



John L. Salomone  
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON  
131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR JEFF WRIGHT**

Minutes

Newington Town Council

March 31, 2010 – Special Meeting

Mayor Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers of the Newington Town Hall.

**I PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**II ROLL CALL**

**Councilors Present:**

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

**Staff Present**

John Salomone, Town Manager  
Ann Harter, Finance Director  
Lisa Rydecki, Asst. Finance Director  
Jaime Trevethan, Exec. Asst. to the Town Manager  
Mary Richard, Council Clerk

**III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Steven Summa, 325 Hampton Court – Regarding the proposed budget, he does not support the budget increase, does not support the Board of Education request for 3.6% increase or the Town Manager's request for 3%. He suggested that the Town budget should be frozen this year. He continued with three points, in most corporate America in the last 12 to 18 months he has seen pay freezes and over the next six months with a start to increase pay will be more than 1 to 2% pay raise. Also personal income in the State has dropped for the second time in 40 years. 2008 – 2009 and back in 2002. Nationally personal income fell 1.7% for the first time in 40 years. Also, he stated that the State of Connecticut is expecting 3 to 3.5 billion dollars short fall in the State budget. The next Governor will have the task of cutting 25% to 25% from the budget. He said that the Town Council prepared for more like 10 to 15% and will not be a minor increase and for teachers to think that they will get their 4,5,6% pay raise is outrageous. He said he does support a comprise of 1 to 1% so that the Town workers can get a raise, but does not support the teachers. If they do not go to arbitration, when this contract is up in two years then it should be frozen.

Amy Morris, 702 Jacobs Lane – is here in support of the Clem Lemire turf field and driving by the field she said that the field is all lit up nice but in the fall there's nothing, and football season is fall time. She works

for the State of Connecticut and understands the budget, when there's an opportunity of \$500,000 grant the last thing we should do is lose it. With whatever means necessary, we have to use this money. Having just bought a home in Newington and have made a commitment to the Town and to the schools and our youth program, and we're a new family and new taxpayers as well. She said her family would like to see a new turf field and her children should have better than what she had. She feels that there's no reason why this process can't get started. Lastly, she said that her family is there just about all week and seeing this beautiful complex on the left and seeing the football field on the right. Being Newington CT we should have the best complex in the State so when other teams come here they walk through the gates, they think "Wow", this is first class. She said that not everything at once needs to happen but we need to start taking advantage of this \$500,000. grant.

Jaden Morris, 702 Jacobs Lane – stated that he would like the new turf field because when his team mates walk onto other fields they think it's cool and wish they could have one of those fields.

Mark Pappa, 205 Bach Lane – hearing a lot of the word 'painful' and how difficult some things will be. He redefined how painful really is. Painful is when 94,000 people laid off in Connecticut, Pratt & Whitney is saying any where but Connecticut, that's painful. People not finding jobs, collecting unemployment, Senior income dropped 50% to 60% because their spouse was laid off from not finding a job. Paying for Cobra, losing your home, losing more workers in the State age 24 to 35 that's painful. He believe the reason is because the cost of Government is out of control, taxes out of control, salaries, pensions and benefits are complete out of control and most importantly unsustainable. He refers to the Board of Education budget. Our biggest challenge is asking the teachers union to come to the table so teachers and administrators can forego their raises, not layoffs but massive raises of \$ 1.3 million dollars. He said that from his count there were 24 Board of Ed teachers and administrators making salaries over \$100,000. With no health care. Adding health care it puts a majority of 510 people over the \$100,000 mark, we pay \$19,423. per person at the Board of Education just in health care benefits. He asks for shared sacrifices and not more than that. For the teachers not to share in this sacrifice he believes is absolutely selfish gesture. He believes it's unfair to other taxpayers and other Town employees and others who have made those sacrifices and also unfair to the school children who each year get less and less in form of supplies while the teachers union grabs more and more. He urges the Council to stick to their budget and not give in to the Board of Education request to cover these utterly ridiculous pay raises when everyone else is making PAINFUL cuts at home.

Jim Robidoux (address unknown) - wants to comment on the field for Clem Lemire. He understands that we have that grant and we'll lose it if we don't use it. He said that not everything on the field does not have to be done right away, but if we could get that field in, after coaching for 17 years and these kids in Town deserve this.

Billy Michaels (address unknown) - represents synthetic insulation company, he lives in Glastonbury. He has been following this situation and saw that this money has been available for so long and feels that it shouldn't go to waste. This money can be used and actually make money in the future. This field has the ability to have sessions on it for 365 days a year. It can be used for rental and anyone who knows about sports knows how important it is for children to grow up with the right mentoring and really makes a difference in their lives. This field would be booked in advance for events two to three years. Also, safety is a great concern for children. When looking at the cost, he has seen costs from different companies and some who have done studies and are way out of line. He said he's here to answer any questions about cost savings and the goals can be reached.

David Tupper, 106 Saddle Hill Road – says that we've had this grant for 2 years, and done nothing with it. He said all we've done is quick fixes, and patches in the hopes of getting the turf field. We need to do something, the field is falling apart, the fence is falling apart and someone will get hurt out there. The drainage is terrible and the cost to do this project will never be lower than it is at this time. If we continue to do nothing it will continue to get worse.

Peter Arbur, 133 Tremont Street – he has one comment. These are difficult times and we all have to tighten our belts a bit and the focus has been on the Board of Education. He wants to bring this to the

attention of the Town Council; this year the health/insurance the Board will get back roughly \$490,000. This has been the bonus in previous years. He said he knows there has been some type of agreement way back where the Town has been held hostage, he thinks that this year we should look at this money as an offset, not as a bonus.

Kevin Daly, 31 Stoddard Avenue – supports the turf field at Clem Lemire and looking at surrounding neighbors who have turf field. West Haven was the only field to have this field and since then our neighbors in Berlin, Danbury, Farmington, New Canaan, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Stanford, Weston and Westethersfield to name just a few. It's been noted that children who play on artificial turf have an advantage over students who do not. He stated that watching his son play at Wallace because the field is in such bad shape and has been said, the field could be used year round. Also, he said that the field could be rented to other town who do not have that luxury. He said after having coached for eight years and has been over the state and Newington little league has a field that rivals many if not most in the State and High School is a big deal, so why wouldn't the junior football program have the best so when getting to the high school level they've played on the best. He realizes that there's some concern about the safety of the rubber crumb, and there are studies out showing the very low concern. Also he mentions statistics on safety, the decrease in injuries 24 NCAA Division One football teams, 465 games were tracked, 230 on field turf, 235 on natural grass. There were 7% fewer total injuries on the turf, 3% fewer minor injuries, 19% fewer substantial and 22% fewer severe injuries. Finally he said that the Newington Children really deserve this field.

Peter Gajowiak, 60 Pickens Drive – he's encouraged by the number of people who came out to speak, and he does support this project. He believes this is the time to do this. Also he stated that he thinks we're getting quality product and is probably the best price we'll ever get and we can't afford to wait any longer. Finally he commented that reality we have to act with what we have in front of us and we can't afford some and we know we have the \$500,000. grant and he asks the Council to act on this proposal.

