



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR JEFF WRIGHT

**MINUTES
NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
September 8th 2009**

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

Councilors Present	
Councilor Christopher Banach	X
Councilor Tony Boni	X
Councilor John "Jay" Bottalico	X
Councilor Thomas J. Bowen	X
Councilor Myra Cohen	X
Councilor Mike Lenares	X
Councilor David Nagel	X
Councilor Kristine Nasinnyk	X
Mayor Jeff Wright	X

Staff Present	
Town Manager - John Salomone	X
Executive Assistant - Jaime Trevethan	X
Council Clerk - Scott Coleman	X
Director of Finance - Ann Harter	X
Director of Facilities - Bob Korpak	X

III. AWARDS/PROCLAMATIONS

A. Constitution Week (2009 – 89)

Mayor Wright invited Beverly Manning and Barbara Crede of the Willard-Welles Stanley Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution to receive the below mentioned proclamation.

Mayor Wright moved the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

**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, 2009 marks the 222nd 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 Jeffrey Wright 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**

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

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 Bottalico
Motion passed 9-0; unanimous**

B. Leukemia, Lymphoma & Myeloma Awareness Month (2009 – 90)

Mayor Wright moved the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS, blood cancers currently afflict more than 894,543 Americans with an estimated 138,530 new cases diagnosed each year, and
WHEREAS, leukemia, lymphoma and myeloma will kill an estimated 52,910 people in the United States this year, and
WHEREAS, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, through voluntary contributions, is dedicated to finding cures for these diseases through research efforts and the support of those who suffer from them, and
WHEREAS, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society maintains offices on Fairfield County and Meriden, Connecticut to support patients with these diseases and their family members in the Town of Newington, and
WHEREAS, the Town of Newington is similarly committed to the eradication of these diseases and supports the treatment of its citizens that suffer from them, and
WHEREAS, the Town of Newington encourages private efforts to enhance research funding and education programs that address these diseases,
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Newington joins with The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in designating the month of September 2009 as Leukemia, Lymphoma & Myeloma Awareness Month to enhance the understanding of blood related cancers and to encourage participation in voluntary activities to support education programs and the funding of research programs to find a cure.**

**Motion seconded by Councilor Bowen
Motion passed 9-0; unanimous**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Tom Ganley TPZ 223 Goodale Drive, Newington
Mr. Ganley commented on the Center Parking Lot project. He referenced Newington’s Plan of Conservation and Development as well as that of the Capitol Region. He emphasized that the Parking lot is only the beginning of the revitalization process.

Judy Igelski Resident 23 Old Musket Drive Newington
Ms. Igelski stated that the purpose of her speaking was to improve communications between the Town Council and the town residents.

- She specifically asked about sharing, publicly, the general concerns expressed by residents who communicate with the body via email.
- She also expressed her preference for maintaining the Council’s meeting schedule and for not canceling meetings. .
- She stated her concerns over the mention by an elected official of the closing of a local business in Lowrey Place Plaza. She did not feel it appropriate without the express permission of the business owner, and that the disclosure might have unanticipated consequences. She expressed her opinion that an apology was due the affected party.

Rose Lyons Resident 46 Elton Drive Newington
Ms. Lyons complimented the Council on having the Council Rules of Procedure available for the public. She further commented on new business agenda item V.B., Transfers of Capital, regarding earmarking further funds for the downtown revitalization. She expressed her interest in having some of the revitalization funds allocated to a particular dress design shop for signage.

Maddie Kenny Resident 53 Crestview Drive Newington

Ms Kenny commented about the poor quality and dangerous nature the sidewalks along Market Square. She stated that she had almost fallen and that this had also been mentioned by others with whom she had spoken. Additionally, she expressed her wishes that all of the revitalization funds not be used for the parking lot project, and her opinion that added shopping facilities would be more beneficial.

Mark Pappa Resident 105 Back Lane Newington

- Mr. Pappa commented on the signage mentioned by Ms. Lyons, stating that private capital might be available for this funding
- He cautioned about making comparisons between the municipal parking lot project and the privately owned Lowrey Place. He stated that while the town might wish to assist Lowrey Place, it was clearly not the same as investing in the municipal project.
- He discussed the revitalization's parking lot and center green component, and how its goal is to attract an influx of new capital, as well as making the downtown more business friendly, along with improving mobility for high-rise residents. He expressed his support for the project, and commented on how well it was thought out.
- He stated that he favors the closing of dormant and completed project accounts and using the funds for revitalization projects.

