



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR JEFF WRIGHT

November 23, 2010

Minutes – Newington Town Council

I PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II ROLL CALL

Councilors Present:

Councilor Banach
Councilor Casasanta
Councilor Cohen
Councilor Klett
Councilor Lenares
Councilor McBride
Councilor Nagel
Councilor Nasinnyk
Mayor Wright

Staff Present

John Salomone, Town Manager
Jaime Trevethan, Exec. Asst. to the Town Manager
Mary Richard, Council Clerk

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –

The Mayor announced the phone number for the home viewers who wished to call 860-665-8736

Maria Pane, Church Street – said that a family member of hers is a member of the TPZ. Her remarks are only hers. She said that usually in the matter of politics things usually work themselves out and she tries not to get involved, however this seems to have taken on a life of its own. It seems that most of the Council was so quick to place blame that it was obvious some of you did not do your homework before you spoke on the vendors in Newington, instead you chose to believe rumor and innuendo. If the Council had taken the time to read the minutes you would have seen that the Town Planner had wanted to ban vendors in Newington since 1994. Also in the July 28th minutes, one of the Commissioners meeting with the Town Manager, and the Town Manager's response also noted the safety problem. You would not have found any conflict of interest, alternative motive or harassment. She feels that this has gone on too far and much too long. If the Council had done their homework on vendors they would have found the norm that no one serves on the street side. She gave two examples in Hartford and New York. She said it seemed much easier to jump to trash people's band wagon than to see the obvious problem. She said that she expects more from the elected officials to at least do some research before making decisions that affect the citizens of Newington. To the Town Manager, maybe he forgot the conversation, it's been four months and the minutes have been out there. To the Deputy Mayor, she said that yes people should report situations that are unsafe. When people come before you they should be treated with respect.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive – spoke on the issue of the low income housing project at Victory Gardens to be built on Willard Avenue. She said that with several presentations no public participation was allowed at that time. On October 10th she was at the meeting which approved the site plan and once again there was no public hearing so public participation was not involved. At the end of the Board of Education meeting it was suggested that all three bodies, the Town Council, TPZ and Board of Education find a way to get together on one night and notice be given to the public. She said that she read that an informational meeting regarding the project was going to be

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held at the American Legion Post on Nov. 18 and the public was invited. That day she said she received in the mail an unsigned flier urging her and neighbors to rally against the project. Channel 3 News was present before the meeting but not during the meeting nor at the end. The tone of the meeting was not a pleasant one. Later she watched the Channel 3 11 PM news to hear that residents in Newington turned out in opposition to low income housing fearing that property values would go down and would have more traffic. She said that in today's mail she received another unsigned letter urging residents to file an appeal to the TPZ decision issued on November 10th granting site plans. She urged the Mayor and Councilors to find a way to get the word out to the public when matters such as these come before them and she urged the public to come out to these meetings.

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

A. 2011 Schedule of Town Council Meeting Dates

Councilor Cohen asked if a notice goes out to notify the boards and commissions of when the Jewish holidays are. Mrs. Trevethan answered yes. Councilor Nasinnyk asked about February 22 being vacation week. Mrs. Trevethan indicated that she will find the information on vacation weeks and report back.

B. Veteran's Observance Committee

Mayor Wright said that the basic idea is to set up a committee from an organizational standpoint recognizing the importance and significance of both Veterans Day and Memorial Day and Memorial Day Parade and to see that these programs go on without a hitch. He suggested that it should be a non-political committee, and perhaps we could have the American Legion Commander as a member of that committee, and commander of the VFW also a member of this committee. From the town prospective sometimes these things become last minute details. In addition to that this Town Council year puts a fair amount of money in the budget for the purpose of the Memorial Day Parade and he, the Mayor, has spoken with members of the American Legion and they asked for something like this. Councilor Cohen doesn't see the need for this, it's been going on for years and years and when someone retires maybe it takes a little while to catch up, but she doesn't see the need.

Councilor Klett asked if members would have to be Newington residents, or is any Veteran eligible to join. These should be people with the best interest of the Town. Mayor Wright said that it should be noted that these should be Newington residents and the purpose would be to assist these ceremonies because they are important. Councilor Klett said that with Mr. Fox having stepped up and her husband has been involved in it for years she thinks that having some structure would be a benefit. She said that these people are those who have the best interest of the Town in mind. Mayor Wright said right now with Captain Fox not involved there's not one person or place to go and we also need a point person. We should put a committee together and get an operational guide on what should be done to make sure we get the proper dignity for these ceremonies.