Mr. Dsau, (address unknown) - is a Hartford resident but has two children in the Newington school system and this is his third with the program coaching. Listening to both sides on the issue and the main issue in dealing with the grant, if there was not a grant available to us he thinks we wouldn't be having this discussion, but the fact that we have this money that will better the sports in Town for lots of people and other sports. He said that this is a very important in having a nice field is for the kids to play on and represent Newington. He said that after going to other places in the State where the fields are incredible and the kids are excited and it's a lot of fun, then coming to our field it's like an embarrassment. He said that with this money, we should move ahead and benefit the Town and the children and it's something that will be here for many years and represent Newington well.

Chez Pace (address unknown) - here as former Newington Midget Football member, Vice President and a parent of three children who came through the midget football program. He supports the Clem Lemire field getting done. He believes that if there is anything that can be done it would be a tremendous asset to the Town and for the children.

Bernadette Conway, 177 Hartford Avenue – is supporting the Board of Education, the Town Manager's 3% increase. She realizes that lots of people are speaking in favor of the turf and is having a problem understanding how we don't have enough money to put into the school budget, but even with the \$500,000. grant, this turf project would be 1.1 million dollars and she cannot justify putting money into a field over a Board of Education budget. She feels that it doesn't make sense, both of her children played there but at this time with issues we have it doesn't seem justified. She supports Councilors Banach and Nasinnyk, that a resident wants them to be recused of voting on the Town budget, because Councilor Banach is a teacher, Councilor Nasinnyk's husband is a teacher, this has never been in issue in the past and it should not be an issue now. Lastly, she is also here as an Open Space Committee member, she is asking for the Council's support for the allocation of funds toward the appraisals for the DEP grant we are pursuing in regards to Cedar Mountain and she states that she has every confidence in Chairperson Tom Bowen and strongly recommend that the Council support the Open Space Committee initiative in contacting the property owners.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive - Her position on the turf field is that we should use this \$500,000. grant and with another \$324,400. To be added to it will bring it up to \$824,400. but will it stop there or will it continue on and on. She doesn't believe that just because we have this grant we should use it just to use it. When we have a figure of \$824,400. That to do the turf field, no lighting, nothing else and that's where it will stop and not ask again. She said that what's painful to her is that as a life long resident of Newington having had many family members and friends using the field didn't feel they should have better than what they had, and were happy with what we were given. She has only known Newington, having grown up here. She doesn't feel that she know the Newington she sees now. She commented seeing planters with dead plants, she see blighted properties that no one is doing anything about, she see commercial properties that haven't been developed, she said that at the Council meeting and has heard more discussion about how many minutes to give the public to speak, and whether or not to open up the phone lines than I have heard about this artificial turf field. In January 2009 the grant was accepted and it was asked that it be further discussed. She said that she has heard nothing about this turf field until this budget came up this year. She is not in favor of doing the turf field at this time. She doesn't believe that the \$824,400. will be the end of it. She believes that the requests will continue.

Roland Bishop, 42 Woods Way - speaks in favor of using the grant. He is a coach in midget football, has no kids in the program but thinks that Ms. Lyons make a valid point. He believes we really don't know exactly what the cost is, but we should lock in the grant and would think that we're looking at something south of \$900,000. He makes the point that we can use the grant monies to determine that, with engineering and architectural design, and use the grant money for that and vote to shift some monies already in the CIP fund to make an investment but only after using some of the grant monies to know what exactly what a functional field will cost. He believes that we can get a lot of support for it if you're willing to make an investment tonight in doing that. He feels that there are a lot of volunteers that work on that facility and try to keep that field viable and with the \$500,000 from the State, and what we're asking for is an investment to find out exactly where we need to go. It would be a shame to lose and we should make a good faith effort to use it. He supports it under these circumstances, and thanks the Council for their time.

Amanda Hurwitz, 71 Harris Drive – read a statement – The United States is presently experiencing a financial crisis which began in 2007. Since that time economic stimulæ has been offered by the Federal Government in various forms such as taxes rebates. She would like to see Newington spend the \$500,000. Grant earmarked for Clem Lemire field to install an artificial turf field, expenditure of these funds would boost business and consumer spending in Connecticut and stimulate our economy alleviating some of the financial hardships that our citizens are facing.

Clark Castelle, 167 Connecticut Avenue – being a member of the Board of Education defends the NTA and the Board of Education said that the pressure to reopen a contract can only come when the finances of one party to the contract are crumbling entirely. He understands that the state of the Town for the time being is very good and thank all those who have managed this. He states that in his own family we have unemployment, underemployment, large premiums for insurance and he is stills supports the Board and NTA. Looking at the salaries increases for next year, the average salary for the teacher with Step increases, which include post graduate academic credits that these teachers have aid tuition for, with the expectation that raises would come later. The average salary next year would be \$74,000. According to citydata.com the household income in Newington in 2008 was \$72,229. Family income exceeds that by 17% which would be \$84,507. He stated that some of the comments made upsets him concerning the ridiculous increases which include 'steps' etc. Clipping the wings of the Board of Education...lots of you know what the history of contracts with boards and teachers has been over the last many years in Connecticut.

Bill Diblasio, 68 Harold Drive – wrote as a member of Midget Football Association and a current Park and Recreation Commissioner, he's asking for support for the turf field and would like the Council to use the \$500,000. grant awarded to Newington back in 2008 for the construction of the turf field at the Clem Lemire complex. He said that a great deal of work has gone into applying for and receiving the grant, not to mention the planning for the field. The Town of Newington should take full advantage of opportunity, like most of the surrounding towns, Berlin, Cromwell, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield and West Hartford which all have turf field in use and require much less maintenance. He feels the turf field in Newington would be a great

asset. Considering that we don't have one field in town that could accommodate all sports and all age groups involved. The turf field would also be safe and playable throughout the year, even baseball in the Spring. Studies have been done and paid for, recommendations have been made. Grants of this size don't grow on trees and we don't act now, we'll most likely lose this grant and be stuck footing the whole bill in two to three years. He stated in closing that DEP performed a study on the turf field in Berlin, which is seven years old and found nothing harmful and the field was deemed safe. He asked please to move forward with this project.

Mady Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive – stated that this time of the year when our elected officials must differentiate between our wants and needs and make decisions based on what is best for Newington. The word 'entitlement' should never enter into the decision making process. She said that it's amazing that on March 15 certain individuals stated that we are in hard economic times and urge the teachers to forego their contractual pay increases. She said that two nights later these same individuals lobbied for an additional expenditure for over a million dollars now reduced on fake grass. She realizes that monies in question come from different sources, but the emphases we see express a mind set. The rationale for spending this additional money just for the sake of using it doesn't seem right, it sounds too familiar, having been down that road before with other projects. She wonders how we justify this expenditure when other worthy projects are not funded. What she would like to see before any decision is made would be a complete breakdown on fees and costs for all aspects of the field as well as the lighting including but not limited to design, installation, materials, maintenance, replacement costs and yearly savings. No mention has been made as to whether or not the Parks Department will use the equipment we have or will be put out to private contractors. Ultimately, she thinks we should be thinking about necessary repairs to our Town Hall such as the front steps, they are falling apart. Also, the steps leading to Mill Pond bridge which could lead to personal injury and law suits. We need to take stock of wants and needs and cast aside feelings of entitlement. In her opinion this is not the time to do it.

George Chylinski, 57 Meadow Street – His son and daughter have been active in Town sports through the years including Clem Lemire. He believes that we should stay competitive with other towns in order to compete at the highest level. This week with the rain grass fields are soaked and not usable, and turf fields can be used at any time. We should use the \$500,000 grant to get the ball rolling so we won't have to find other ways in the future. He asks that we use the \$500,000, use it for the children and the field.