Neil Forte Resident 123 Church Lane Newington

Mr. Forte is involved with the Downtown Businessmen's Association. He mentioned the October 9th Taste of Newington Center, and expressed his support for the downtown revitalization and the parking lot renovation.

Michael Gallon Resident 43 Cheney Lane Newington

Also a member of the Downtown Businessmen's Association, he spoke to encourage the Council to transfer found available capital funds into the revitalization project.

V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Driving Simulator Agreement Renewal Justice Assistance Grant (2009 - 91)

Councilor Bottalico moved the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby authorizes John Salomone, Town Manager, or his designee pursuant to Section 504 of the Newington Town Charter, to enter into Agreement No. 7.30-02(09), an Amendment to License Agreement No. 3.27-01(07) between the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Town of Newington for the Use of Space at 160 Pascone Place, Newington, Connecticut. All previous previous actions with respect to said Amendment taken by the Town Manager or his designee are hereby ratified.

Motion seconded by Councilor Nagel

Council Cohen inquired about the long-term location of the driving simulator facility. **Town Manager Salomone** responded that the town is just renewing the lease year-to-year, and that there is no long-term plan.

Motion passed 9-0; unanimous

B. Transfers within Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures Fund (2009 – 92)

Councilor Bottalico moved the following resolution:

CERTIFICATION:

In accordance with Section 808 of the Town Charter, I hereby certify that there exists, free from encumbrances, in the following appropriations in the Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures Fund, the amounts listed below:

Account Number	Title	Amount
88312	Town Hall Elevator Modernization	43,705
88420	Library Roof Repair	13,782
88021	Stamm Road/Liberty Street Flood Control Study	2,970
	Total	60,457

Ann J. Harter, Director of Finance

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby transfers the above-certified funds in the Capital and Non-recurring Expenditures *Fund to the following account in the Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures Fund:*

Account Number	Title	Amount
88036	Demolition of 90 Welles Drive North	\$60,457

Motion seconded by Councilor Bowen

Councilor Bottalico explained that the purpose of transferring and allocating these funds is to demolish the former home of NCTV, channel 14/16, located on Welles Drive, which is scheduled to be relocated to Town Hall in October. The ground-breaking for the new senior housing which replaces the NCTV facility will be in early October.

Mayor Wright added that 90 Welles is also the former location of the Art League which has been relocated to Town Hall.

Motion passed 9-0; unanimous

C. 8-24 Referral: Costello Industries Land Gift (2009 – 93)

Councilor Boni moved the following resolution

WHEREAS, the current owner of two vacant parcels of land totaling 1.75 acres located at the unimproved end of Costello Road, Costello Industries, desires to donate the two parcels to the Town of Newington; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 8-24, the Town Council has referred the matter to the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission for a report on the proposed land gift; and

WHEREAS, the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission has returned a favorable report to the Council on this matter; and

WHEREAS, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission finds that the Town's ownership of these parcels will protect the wetlands and water course which runs through this land and increase the open space buffer between the Berlin Turnpike business corridor and Culver Street;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Town Manager is authorized to accept the gift of the aforementioned parcels of land from Costello Industries.

Mayor Wright thanked Costello Industries for making the "generous gift" to the town.

Motion seconded by Councilor Banach

Motion passed 9-0, unanimous

D. 8-24 Referral: John Scelza Land Gift (2009 – 94)

Deputy Mayor Lenares moved the following resolution

WHEREAS, the current owner of one unimproved parcel of land totaling 18,640 square feet located at Assessor's Map 28, Lot #63 and adjacent to 211 Lamp Lighter Lane, John Scelza of Ramblewood, Inc, desires to donate said parcel to the Town of Newington; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 8-24, the Town Council has referred the matter to the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission for a report on the proposed land gift; and

WHEREAS, the Newington Town Plan and Zoning Commission has returned a favorable report to the Council on this matter; and

WHEREAS, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission finds that the Town's ownership of said parcel will add to the existing five acre conservation open space in the neighborhood.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Town Manager is authorized to accept the gift of the aforementioned parcels of land from John Scelza of Ramblewood, Inc.

Motion seconded by Councilor Nasinnyk

Motion passed 9-0; unanimous

Mayor Wright thanked Jack Scelza and Ramblewood for their "generous donation".

