



John Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

## OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

### MINUTES NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING GOAL SETTING SESSION

Thursday, January 14, 2010

5:30 pm

Conference Room L-103, Newington Town Hall

#### NOTE: TRANSCRIPT AUDIO TAPES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Mayor Wright called the Newington Town Council Special Meeting to order at 5:30 pm in Conference Room L-103 in Newington Town Hall

I PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - waived

II ROLL CALL

Councilors Present

Councilor Banach

Councilor Casasanta

Councilor Cohen

Councilor Klett

Councilor Lenares

Councilor McBride

Councilor Nagel (exited meeting at 6:55 pm)

Councilor Nasinnyk

Mayor Wright

Also Present:

John L. Salomone, Town Manager

Ann Harter, Director of Finance

Ed Meehan, Town Planner

Richard Mulhall, Chief of Police

Jamie Trevethan, Executive Assistant

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -- ON AGENDA (none)

IV EXECUTIVE SESSION RE: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Council went into Executive Session re: Collective Bargaining at 5:35 pm. All Councilors and Mayor Wright were present, as well as Town Manager Salomone, Finance Director Ann Harter and Police Chief Richard Mulhall.

The Council adjourned from Executive Session at 6:55 pm. Councilor Nagel exited the meeting.

## V CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Banach moved to amend the agenda to address agenda item V.B. Goal Setting: Other Bipartisan Goals as the first item under New Business. Motion seconded by Councilor Nasinnyk. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Nagel absent)

### A Goal Setting: Other Bipartisan Goals

#### Public Safety

Chief Mulhall gave the Council an overview of 2009 operations. Calls for service were up 4%, with approximately 30,200 calls per service. Patrol response is adequate and response times are good. About one-third of the calls are 911 calls. There has been a 3% decrease of part-one crimes (serious crimes), with just under 1,000 part-one crimes reported. Criminal arrests have increased 15% to 1,323 and DUI arrests are up 14% to over 200. There was a 27% increase in officer-induced car stops, with about 9,600 cars stopped per year. Grant funding has been utilized for both DUI and traffic control. There was a 4% reduction in auto accidents as well as a decrease in injury accidents.

The Department has been at full staff for the past year; budget and overtime costs are on target. There are five officers eligible for retirement this year; two have indicated that they do plan to retire. Recruitment will focus on the search for certified officers. Two civilian dispatchers are also eligible for retirement. There has been some stress in the records unit due to an increase in motor vehicle violations. The division has run with 2.5 staff people for the past 20 years, and it may be time to look into additional staff. The Dispatch center operates with only one dispatcher over the weekend, which can cause problems on the day and evening shift from time to time due to volume. The Detective Division is dealing with more complex, technology-related, fraud, financial, forensic and long-distance cases. Some investigations are being pushed to patrol.

The Chief answered several Councilors' questions regarding police operations.

#### Development

Mayor Wright stated that everyone wants to keep taxes down; therefore the Town must increase revenue through development. The Council discussed several key areas of development throughout the Town with Town Planner Ed Meehan.

- Cedar Street/Fenn Road: items of discussion included Mr. Meehan's presentation to the Council regarding the area at the January 12, 2010 Council meeting, traffic problems and the various traffic studies in the area, ways to address traffic concerns, the State's proposed busway.
- Cedar Street/Alumni Road Realignment: items of discussion included how the streets would be aligned, resident concerns, and how the realignment could increase development potential in the area.
- Downtown Area: Mr. Meehan gave an update on the Constitution Square reconstruction project, which is on schedule considering the weather. Mayor Wright introduced the idea of using STEAP funding to complete the next phase of the Constitution Square parking lot. The Council debated the idea, including the timing, complexity and cost to complete both projects.
- Cedar Mountain: discussion included pros and cons of development on the mountain, various types of development and their impact on Town costs and revenue.
- Town Hall/Parking: The Council discussed approaching the Library Board to discuss constructing a low cost, temporary parking lot on Mill Street where the two houses used to stand. This will improve parking at Town Hall and the Library.

#### Goal – Ordinances

**The Council discussed strengthening several quality of life ordinances such as noise and blight ordinances and also tightening the enforcement of those ordinances. This was designated as a Council goal for the upcoming year.**

B Goal Setting: Budget

Finance Director Ann Harter and Town Manager Salomone reviewed the status of revenues and expenditures for the current 2009-10 fiscal year. (Report attached.) The Council discussed the status of the State budget, including possible cuts and assumptions that will need to be made about the State budget when preparing the Town's budget. The Council discussed guidelines and direction for the 2010-11 budget, including the assumption that there will be a cut in State funding. The Town's reserve fund balance was discussed and debated as a possible source of funding. The Council discussed the Town's historical yearly fund balance and its ability to replenish the funds. Town Manager Salomone cautioned that the Town may need to have the fund balance available in the 2011-12 fiscal year due to the instability of the State and Federal budgets. Town Manager Salomone stated that the Town can come to the Council with several different budget scenarios and the impact of those scenarios, but cautioned that a zero-percent increase would result in a cut to services in both the Town and the Board of Education. He noted that there are two increases in costs that the Town has no control over: pension costs and medical insurance costs, the increase in both totals about \$800,000. Town Manager Salomone stated that even coming in with a three-percent increase may result in some cuts; however, every attempt will be made to keep services at the same level.

**Goal – CIP**

**Councilor Cohen suggested that the Council spend more time looking at the Capital Improvement Budget five-year plan, concentrating on taking a closer look at all five years. She stated that the Council should really be able to endorse the five year plan, even with the understanding that future Councils will have the ability amend the later years. This was designated as a Council goal for the upcoming year.**

The Council discussed other goals for the upcoming year.

**Goal – 2010-2020 Plan of Conservation and Development**

**Councilor Cohen suggested that the Council review closely the TPZ 2010-2020 POCD, as the Council is supposed to give input and comments about the plan. The Council discussed the timing of the review and came to the consensus to place the item on the Council's agenda once the TPZ submits the third draft of the plan in February. This was designated as a Council goal for the upcoming year.**

**Goal – Emergency/Disaster Planning**

**Councilor Klett spoke about the need for planning in the event of a major disaster in Town in which the Town would not be able to depend on outside resources for aid. Town Manager Salomone stated that there are various plans in place. The Council requested feedback and information regarding the plans. This was designated as a Council goal for the upcoming year.**

The Council discussed communication to the public, and means of communicating Council actions, issues and agendas. Items discussed included the changing use of media, such as newspapers and email to inform the public.

The Mayor requested to have the auditors speak to the Council. Mrs. Harter noted that the Audit Committee will meet once the auditor's management letter is received.

The Council discussed and debated the use of a phone line for public participation during Council meetings. The Councilors also debated whether the rules would have to be changed to allow for a phone line. No consensus was reached.

VI PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -- ON AGENDA (none)

VII REMARKS BY COUNCILORS (none)

VIII ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting was made by Deputy Mayor Lenares at 10:05 p.m., seconded by Councilor Banach. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Nagel absent).

Respectfully submitted,

Jaime Trevethan  
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

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