Dwayne Thomas, 401 Cedar Hollow Drive, Rocky Hill – serves on the Newington Midget Football Board, and touched on the reality and truth of it. True \$1.6 or \$1.2 was thrown out there but the reality is that we can get a field in with the \$800,000. Another point he makes is \$800,000 is not a lot of money in terms of 503 which is what we're asking for. He said he couldn't name a town or city that receives \$500,000 whether it's a DEP grant or Open Space, but we also have to use the space we have now. If we allow it go by the wayside, shame on us. The ground work has been done to obtain the grant, now it's a priority, we don't need lights now, bleachers and other stuff can wait. He's happy with the \$324,000 on paper and hopefully we can obtain this goal. He said that this is a text book case of common sense.

Jeff Hedberg, 120 Northwood Road – he also is speaking in favor of the turf field, he is the Chairman of the Parks & Rec, and wants to correct a few things said. The Parks & Rec has been studying this for months, and a lot of numbers that get thrown out is a lot of misinformation. CIP (Capitol Improvement) so this \$324,000 that would be put toward the turf field cannot go to the Board of Education. As far as the 1.6 million on the Park & Rec they were asked to make a wish list of things they would like to see at that complex. Never did the Parks & Rec think they would get 1.6 million dollars. In answer to the lady stating that this would keep costing, if they did everything on the wish list it would cost 1.6 million maybe a year ago, but now would cost less because of labor being given away. He stated that as far as the turf field on the budgetary stand point if the field goes in, we've got the \$500,000., the \$300,000 that's in the budget now we get the field, the fence etc, and what we save on maintenance and over time it's saving on the budget on over time towards labor. He is not asking for the 1.6 million, he thinks that what has been put aside in the budget would be perfect, we could get a field and fence and a safe playing area, plus we could rent the field for extra money toward a special revenue fund. These are things that haven't been talked about when we get away from the political side of it and would be a great opportunity. Lastly, the ladies that

don't want to spend the \$300,000. at those same meetings they have endless money for the Board of Education, so they're talking out of both sides of their mouths.

Tom Bowen, 22 Ridgeway – firstly as Chairman of the Open Space Committee, he appreciates the appraisal being put on the agenda for the evening and encourages going after the grant money. Also he supports the strategy that the Open Space Committee has put together in approaching the different land owners and discussing different strategies for developing their properties. Other items he brought up, he shares disappointment that the teachers have not come forward in this difficult time to help, he encourages them again and again, 3.5 salary increase, anything they can do to bring our budget lower would be greatly appreciated, but I think what the public has to understand is when you ask for zero % budget you're not reducing the teachers salaries, all you'll be doing it taking away from the children. He's heard this evening is that our children are entitled to the best football field we can give them, but more importantly is the best education system we can give them. If he has to choose between the two, he corrects the gentleman who spoke, he said that we can move money from CIP into the Board of Education budget, done before and can be done again. Regarding the fields, reducing the Board of Education budget by 6/10<sup>th</sup> % approximately \$360,000, funny that's the same amount needed for the turf fields. Shame on the Board of Parks & Rec, two things, they had the opportunity to change this grant and move this field to the High School which is exactly where 90% of the turf fields reside now. If that had been done we could have gotten the State off setting money, cheaper to the Town, wouldn't lights, bleachers so shame on the Board of Education for not taking this action, and he asks to please support the Board of Education budget, and if we can get a field that's great but not the time to take money from other parts of the budget.

Frank Niro, 148 Eagle Drive – has been part of Newington Midget Football for about 10 – 12 years and is in favor of getting the field in there. Over the years they've worked and played in muddy fields, water, drainage problems and sometimes dangerous for the children. If we don't do this now, he is sure we will all kick ourselves in the butt saying that we should have done it when we had the money and it will cost more later. He is in favor of this, tighten our pockets and get it done.

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane – Vice Chair Newington Parks & Recreation- he is in support of the turf field, it is definitely needed and would be fully utilized by the Parks & Rec Department. He made the point that the grant is good until July 2014 with no eminent danger of losing it as long as we draw down on it and if the Council sees fit to fund that \$324,000. and can accomplish what's needed he fully supports that. Another point he clarifies is that Mr. Bowen blamed the Parks & Rec Department for insisting that the grant money be used at Clem Lemire, the reality is the grant money was site specific and the site was Clem Lemire, not Newington High School. Lastly, before he went away this winter we were for a letter from the DEP stating that if we were to spend the grant money on that turf field they would have to give it its blessings and to the best of y knowledge he hasn't seen that letter, it could exist but it's his understanding that we're not allowed to spend that grant money on construction of that field until we get that letter from the DEP. He supports it 100%, and we need to be cautious on how we proceed, but would like to see it funded.

Dean Casella, 277 Tremont Street – a Newington Midget Football coach and was invited here, after moving to Newington five years ago after leaving Berlin and stood before the Council here in Berlin asking for the field. He said he has no children in the league any more, sons all grown up, they've played on the muddy field and it's really terrible. He asks how can we put a price on the youth safety, he in full support of this field.

Sarah Hurwitz, 71 Harris Drive – is in second grade, a cheerleader for the Newington Knights. She thinks we should make a turf field at Clem Lemire because when she and her team mates meet and see other fields, they say WOW, and they wish our field was like that. And then when they're on their own field they get muddy and dirty most of the time. Thank you.

Anthony Sena, 123 Monroe Lane - believes that the turf field should be done, and no one given \$500,000. would turn it away. He realizes that everyone wants great education and it is important, but so is sports in this Town. He said that on numerous occasions he has had to spread tarps over the field before a game two days later and he doesn't want to see any kids injured.

Randy St. Pierre, 39 (address unknown) - supports the turf field, to let \$500,000 go to waste and not get the ball rolling at least to keep the money is ridiculous and as a parent and coach, the field is a mess with holes, need tarps with pins, remove tarps, check for the pins are off the field and it would be great for the kids. He believes that the kids do deserve more that we had and that's why he and his wife both work two jobs so the kids can have better than what they had.

Jennifer Cleveland, 57 Michael Lane – Vice President of Newington Midget Football and as a resident she is in support of the turf field at Clem Lemire. She thinks it's an important issue and supports the use of the grant, when games are cancelled or shifted there's a lot involved in that and with a turf field it would be beneficial to the kids.

Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street - addressed the Mayor and the Councilors stated that he is in favor of maintaining Open Space and would like to see the money set aside for the appraisal so the Open Space Committee can continue working on maintaining Open Space especially on Cedar Mountain. Regarding the Board of Education he feels their budget can't be cut any more and the NTA will not open the contract. Regarding the turf field he was unaware that this was such a big issue, and evidently Midget Football League has done their homework and it is a good idea but he'd like to know is, we can spend down on the money but how long it would take to get our money back. He doesn't see spending our own money whether from the CIP or Board of Education for a turf field in this budget, especially since it doesn't expire until 2014.

Pam Austin, 105 Old Farm Drive – she wanted to address things said in terms of entitlement, no one thinks that our children are entitled to a turf field, are concerned with the safety, concerned with them being well rounded individuals and sports brings that as well as education. She says that the environment now is not safe and we don't want to lose the \$500,000. She thinks that down the road two or three years that field will be totally unplayable in terms of safety. She feels that rather than waiting for when we'll have to take care of the whole amount. She said that we have contractors in this Town who are trying to survive and we can use local people and stimulate our own economy.