VI. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A. Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

Mayor Wright invited Bob Korpak, Director of Facilities and Ann Harter, Director of Finance, to discuss the grant. **Director Korpak** explained that this grant is part of the Federal Government's energy efficiency under the Reinvestment Act of 2009. The state has been allocated \$14.9 Mil of which Newington's share is approximately \$110,000.

Director Harter explained that while there is no definite date for submission of the grant, she would like to proceed with its preparation.

Mayor Wright asked Director Korpak how the town would save money undertaking this project. The director explained that the project would replace the original 1970's air-handling unit and controls. **Councilor Nasinnyk** inquired whether this would help with temperature as well as air-handling. **Director Korpak** acknowledged that it would. **Councilor Bottalico** asked Director Korpak about the projected 20% reduction in use of electricity and fossil fuel. **Town Manager Salomone** stated that the state goal was a 20% reduction, and that this project would contribute toward that, but that they did not have an exact number to provide.

Mayor Wright inquired what the current expenditure is currently. **Director Harter** responded, "about \$70,000/year".

Councilor Cohen asked whether matching funds would be required. Director Korpak responded that they would not be required. He stated that the preliminary engineering and equipment pricing indicated that the project would cost "about \$120,000" and that project could "probably be brought in under the grant".

Councilor Bowen commented that the library is probably a good subject for this grant. **Councilor Nagel** agreed.

B. Various Transfers – Capital Project Funds

Mayor Wright had previously asked Director Harter to review the capital project reserves for projects which had been completed and those whose substantial fund balances which might be allocated toward the downtown Constitution Square revitalization project. The Mayor mentioned that bids had been opened today and that by next meeting they should have a firm idea what the numbers are for the project. He stated that the Economic Development Commission and Downtown Revitalization Committee are meeting on the September 16th to review the bids.

Director Harter explained that the "Summary of Capital Projects" memo of September 3rd, provided to the Town Manager and Council, details the status of project fund balances. The projects are listed and sorted into four categories based on their fund balance "availability". 1) Complete, 2) Inactive, 3) Active, 4) Public School. Director Harter indicated that project funds falling into categories 1 & 2 are generally considered to be available for return to the General Fund and and/or use on other projects. She explained that the projects, which are associated with Public Building Committees, must be closed, as per ordinance, before their funds become available. Total available funds, as per the chart provided in the memo, are 1) \$86,178 and 2) \$316,606. Not considered to be available for use on other projects are 3) \$3,881,810 and 4) \$379,914.

Councilor Cohen suggested that the “available” funds should be “prioritized”. “Anytime money is available, you want to look at where the needs are,” she stated.

Councilor Bowen explained that there are two views on how the money should be appropriated: 1) for revitalization or 2) as a reserve to defray next year’s taxes. He characterized the \$300K increase defrayed by AFSCME, as a “gaping hole in next year’s budget”, and suggested that the “available” funds, amounting to about \$230K, be held in reserve against future expenses in next year’s budget.

Councilor Cohen remarked that the original grant for the parking lot had been \$1 mil., and that the project was to be done for that \$1 mil.” She stated that everyone wants to take care of the drainage and paving problems, but that there are other more visible projects, and business needs, such as Market Square, which could use the funds. She emphasized that “[the public] cannot afford to put anything else in there”. “There’s more to the Town of Newington than a parking lot”, the Councilor stated.

Mayor Wright explained that it was he who had requested the \$1.8 mil from the Governor, for the parking lot project, and that it was the budgeted amount put forth by Ed Meehan, the Town Planner. The town only received \$1 mil and that there were no strings attached restricting the size of the project. The Mayor continued that, as it now stands, the Town is coming in under budget. He further explained that since 1976, thirteen studies have been conducted on downtown revitalization, all paid for by taxpayers. “It’s time to move forward”, he stated. “We have a very good plan, which the Economic Development and Downtown Revitalization Commissions believe is the right plan ... that will help create jobs, and will expand our property tax base in the downtown.” He explained that he felt that it’s time to invest in Constitution Square, along with Market Square; and that it’s always been part of the long-term plan. He stated that he felt that the town should do both over time, not one or the other. “We need to set the table for the future”, he said. Furthermore, he believes that now is the right time for the project due to lower costs, and that the Town will benefit when the economy turns around and businesses/people are looking to invest. He pointed to the fact that \$145K of the found and available funds was earmarked for Newington Center improvements and that he considers this project one of those. Another \$15K on the list is for Municipal Parking Lot. That totals \$160K of the \$226K on the list. He stated that he felt that thirteen studies and thirty-three years should indicate the importance and interest in downtown revitalization.