Councilor Nasinnyk said that the Mayor is the only one having been in the Armed Services and believes that the people on this committee should be people with experience. She said she wasn't sure the Councilors would have the kind of information needed in order to serve on the committee. Mayor Wright said that the probably shouldn't be any Councilors on this committee, but should have Veterans, a non political committee and get input of Veterans in Town. Councilor Cohen asked if the Mayor had discussed this issue with the Boy Scouts and the Kiwanis. Mayor Wright said no but he believes that this should be 'Veteran' centered. Councilor Klett, Mayor Wright and Deputy Mayor Lenares volunteered to do some research to put together the committee.

V RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (Action May Be Taken)

That the Newington Town Council hereby makes the following appointments:

17. Board of Education Roof Replacement Project Building Committee

5 Members (3 Town Council, 2 BOE)

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
NTC: Myra Cohen	42 Jeffrey Lane	D	NTC Term	N/A
NTC:	211 Beacon Street	D	NTC Term	N/A

Scott McBride				
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MOTION BY: Councilor Banach
 SECONDED BY: Councilor Nasinnyk
 VOTE: 9 - 0

VI. TAX REFUNDS Action Requested)

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$13,724.24 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 BY: Councilor Lenares
 SECONDED BY: Councilor Nasinnyk
 VOTE: 9 – 0

VII MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. Regular Meeting, November 9, 2010

Councilor Banach noted on Page 2, 3rd paragraph - the word ‘avoid’ should read “award”
 Councilor Cohen noted on Page 3, the amount reads \$643,000 in two places should read “\$640,000
 Also in Paragraph 4, the amount shown as \$250 should read \$250,000.
 Also in Paragraph 2, 3rd line from the bottom should read “why should we should not wait” to know...
 Councilor Banach moved to accept the minutes as amended.
 Councilor Cohen seconded - Vote 9 -0

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

Mr. Salomone said the inaugural episode of, NTT, Newington Town TV; a monthly program getting into the various departments to show what the Town does and to keep residents informed of the Town’s many services will air on November 30 on NCTV. This episode talks about what the departments do around the holiday time, especially for people less fortunate than us. Mr. Salomone said that he will be hosting the show briefly but eventually the programming will rotate among departments from month to month and will be spear headed by an intern this year from the program from UCONN. He saw a void that there wasn’t a monthly program like this in town, showing various interesting information items from the snow plow program to the Police Department. Mayor Wright asked if this would be done during work hours. Mr. Salomone said yes, it’s taped by the intern so it’s edited by her. Mayor Wright asked what it will cost or how many hours will be needed to produce this, and will it take employees away from their duties. Mr. Salomone said that part of their duties is to inform the public and that since it will rotate among various departments it will not be an enormous amount of time. Mayor Wright asked if will be non political and won’t be related to budget items. Mr. Salomone said it is non-political and we won’t get into budget and things like that and hopefully you’ll find it informative. Mayor Wright asked would it be possible to have a dark period of the show so we don’t cross that line and Mr. Salomone said that after people see it, it won’t be a problem.

Councilor Klett asked about former Mayor Mortensen having had a show on the Mayor’s show and he was in the snow plow. Mr. Salomone said that that show has been gone for several years, but this is a little different, and this one will be so the public can see how the government works. Councilor Klett said that she thinks this warrants some further discussion. Mr. Salomone said he could delay it if she has concerns about it. Councilor Klett said that always being sensitive to having union employees and can’t be sure what might result in a grievance situation. She wants to make sure that we don’t leave ourselves open for a problem. Councilor Cohen thinks the show is a good idea and with it we wouldn’t have so many people wondering what we’re doing. Mr. Salomone said it mentions several activities that are non denominational, but if there are concerns he doesn’t want to overstep his bounds. Mayor Wright expressed his concern about doing this in the budget time; he thinks it could be looked at as a political thing. Mr. Salomone said that he always out there as Town Manager talking to people about what we do. Councilor Klett said that she thinks that’s what Mr. Salomone gets

paid for and is not sure that that's we're paying in Parks & Grounds and is there another community doing this. Mr. Salomone said he is sure there are other towns doing this, and suggested looking at the first one and see how it goes. Councilor Nasinnyk said that the more information given to the public the better and seeing how things go on a daily basis and when former Mayor Mortensen did a program with the trash bins, and it went over much smoother than in other towns and she would be very interested in seeing how this goes. Councilor Banach said that he likes the idea and the more information we can get to the public the better, and the idea of transparency, what do my tax dollars go for, what do you do etc. and it gives the public a better idea and better choices. Councilor Klett said that she is not opposed to this, but the public may not think that to take a paid employee off their duties to go on a television show is a good thing and this should not become a problem for us.