**Councilor Klett – moved for a ten minute recess at 8:15 PM – Seconded by Councilor Lenares – Vote 9 – 0**

At 8:25 PM, Mayor Wright called the meeting back to order

#### **IV CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS**

##### **A Funding of Appraisals for Open Space Grant Application**

Councilor Banach moved the following:

#### **CERTIFICATION:**

**In accordance with Section 808 of the Town Charter, I hereby certify that an amount of \$15,000 exists, free from encumbrances, in the Land Acquisition Fund.**

**Ann J. Harter, Director of Finance**

**WHEREAS: up to \$15,000 will be necessary to retain two appraisers to submit an appraisal to the Town, which will be utilized for the Town's grant application to the State of Connecticut's Open Space fund; and**

**WHEREAS: time is of the essence to perform the appraisals that must be included with the grant application;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Newington Town Council hereby appropriates the above-certified funds in Land Acquisition Fund for pay for appraisals to accompany the grant application.**

Motion seconded by Councilor Nasinnyk.

**Councilor Casasanta moved to add an amendment that this Resolution be contingent upon tentative agreement with the land owner.**

Councilor Nasinnyk understands that the reason for a time factor on this is that there needs to be an appraisal of the property before the grant can be applied for. Mayor Wright asked Mr. Salomone to explain what we need in the grant application which we do have a short time frame which is due on May 3. Mr. Salomone said that on March 30 he instructed the Town Planner to send a letter to eight appraisers to start the process and gave them until April 7 to come back with a proposal. We have estimated about \$7500 for each. The key component of this is that we need an exact acreage to put in the grant application. As you recall when we had the application last time it was for the 28 plus acres which we ultimately wanted to change but couldn't reduce the acreage. So it's key to have the number of acres that we will be applying for in the grant prior to submitting. Also we need a pretty good approximation for the appraisers. The final grant has to have an approximate amount of acres as part of the grant process. Mayor Wright asked if we have to have a general framework on we're talking about otherwise we might ask for an appraisal for two when in fact it's only one. Mr. Salomone stated that we would have to be pretty specific in the grant application that we're applying to purchase a parcel of land that is appropriate to the size.

Councilor Casasanta asked if we need the permission of the land owner to do the appraisal. Mr. Salomone said that yes if we go on the land we would need their permission. He said that we would need that and we would need of an agreement on what piece of land is to be purchased. If we wait too long we might run out of time, so we should hire an appraiser next week with an approximate size. Councilor Nagel said that he understands that this appraisal will not be done if the land owner does not give us permission to be on the land or if he does not wish to sell any land. Mr. Salomone said that if we don't have a willing buyer there are other methods to acquire property but the intent of the grant is to have land in place to purchase so there's no grant with an open ended type of parcel. He thinks we need a pretty plan of acquisition to go with the grant. Councilor Nagel asked if it would be to our advantage to simply find out whether the land owner is willing to go through with this process, and there would be a general agreement before this money is used. Mr. Salomone said that the description of the parcel must be in agreement with the application.

Councilor Nagel asked if this amendment would clarify what we want. Mr. Salomone said that he understands why the amendment is there, either way we can't apply for the grant unless we have specific amount of acreage we're applying for. Councilor Nagel said that this amendment would not hurt.

Mr. Salomone said that ultimately we have to come up with an agreement prior to the grant application going in, maybe a little general so we get the appraisals done. Councilor Klett stated that former appraisals done, there were more than one reference to conversations with the owner in both appraisals so the individual we choose would be in contact with the owner and as much as she would like to proceed without some kind of agreement just to get the ball rolling, she's not sure how to do that and how we apply for something specific with the State without having some kind of general agreement. Mr. Salomone said that these pieces of the puzzle have to be in place within the next few weeks. Councilor Banach asked Mr. Salomone if he has a meeting set up with the property owner. Mr. Salomone said that there is a plan for a meeting on April 7. Councilor Banach asked how quickly appraisers be retained and be put to work. Mr. Salomone said that letters were sent out with the April 7 date, and with the meeting next week we'll have an idea of what the grant application would be and the appraisers will getting back to us with their availability.

Councilor Banach stated that he doesn't think the amendment is necessary in that you'll be meeting and get some kind of indication from the property owner and wants to make clear that with the Open Space Committee, he believes that they are free to meet with the property owners at their own discretion whether through their chairperson or a subcommittee and they are also free and present what they see as use of the mountain and are able to do that rather quickly. He thinks we should move ahead with the motion as is will have a better idea after meeting with them. He would oppose the amendment.

Councilor Cohen stated that all this does is allow the Town to go forward, the money will be in place so that the Town can proceed in the proper time frame according to how the Manager proceeds. She said that the money will be there if we vote yes on this any anything else needed to be put in place in allowing the appraisals to go forward will follow because that would be an automatic requirement. The Town has to have the money to take step one. Councilor Klett stated that she has no problem with meeting with the owner but would like some assurance that anyone representing the Town does not do so in the fashion of some kind of negotiation. If that happens it creates a problem.

Councilor Nasinnyk believes that if the members of the Open Space Committee would be there to meet with the land owner it would be with the person who could negotiate on behalf of the Town. She believe that the actual resolution before us is to appropriate the money for the two appraisers that the State has to certify in order to go forward with this. She believes with this amendment it would be redundant to what the actual resolution is pending. Councilor Cohen said regarding who can meet with the owners, the Open Space Committee was created to determine the means to acquire, preserve and protect the Cedar Mountain parcels and other various open space parcels, and she thinks that is quite an open charge to the Committee as to how far they should go and that would involve meeting with the owners.

Mayor Wright stated that the meaning of this motion is about amending this Resolution so that it states that the agreement, and our last Council meeting it was agreed upon by this body that the Town Manager, the Town Planner himself as Mayor would meet to negotiate with owners. He thinks that a certain order in consistency is needed, whenever the Town deals with the folks as far as land acquisitions and he believes that Town officials should be acting in that capacity on behalf of the Town of Newington.

Mayor Wright asked for a vote on the Resolution as amended

Councilor Banach: no  
Councilor Casasanta: yes  
Councilor Cohen: no  
Councilor Klett: yes  
Councilor Lenares: yes  
Councilor McBride: no  
Councilor Nagel: yes  
Councilor Nasinnyk: no  
Mayor Wright: yes

VOTE PASSES: 4 No 5 Yes - Motion Passes

**V        CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS**  
**A        Set Tentative Budget**

Councilor Lenares made a recommendation regarding the budget that Councilor Banach and Councilor Nasinnyk recuse themselves from voting on the budget relating to the Education part of the budget. Councilor Banach is currently an employee of the Board of Education and Councilor Nasinnyk's spouse if also an employee of the Board of Education. Councilor Lenares has read lines from the Code of Ethics, for personal gain, preferential treatment, financial interest and personal interest. He made clear that it's only a recommendation, discussing the improvement of the Board of Education budget any percent that we give to the Board of Education regarding increases, he feels that it's going toward two Councilors at a personal gain.

Councilor Casasanta is concerned with the Statute Section 32-5 - it is expected that public officials will be acutely sensitive to possible conflict of interest issues and that they will conduct themselves in a manner that will be scrupulously to avoid any conflict of interest. This is not anything personal again these two Councilors, just simply in the interest of full disclosure.