Councilor Cohen responded explaining that she didn’t feel that the Mayor should be comparing an elderly housing project to a municipal parking lot, already funded by \$1 mil., which could be used to fix the drainage and the parking lot. The Mayor went on to say that he felt both were equally important. He stated that the downtown revitalization is about economic development, and creating jobs. He continued, commenting that the revitalization is about new buildings and more tax revenues which allow the Town to fund additional projects for seniors, the library and education.

Councilor Banach commented that the project cost is up to \$1.6 Mil and questioned the expense and embellishments. He also cautioned concerning the state of the next year’s economy, and expressed his desire to put money aside for next year. “This is not the time to do the add-ons, this is the time to get the job done ... to make the parking lot decent and nice in appearance.”

Councilor Nasinnyk explained that she had heard from numerous constituents who expressed their concerns about the expenditures on the parking lot. They told her that they thought there were other things more worthwhile than a parking lot. She expressed her concerns about the safety issues related to the parking lot. She stated that she has a problem with the embellishments in the parking lot, but not the drainage and paving repairs.

Councilor Boni stated “the Town is stagnant”, but feels that now, with this project, there is an opportunity to attract new businesses. “You can’t expect new businesses to invest in this Town, if this Town won’t invest in itself”, he stated. Furthermore, he said that he wants to do the project right, and is opposed to using the band-aid approach. **Councilor Banach** responded commenting that private capital was put into Lowrey Place and that it hadn’t paid off and wondered why putting government money would work any better. **Councilor Bottalico’s** position is that the parking is owned by the Town and that the repairs are up to it. He feels that the Town should do it right or not at all. **Councilor Banach** responded that he wished to keep the amount to \$1 mil. The **Mayor** answered that the original estimate for the work was \$1.8 mil, and the fact that the Town received \$1 mil as a grant did not change that reality.

Councilor Cohen stated that the Council was never told that an additional \$800K would be required. She explained that the Council was given an outline from Ed Meehan showing how the project could be done for \$1 mil, and that the Council was not told until some time later that the cost would be \$1.8 mil. She stated her concern about the extra cost in this economic climate. **The Mayor** responded that he couldn't understand why some of the Council was so unwilling to invest in revitalization, even in the face of comparatively low tax increases over the past two years. **Councilor Cohen** stated that the budget increase statistics, provided by the Mayor, shouldn't be taken out of context and required further explanation.

Councilor Bowen refuted several points previously made:

- Ed Meehan told the Council that the cost for fixing the drainage and repaving the parking lot would be \$1 mil
- He had heard from Joe Harpie, EDC Chairman that the plan was to stay within the \$1 mil budget
- The engineers never showed up with a budget inside \$1 mil. "They were never tasked to stay inside \$1 mil."
- West Hartford Center has "lousy parking lots". They did not need a parking lot to become a vibrant shopping center. They refaced the sidewalks and the facades of the buildings.
- The Town has spent much (through STEAP grants, and sale of property to Target) on downtown revitalization. He commented that Main Street has changed much over the past seven years, and gave examples.
- The next step for downtown revitalization was agreed to be Market Square.

Councilor Bowen requested that the additional funds above \$1 mil. be instead used for Market Square. According to the Councilor, Ed Meehan has stated that the entire Market Square could be done over for \$500K. If the budget looks OK for next year, the Councilor would like to see the money be put into Market Square. He mentioned making the street one-way, diagonal parking, and bump-out curbing.

Councilor Nagel explained that he would prefer making the Town vibrant, rather than doing a patch-job and remaining stagnant.

Mayor Wright stated that he along with the Town Manager had met with Bob Weiner, the developer of Blue Back Square and asked him what he would do to revitalize Newington. The developer suggested putting work into the parking lot, to square it up and put a focal point in the middle of it where activities could take place. He added that members of both the Chamber and the Downtown Business Assn. supported this project with their communications. He stated that Market Square was next, but that he felt that the Town should take care of the biggest and most expensive project, having the greatest potential impact, first.

