill Rate	0.03264			
Additional Veteran Exemption	\$8,000			
Savings to each Veteran	\$261.12			
Income Limits are \$57,300 and \$64,500				
		<u>Income Levels</u>		
	4/10/2012	<\$50,000	<\$64,500	
Number of Eligible Veterans	187	433	95	
Total Value of Exemption	\$48,829	\$113,065	\$24,806	
State of CT Reimbursement	<u>\$10,399</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	
Loss in Revenue to Town	\$38,430	\$113,065	\$24,806	
		% of Mill		
Resolution 2012-42	\$50,000			2.0%
Cost <\$50,000	\$113,065			4.6%
Cost <\$64,500	<u>\$24,806</u>			<u>1.0%</u>
Total Cost up to \$100,000	\$187,871			7.6%
Value of a Mill	\$2,477,986			
Mill Rate	32.64			
Levy	\$80,881,477			