Councilor Nasinnyk asks Councilor Lenares what was the problem with us voting on previous budgets when we both had this type of interest with the Board of Education. Councilor Lenares explained that this was brought up by the public. He didn't realize that this Code of Ethics was here, and saying that being an elected official, sitting on the Town Council and voting for a budget, where the Board of Education is probably, ethically speaking is the conflict of interest under the Section 32-5 Conflict of Interest. Councilor Nasinnyk stated that the conflict comes from me, and that she determines whether there is a conflict of interest here and the previous times when she has voted on the budgets and my husband has been an employee of the Town, it's for the greater good of the Town, not like voting for his contract and for his personal gain. The Town Attorney has not officially given me anything in writing to say that this is a conflict of the Town, the State Statute says that we can vote on things that are of interest of the Town and she believes that this is a politically motivated tactic that has not been brought up before and she personally will not vote. Under the State Statute you do have the right to vote on the budget, and say it was in clear conflict in the Code of Ethics, so it's your choice. Councilor Nasinnyk said that was never mentioned to her.

Councilor Cohen stated that we are voting on the total Board of Education budget. We are not segregating cutting the teachers or adding to the teachers salaries. She stated that we are voting on the entire budget and she is sure the way things are going and the lack of cooperation from the leadership of the teachers union that what we will be doing will have absolutely no affect on what the teachers are making, but the percentage given to the Board will be strictly on programs and materials and will not have any affect on the teachers. She see no conflict at all. Also, she said a conflict would be something that affected the individual personally rather than the group. Mayor Wright disagrees and believes that mill rate affects everyone. He stated that it's relative to the budget this year when the average pay increase for the teachers of Newington is 5.6% and that pay increase represents 2% tax increase by itself. He does think there is a conflict of interest and that there is political pressure that applies to members of this Council. Councilor Banach asked if the Mayor thinks it's ethically correct for Mr. Lenares to participate in the Education vote, with contracts with the Board of Education. Mr. Lenares stands to have personal gain. Mayor Wright replied that Mr. Lenares does have that ability because that contract is there just as the Chairman of the Board of Education Steven Woods does business with the Board of Education. Speaking to Councilor Banach Mayor Wright stated that Mr. Banach does stand to gain a 3% increase in his income and Councilor Nasinnyk's husband is set to get a 6.8% pay increase. The Mayor stated that he doesn't get \$1. from the Town of Newington and it's important that we separate compositions. Mayor Wright agrees that Councilor Banach should vote on the Town budget, but not on the Board of Education budget. Councilor Banach asked how it is selectively applied to the two Democrats, and don't have any concern nor does Mr. Lenares have with Mr. Carson serving on the Board of Education and his wife also being an employee of the town. Mayor Wright stated that he is not comfortable with that either.

Councilor Banach stated that there doesn't seem to be an issue with that and asked is that because he's of your party? Mayor Wright answered that it is not. The distinction drawn is tonight we'll be voting on the increase to the Board of Education and you're the fourth highest paid teacher in Newington and he thinks that's a direct conflict of interest. Councilor Banach said that that wasn't an issue for previous years and in fact if you prevail here, which you won't, you would have a 4/3 majority giving you control of the budget. Mayor Wright stated that if Councilor Banach feels comfortable on voting on the Board of Education budget then he should. Councilor Banach answered that it absolutely does. Mayor Wright said that if Councilor Banach feels this is the ethically thing, then let's move on. Councilor Banach responds that this is merely the Mayor's opinion. Mayor Wright stated that the Town Attorney is of the same opinion. Councilor Banach responded that the Town Attorney didn't render an opinion on the parking lot where the Mayor's business front sits, did the Mayor benefit from that? Mayor Wright answered that he rents space and does not own property there.

**Councilor Banach moved the following adjustments to the 2010 – 2011 Town Manager's proposed budget. All motions seconded by Councilor Nasinnyk.**

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Account #</b>		<b>Description</b>	<b>Change In Tax Burden</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>14000</b>	<b>8601</b>	<b>Reduce Board of Education</b>	<b>(\$30,000)</b>

Mayor Wright requested a roll call vote:

Councilor Banach: yes  
 Councilor Casasanta: no  
 Councilor Cohen: yes  
 Councilor Klett: yes  
 Councilor Lenares: no  
 Councilor McBride: yes  
 Councilor Nagel: no  
 Councilor Nasinnyk: yes  
 Mayor Wright: no  
 Motion passes 5 yes 4 no

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Account #</b>		<b>Description</b>	<b>Change In Tax Burden</b>
<b>2a</b>	<b>10712</b>	<b>8102</b>	<b>Increase Overtime to reinstate Library openings on Sunday</b>	<b>\$1,756</b>
<b>2b</b>	<b>10713</b>	<b>8102</b>	<b>Increase Overtime to reinstate Library openings on Sunday</b>	<b>\$3,434</b>
<b>2c</b>	<b>10716</b>	<b>8102</b>	<b>Increase Overtime to reinstate Library openings on Sunday</b>	<b>\$2,642</b>
<b>2d</b>	<b>10712</b>	<b>8103</b>	<b>Increase Part Time for Library openings on Sat/Sun</b>	<b>\$6,009</b>
<b>2e</b>	<b>10713</b>	<b>8103</b>	<b>Increase Part Time for Library openings on Sat/Sun</b>	<b>\$4,710</b>
<b>2f</b>	<b>10714</b>	<b>8103</b>	<b>Increase Part Time for Library openings on Sat/Sun</b>	<b>\$1,129</b>
<b>2g</b>	<b>10716</b>	<b>8103</b>	<b>Increase Part Time for Library openings on Sat/Sun</b>	<b>\$9,092</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>10232</b>	<b>8303</b>	<b>Increase Uniforms and Clothing for Fire Dept recruits</b>	<b>\$5,960</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>11100</b>	<b>8501</b>	<b>Increase for Single Stream Recycling bins lease due to change from 7 yr to 5 yr term</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>10110</b>	<b>8202</b>	<b>Reduce Dues for CT Conf of Municipalities (CCM)</b>	<b>(\$20,809)</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>11014</b>	<b>8220</b>	<b>Reduce Serial Bonds Interest for Refunding</b>	<b>(\$221,479)</b>

Mayor Wright asked that the refunding done here is \$221,479 the amount we save so this will be a net increase in the total CIP budget, won't there be an offset in reduction

Ann Harter, Director of Finance stated that this is not coming out of the CIP budget, but is coming out of the general. Mayor Wright said these payments come out of the CIP under our leases. Director Ann Harter stated that the refunding for the bond comes out of the \$6.3 million that we talk about for CIP.

**Mayor Wright** asked if we have an approximate \$20,000 proposed savings in interest both interest rates for 5 and 7 years are less than 3%.  
 Director Ann Harter answered yes.

- Item 2a** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 2b** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 2c** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 2d** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 2e** Vote passes - 9 – 0
- Item 2f** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 3** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 4** Vote passes – 9 – 0
- Item 5** Vote passes - 9 - 0
- Item 6** Vote passes - 9 – 0

Mayor Wright said that there was discussion about this a few weeks ago and asked Councilor Klett her feelings. Councilor Klett answered that she was disappointed. She feels that there would be a advantage to the Town Council to keep this already budgeted in by the Town Manager and that it's resource that the Town Council cannot find any place else. She feels there needs to be more research beyond what the Town Manager has available. She stated that this is an agency that can help make a more effective Council.