Mayor Wright said that we should go with the first show and talk about it more and as the Councilor we should see it before you do it. Mr. Salomone said he didn't want the Council get involved, but it can be done on off duty times. He said that he will defer to the Council and if there's a concern he will get into more nitty gritty. Councilor Cohen said that she has confidence in Mr. Salomone's ability to keep it neutral. Mr. Salomone reiterated that the first show will air November 30th, Tuesday 7 PM and it is called "Newington TV – NTV"

Mr. Salomone went on to the budget process which starts tomorrow; it will be a difficult process, financially we're in good shape, the State Government provides the Town with about 20% of its revenue so anything the government does will affect Newington.

Mr. Salomone said that the leaf program is a popular process that the people like, just putting the leaves out front and not have to bag them. There will probably be one more pass with the leaf collection trucks over the next several days, weather permitting.

IX COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Nagel said he recently attended a meeting of NCTV, AT&T is yet to be connected for local access channels, it is not the fault of NCTV, but has to do with the vendor and public should hold on, it will happen. Also those who have Cox TV may have received message from Cox concerning getting Town meetings, Cox has decided that any analogue television hooked up to Cox needs to get a digital converter, the short version is if you have a problem you should contact Cox TV and not NCTV.

Councilor Klett said that the Turf Field Committee met and will be having two meetings on December 13th at 7 PM and December 16th at 6 PM if anyone would like to join us.

X PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (IN PERSON/VIA TELEPHONE) 860-665-8736 (3 minute time limit per speaker on any item)

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton – noted how the Committee on Economic Development went out of their way to try and make everyone happy, with their presentations, and she asked one person involved why we couldn't have done it all in one meeting and she was told that's not the way the Town wanted it done. Regarding the budget season, Ms. Lyons urged everyone to come out and get involved, she recently attended a Capitol Improvements meeting which she found very interesting, in the past years she's seen proposed projects and then at the last minute when the budget is being voted on things got changed. She also said that she did receive the post card from NCTV and received four different answers as to how it would work. The bottom line is that we're entitled to one free receiver, with no charge for the receiver, no charge for the service and will be until April, 2012, but again that was the fourth answer she received. She went on regarding discussion back in December on adding time for public participation, at that time Mayor Wright stated that he would try to be more flexible and looked to the Councilors for direction. As of this date we're still limited to three minutes.

XI REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Klett received an email from the Town Manager regarding activity at Cedar Mountain in that there is nothing changed there. Mr. Salomone said that there's nothing different. Councilor Klett said that she wanted the public to be aware of that and there has been some posting, but wanted the public to know that if there is any change that the Council would share it with the public.

Councilor Cohen said this Monday, Susan Campbell will be the guest speaker at the Kiwanis meeting at 7 PM at Paradise Pizza and the public is invited. She also wished everyone a safe and happy Holiday season.

Councilor Nasinnyk said that she has noticed that the streets are clear of leaves and look very good and also wished everyone a very and safe Holiday Season.

Councilors Nagel, Casasanta and the Mayor wished everyone a very happy and safe Holiday season.

Mayor Wright also wished everyone a happy and safe Holiday and reminded everyone of Saturday, December 4th, is "Stuff a Cruiser" day, where new toys can be given to a Newington family for a better Christmas for the children. The cruiser will be at the Walmart from 9 AM to 4 PM. Also on that same evening at 5 PM to 6 PM will be the street lighting ceremony on Main Street. Also he mentioned regarding Victory Gardens, he said that the whole process they've gone through working with the Town Planner, Town Manager and himself, has been going on for about two years and worked with a lot of concerns and he thanked them for their hard work, because they didn't have to do that. He wished everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Wright noted that the scheduled Executive Session has been postponed.

XII ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Lenares moved to adjourn the meeting at 8 PM

Councilor Klett seconded - Vote 9 – 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Richard
Council Clerk