VII. TAX REFUNDS (2009 – 95)

Councilor Bowen moved the following tax refunds:

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$7,464.39 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 Nasinnyk
Motion passed 9-0**

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

Added: Resignation: Judy Igelski from the Library Board of Trustees. She will be accepting a position as a corporate member on Sept. 14th

A. Town Manager Report

Councilor Bottalico inquired about the Parking Ground Division overtime of \$7,478 for the Extravaganza, which he believed had been removed from their budget. **Town Manager Salomone** explained that this expense is offset on the revenue side of the budget. He added that the event itself actually turned a small \$100 profit compared with last year's \$16,000 loss. Upon further questioning of police overtime, Manager Salomone explained that year-to-year July spending was down about \$18K. Councilor Bottalico asked when

the impact of adding the four new officers would be seen. The Manager stated that he thought the “trend [is] good”. Last year \$64K was expended, this year \$48K. The Councilor expressed his concerns that the cost would be “out of sight”. **Town Manager Salomone** cautioned that “it was never meant to be a one-to-one” when creating the new positions”, and reiterated that “the trend for the last three years has been down”.

Councilor Boni inquired about the discrepancy in the amounts being reported on pages one and two of the Manager’s Monthly Report for July. **Manager Salomone** explained that the amounts differ due to the basis on which they’re being reported; one is based on pay-periods and the other on gross salaries. He said that, in the future, he would either reconcile the amounts correctly, or only provide one chart.

Councilor Banach questioned the Manager about the number of referrals (one) by the Juvenile Review Board, and inquired why the number was not “more significant”. The Manager said he would follow up on the inquiry.

Councilor Nagel asked for a facilities and Meadows progress update for the benefit of the public. **Town Manager Salomone** responded that the Town Hall renovation project is on track; that a week had been lost but that it was now back on schedule. The windows are in, sheet rocking has been completed, painting has started and the project is on track to make the transfer of Channel 14 sometime in early October. The paperwork, he continued, for New Samaritan has been completed, and they are taking the documents to HUD for final approval; then they’ll be ready-to-proceed, he stated.

Councilor Banach inquired about a Dog Park design presentation attended in Rocky Hill by a member of Parks & Rec. He asked whether the Town had a site in mind and about the timetable. The Manager responded that he was not aware of any plans and/or their details.

Councilor Cohen moved to add an executive session to the agenda concerning the status of property acquisition.

Councilor Bowen seconded the motion
The motion passed 9-0.

IX. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Nagel mentioned his attendance at the NCTV meeting, and allayed concerns that NCTV might be off-air for an extended period of time. He said that a scroller would inform the public during the transition. He also mentioned the AT & T discussion with the DPUC about using its services to deliver programming. The Councilor reported that both he and Councilor Bowen had attended the Fire Commission meeting and communicated that the department had experienced an increase in volunteers.

Councilor Cohen reported on her attendance at the Commission on Aging and informed the Council that the state did not end up cutting the Dial-a-Ride budget. The Councilor noted that the family of Robin Rubino would be establishing fund-raising efforts in her memory.

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Sandy Lallier Resident 27 Elton Drive Newington
Ms. Lallier commented that she was disturbed about the characterization of the Town as stagnant by Councilor Boni. She said that she was further disturbed by the approach suggested that the downtown revitalization projects should be done all at once. She indicated that she preferred doing the work a little at a time.

Rose Lyons Resident 46 Elton Drive Newington
Ms. Lyons described her walk around the site of the municipal parking lot project. She also requested that someone speak with the dress shop owner about signage.

Maddie Kenny Resident 53 Crestview Drive Newington
Ms. Kenny spoke about her tour of the parking lot, and inquired whether any consideration had been given to conducting an air-quality study of the area.

XI. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Boni thanked the Town Manager for his responsiveness in attending to an overgrown property, he had mentioned at a previous meeting by the Councilor.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION RE LITIGATION/COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Councilor Bowen moved to go into executive session at 9:07.

Councilor Bottalico seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-0.

All Councilors, Mayor, Town Manager Salomone and Attorney Ancona were present.

Councilor Boni moved to adjourn from executive session at 9:14.p.m

Councilor Cohen seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-0.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Bowen moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm

Councilor Nagel seconded the motion

The motion passed 9-0

Respectfully Submitted

Scott Coleman
Clerk of the Council

September 15th 2009