**Councilor Lenares moved the following adjustments to the 2010 – 2011 Town Manager's proposed budget. All motions seconded by Councilor Casasanta, except where noted.**

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 2a	14000 8601	<b>Board of Education increases by \$1,235,392 (reduce Town Manager's budget by amount of Health Benefits Fund Credit)</b>	<b>(\$491,057)</b>

Mayor Wright asked Mr. Salomone to explain the operation and the agreement of the health benefits account. Mr. Salomone stated that there is calculation that the Finance Director submits to the Town Manager and to the Board of Education on the end of March. It is a projection of where the fund is at that point and what the funding level is needed to sustain the fund to be balanced. At this point the fund has in excess projected of \$491,000. for the Board of Education. Mr. Salomone stated that the claim run out still needs to occur in the last three months of this fiscal year. There's a final 'true up' as of September 1, of this year, can be higher or lower at that point, but now it's \$491,000. Director Harter stated that it's based on the health benefits agreement on how it's calculated compares the last twelve months of claims compared to what the agent of record thought our claims would be.

Mayor Wright said that in this year's budget proposal they showed an \$800,000. projected increase in next year's costs. He asked if they end up on projection of the \$491,000. would that \$491,000 go to reduce the \$800,000? Mr. Salomone said that they have two options. One is to take the credit in this fiscal year and in that case it would assist in the budget balancing if they had issues with their budget. The other option to take it as a credit against next year's budget. They have until April 8 to respond to us on that. Mayor Wright asked if that wouldn't decrease the amount that Newington sends to the Board of Education? Mr. Salomone answered that that is correct, the \$491,000 would be the final projection and it could be plus or minus depending on the last three months. Mayor Wright said he thinks this is in the increase since this is extra money and the monies to help benefits are not required to go towards our reduction of future health costs, we ran into this example two years in the budget where the Board of Education ran a \$670,000 health funded benefits fund credit when we had increased their budget that year and they did not return the money to the Town, but used it for other purposes for the Board of Education. The Mayor thinks this decision is a great opportunity but we're not affecting education and

have a significant reduction in the amount of total tax increase in approximately 3% to 2%, and he encourages everyone to support this.

Councilor Klett is concerned with this agreement with the Board of Education and the Town Council goes back to the 1980's and has always been an area of concern that what happens to the projected money that's left over. She's stated looking at figures, they calculate \$633,000 monthly because they're told to, that that's the recommended amount. Looking at the February 2010 figure, the estimated cost was \$60,000 over approximately the \$633,000. Because we don't have the actual costs for March, April, May and June they go back and plug in last year's cost and those costs actually figure less than the \$633,000 that the recommended figure used for this year, and that's just an estimated amount of money available. If it's calculated out through June using the \$633,000 she said, the excess amount is not \$491,000 but more like \$200,000. She thinks that this is a risky place to try to take money from and she is not convinced that anything is any different from looking at these figures. She stated that calculated out it does not look like what there is going to be.

Mayor Wright asked if the projected rate is \$633,000, for the final three months that would bring it to approximately \$ 1,900,000 and this \$491,000 projection is on top of that \$1,900,000. Mr. Salomone answered that the estimate is based on a twelve month snap shot from March 2009 to February 10 which can be adjusted the last three months of the fiscal year. He stated that it's a reasonable estimate of what could be on September 1, but there's no guarantee that the last three months would resemble the previous twelve months trend. Councilor Cohen stated that all we need would be one or two cancer claims and that's wiped out. The way the agreement is written she said, that if there's a shortfall in this fund the Council has to make up the difference. She believes this is very risky. Mayor Wright stated that we have a stop loss of \$150,000 so with one or two cancer cases, they'd be capped out at \$150,000 per incident which goes into the \$633,000.

Councilor Nasinnyk asked for verification that the figures used to calculate this based on March, April, May and June of 2009, our figures that are less than what the Town is required to put in, that we've been using since July 2009, are those the actual figures that would again change the projection. Mr. Salomone stated that there's three months from last year and we've yet to finish out this fiscal year. There were months during the calendar year where it was higher than \$604,000 and the low one was May of last year at \$465,000 and during the regular part of the year which is calculated it varied from a low of \$525,000 and a high of \$707,000 so the average for the last three months is pretty consistent with the average for the twelve months. Mayor Wright said that it's a good way to bring the taxes down for the people of Newington, and as Councilor Cohen mentioned if there was a shortfall the Town is liable for it, but the Town pays a deficit. Presented by the agreement, that number is \$491,000 and the Mayor thinks that is a good number to reduce the increase of the Board of Education budget. That decision would bring 2 & 3/4 tax increase down to just over 2%, and at this time would be a good decision.

Councilor Nasinnyk stated that having been to the Board of Education meetings where there was a huge shift in the health benefits that had to be paid out. If it were closer to the end of the fiscal year she would be more comfortable but not with this dollar amount at this time. Mayor Wright asked Councilor Nasinnyk what number would she be comfortable with, less than the projection of the expert on this.

Councilor Nasinnyk said that the projection is to continue on with that monthly projection and she can't tell in the future what the health benefits will be and being in the field, she thinks the money has to be there in the event of some catastrophic event. Mayor Wright said that the experts are not making a recommendation to us to reduce the increase but they are saying that there will be a surplus, their number being \$491,000 and if you put some extra room in there, maybe a claim or two extra, would you feel comfortable in making the reduction in assuming the surplus might be \$400,000?

Councilor Nasinnyk needs some reasonable assurance of what those numbers mean, she said that she just can't pull numbers out of a hat. Councilor Klett said that she doesn't agree with the figures, you're using the figures that were less than \$633,000 based on the past months, then yes maybe you'll come up with more money, but if you factor in for the next four months, which we don't have a projection for, she doesn't think we have that much money. So the difference is you say we do and she says we don't and is reluctant to support that kind of cut. Councilor Cohen stated that the agreement between the Council and the Board of Education has always been rather confusing and she thinks that the public probably doesn't know what numbers we're talking about and she wouldn't be surprised if half the Council isn't quite

familiar with the agreement between the Board of Education and the Town Council. She thinks that before we look at anything here we should have another discussion regarding what this agreement does and where we stand, and we'll have an opportunity before we vote to look at this again. At this point she can't support this. Mr. Salomone stated that the \$491,000 is a snap shot as of the end of March. We are required to give a projection so the Board of Education can make a fiscal decision based on the credit, so they have that option . They have done their own projections and have been a little more conservative and estimate about \$225,000 of savings at year end and that's based on previous levels trends. The difference is that if we look at our twelve month average now it's about \$600,000 per month contribution. The budget had about \$700,000 per month and that's where the differences lie on an average basis per month, so we've been some months over funding and some months under funding but the average is approximately that. The Board of Education has projected about \$225,000 savings for next year and the most optimistic is \$491,000 which is what the credit is based on. Most likely it will be somewhere between the \$491,000 and \$225,000 that the Board of Education has looked at. Mayor Wright commented that another way to look at this is if we look at the Town Manager's proposed increase of \$1,700,000, if this plays out as the expert projection on the twelve months that means that next year's Board of Education increase will be \$2,200,000. When we have an opportunity to bring the tax increase of 2 & 3/4 down to 2% by making this change, and it does not hurt the children.

Mayor Wright requested a roll call vote

- Councilor Banach: no**
- Councilor Casasanta: yes**
- Councilor Cohen: no**
- Councilor Klett: no**
- Councilor Lenares: yes**
- Councilor McBride: no**
- Councilor Nagel: yes**
- Councilor Nasinnyk: no**
- Mayor Wright: yes**

**Motion fails: 5 no 4 yes**

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 2b	14000 8601	<b>Board of Education increases by \$300,000 (reduce Town Manager's budget by \$1,426,449)</b>	<b>(\$935,392)</b>

Mayor Wright said that the proposed increases discussed earlier, for the teachers pay increase for about \$1,300,000 which represents an addition of about 2/3 decrease in the increase for pay for the teachers. He feels that there's no way that the NTA will negotiate unless we have some reductions. Most people in the private sector are getting no pay increases, if they haven't lost their jobs, we don't feel it's correct or fair that the teachers get an average of 5.6% pay increase, which this reduction reflects. Councilor Cohen agrees that it's unfortunate that the NTA won't come to the table, and if they don't agree to a lesser amount you'll have this cut, and where will it come from. Mayor Wright said if he were on the side of the NTA and knew that was the position of the Councilors that they said no, then he would say no every time. If there's a reduction in the amount for pay increases then I think they'd be serious about it, and if they want to stay with their present position then we may have a few less teachers in Newington. Pink slips required by law were to go out from the Board of Education today, for anyone not tenured and I'm sure they did.

Councilor Klett agrees with Councilor Cohen that's it unfortunate that the executive committee of the teachers union has chosen not to ask the teachers to come to the table and try to help out in what are extraordinary times. She stated that we can't blame all the teachers, if the teachers have not been asked and if we must point fingers they should be pointed at the union leadership that has chosen not to go back to the teachers and she feels it's unfortunate that we can't convince them, it is really the

responsibility of the Board of Education but it looks like they're not interested. She thinks that the leadership of the teachers and the CT Education Association who is advising them are not willing to share in the pain of the other members of the community, but to make this kind of a cut is going to translate to a hurtful situation in the classroom and she not sure if handing out pink slips is the answer. Mayor Wright said that it's not to place blame but will say again that \$1,300,000 increase is for pay increases for the teachers and the average is 5.6%. We as taxpayers represents a 2% increase for us and he thinks if we continue to accept that they said no and we can't do anything about it, we'll always lose that negotiation. Councilor Klett thinks everyone on the Council feels the same kind of frustration, that we have absolutely have no ability to kindly ask them to come to the table and apparently the Board of Education isn't able to do that either Councilor Casasanta recognizes that this is difficult having sat for two years on the Board of Education and now on the Town Council. She remembers that last year we had this same discussion regarding moving forward with Teachers Association. At that time it was told to me that this year wasn't a good time to do that. She agreed next year would be better. She and other board members asked when we'd begin the discussions which never happened.

Councilor Nagel stated that at some point someone or group has to take a stand and has to say we need to limit the amount of funds that go towards the Board of Education in terms of money expended. It appears to be the leaders that are not willing to negotiate and not our teachers that we respect and know do a wonderful job and he thinks would be willing to compromise in one way or other. We're being put in the same position as the last time. He agreed that the Board of Education should get at least the amount agreed to and not further cuts and all our Municipal employees, other unions did willingly and graciously take a cut realizing what our economy is like. He sees a blatant unwillingness to cooperate in terms of unions, but somewhere we have to realize that we need to show and take a stand that taxpayers in the Town can only afford to pay so much for anything. Taxpayers at one point will tell us that we need to wisely spend money and we need to set forth the statement, whether we like it or not that indeed it has to be limited and stopped. The only way we can deliver the message is as proposed here, like it or not. As much as we wish to give to our school system and to maintain a quality education we need to look at reality in terms of how much and how many years we can continue to just not say, Please come and help.

Councilor Cohen said that the reality is that we have a contract and unless there's a change in that contract we have an obligation. She asked the Mayor what will happen if this contract is not changed. Mayor Wright stated that he believes we should lay off teachers. He said it's very simple, referring to an article in the Wall Street Journal comparing pay and benefits of public employees verses private employees, and there's a 40% difference between the two. As a tax payer with three children he knows that this is unsustainable and if we're always deciding that we can't do anything about it, the teachers will always win. Looking at this budget, this isn't just about the children. Every dollar increase in this budget is going to the teachers, between the \$1,300,000 increase for pay and the additional \$800,000 increase for health benefit accounts, that goes to them also. It's about the teachers, not about the children. We have 45% of our teachers will be earning over \$80,000 next year. He feels that if we don't take a stand at some point there will continue to be tax increases for the people just so we see pay and benefits go up for the staff. Even the Seniors didn't get any increase this year. He recommends that the Board of Education lay off teachers if they don't want to work on negotiations because 5.6% is unacceptable. Councilor McBride stated that his sales have not gone up 5%, quite the opposite which goes for any facet of business or industry so it's difficult to speak with a union that has an agreement in place and related to different facets of the climate. He is uneasy about is our issue is about agreements and contracts and there's a time and place to fight that battle which is probably when the contract is opened. He feels that our concerns should be at that time.

Mayor Wright stated that the proposed increase for the Board of Education is \$300,000.

Mayor Wright requested a roll call vote

**Councilor Banach: no**

**Councilor Casasanta: yes**

**Councilor Cohen: no**

**Councilor Klett: no**

**Councilor Lenares: yes**

**Councilor McBride: no**  
**Councilor Nagel: yes**  
**Councilor Nasinnyk: no**  
**Mayor Wright: yes**

**Motion fails: 5 no 4 yes**

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 2c	14000 8601	Board of Education increases by \$850,000 (reduce Town Manager's budget by \$876,449)	\$550,000

Mayor Wright stated that this leaves about a \$300,000 decrease in the total pay for the teachers and this proposal in addition of the health benefits savings, the total tax increase will be 1.5%. Councilor Nasinnyk asked if this putting the \$550,000 back into the \$935,000 reduction that did not pass. Mayor Wright answered that is correct. This represents an increase to the Board of Education of \$850,000 which in the Town Manager's recommendations is about the same amount less than his recommendation. Councilor Banach asked Mr. Salomone for clarification because the previous motion was a cut and this looks like an addition, is it not in fact less of a cut, but a reduction. Mr. Salomone - because working down from the higher amount is looks like a plus, but it's still a reduction just less of a reduction than the previous motion. Councilor Casasanta feels that we should come together and realize what's best for the Town of Newington. Councilor Nasinnyk asked for the rational behind this number. Mayor Wright answered this is the \$491,000 which is the projected surplus of the health benefits account and also another \$350,000 which leaves \$1,000,000 pay increase for the teachers which is large concession.

Councilor Cohen when we were working on the previous proposal we were working on adding and subtracting from the Town Manager's budget, so this \$550,000 is not clear which column it's in, could be another \$550,000 from the Town Manager's budget? Mr. Salomone said that if we throw away the cumulative number it would be a reduction of \$876,000. Mayor Wright said he's disappointed, we're looking at a tax increase of nearly 3%, we talked about how much of this budget is going to the teachers, not the children and the proposal is a \$30,000 reduction in a \$50 something million budget, it seems very disingenuous to the taxpayers. This doesn't harm the children and would get a tax increase down to about 1.5%.

Mayor Wright requested a roll call

**Councilor Banach: no**  
**Councilor Casasanta: yes**  
**Councilor Cohen: no**  
**Councilor Klett: no**  
**Councilor Lenares: yes**  
**Councilor McBride: no**  
**Councilor Nagel: yes**  
**Councilor Nasinnyk: no**  
**Mayor Wright: yes**

**Motion fails: 5 no 4 yes**

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 4	10140 8220	Increase for Unofficial Checkers for Election	\$6,000

Mayor Wright explained that both the Republican and Democratic parties have had checkers at the polls to provide information to better encourage voters to come out. That was not in this budget. Based on the recommendation of both parties it is proposed to put that back in. Councilor Klett asked if both parties requested this. Councilor Banach stated that both parties did not request that this be put back in. He will not support this. Mayor Wright said he spoke to both parties and both wanted it back in.

This item is tabled until further information is available.

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 5	11100 8501	Increase Constitution Square Downtown Development to bring total to \$260,000 per adopted Town Council Resolution dated February 9, 2010	\$34,750

Councilor Nasinnyk stated that this is part of the Capitol Improvement budget that we had awarded money toward the Constitution Square downtown development and the Market Square renovation project. That committee hasn't met yet and the reason that the \$34,750 was removed was that this resolution dated Feb 9, 2010 actually set the total to be \$260,000 if the money was available. After going through the budget the money wasn't there, and that was the decision of the CIP Committee to keep it at the money previously stated so she will not vote to increase this.

Mayor Wright said that this was a resolution that this Council took up, we all voted on it unanimously. This amount that's taken out here, in which we're looking to put back in is for the contingency. He believes that every project has a contingency and it's very dangerous that we don't have this contingency. Councilor Nasinnyk stated that there was an expectation from the Committee that the value of engineering or some of the other ways to reduce spending on the Constitution Square Eastern side that's why the Committee voted to do that unanimously. Mayor Wright said that the value of engineering and reductions were in the resolutions that we passed on Feb 9, this was the amount for the contingency. Councilor Cohan the Town Manager at that time said that he would be able to find additional funding to complete the project and she came up with the number that she anticipated would be allocated from the CIP fund based on a memo from you and when she offered that number the Town Manager wondered why it didn't add up to what the number should have been. Mr. Salomone reminded Councilor Cohen that that was the Market Square adjustment made. He said that on the Constitution parking lot it was originally \$495,000 but that was when it was bid separately as a stand alone project. When it was decided by the Council to do the consolidated project there were some savings involved, of approximately \$50,000 to \$60,000 that would have had to be spent if the projects weren't done together so that was eliminated and then there was Value Engineering that would eliminate another \$50,000 or so, so the original project was \$495,000, the revised project has \$225,000 plus \$160,000 from other accounts that we reallocated to the parking lot. So this project now has \$385,000 savings from the consolidation that's not needed because it's one project. Councilor Lenares said that he also is on the CIP Committee and voted for these changes and going forward in the contingency fund the Downtown Revitalization Committee is having a meeting next week and will hopefully discuss Value engineering on the East side of the parking lot, and will discuss with Councilor McBride.

Mayor Wright requested a roll call vote

- Councilor Banach: no**
- Councilor Casasanta: yes**
- Councilor Cohen: no**
- Councilor Klett: yes**
- Councilor Lenares: yes**
- Councilor McBride: no**
- Councilor Nagel: yes**
- Councilor Nasinnyk: no**
- Mayor Wright: yes**

Motion passes: 5 yes 4 no

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 6	11100 8501	Add Clem Lemire Synthetic Turf Field	\$324,400

**(seconded by Councilor Klett)**

Mayor Wright read into the record, letters from Christine Cleveland, Fred Callahan and Tim Kaufman. These will be attached to the minutes. Mayor Wright noted that we had several people speaking for this project, and a point was made by the Vice Chairman Don Woods that this is a top recommendation to get it through for multiple use. This is not an additional cost to the tax payer, because of the grant we have for the \$500,000 which in his opinion in a year from now won't be here, is an important project than some others. Councilor Cohen stated that we are not in danger of losing the grant and we should be starting to use the grant. She feels that in the following 2011 - 2012 budget allocates \$890,000 for synthetic fields. In the meantime we do have the grant to start using and have other money available later on. Councilor Nasinnyk said that this was a topic of conversation of the Capitol Improvement meetings and just as Councilor Cohen said we were advising to use the money to spend it down to get the architectural designs so that this can move forward but it won't be with CIP Committee funds at this time. By getting the work done, then that information can come before the Council. It is in the project for next year. There are things in the CIP for this particular year, there's \$450,000 to work on an access road and there's project money in there for the renovation of Market Square and the completion of the parking lot. This money will not be in the budget for next year. She noted that a lot of the speakers asked that we begin spending the grant and that's what we were advising to go forward. This project has been slotted for next year. Mayor Wright stated that this is not about spending extra money. This is about a fixed amount of money reallocating some of the projects from this year to a year in the future, which don't have matching grants. Looking at the State budget where it's been, there's a lot of talk about pulling back State grants. He believes that if we act now we'll know we'll be able to use that \$500,000 in addition to the \$324,000. He thinks it makes sense to take advantage of this opportunity, and if we don't make this decision he believes that this grant will be gone a year from now. Using some of it now will save the grant.

Councilor Klett doesn't recall anyone from Parks & Rec coming to speak about this and she would like to support this but tough choices have to be made she applauds all the people who came out to speak for it. This is not an easy decision to make and no one else was included before the Town Council.

Mayor Wright thinks if we approve this change to the CIP and fund this we don't have to spend the money immediately, we can say get the presentation. The worse case if this Council decides that they don't like the presentation we don't have to authorize spending the money at that point. Councilor Klett feels badly that she can't support it now, and she knows the possibility that grants can be yanked and that there might be another town ready to take that money. She feels that she cannot support this project at this time. Councilor Lenares being a passed member of Newington Midget Football, this field is not just for football but for many other sports. He wants to support this is to use the grant before it runs out, and to take advantage of the aggressive bidding that's out there. Looking at the budget for this field came in at \$1,100,000 for the field. Another came in at \$1.6 million. It depends on what we want to do now, there are a couple of drawings out there that include the whole field including everything. He spoke with several contractors who offered lower amounts for getting the field operable. He feels that this should be supported and thanks all the people who went out there and got this grant for us. If we do lose it, we have to know at what cost to the Town it will result in. Councilor Klett – in all due respect it's mind boggling to me that my counterparts can offer up a million dollars cuts to the Board of Education's budget and then try to put \$324,000 back for this field. How can we justify making cuts in one area and then trying to add that kind of money somewhere else. Mayor Wright said that the CIP budget is a flat budget, there's no increase in the CIP budget and it's saying that this field is more important than some other improvements.

Councilor Lenares - just so it's understood, this money does not come out of the Board of Education budget, it's in here out of CIP. Councilor Banach – this discussion doesn't tell the whole story, for instance the Senior Citizens Center would have like a canopy at a cost of \$48,000 which didn't make it into the CIP so every dollar spent one place has to be taken from somewhere else. So to rearrange the CIP at the eleventh hour is really not fair to the time and effort to deliberate what the true needs are, we can let things go and go to the point where it's more costly to fix them. Mayor Wright said that the Senior canopy was not in the long term CIP plan. It's a new addition there and there are a lot of things wanted and needed.

Councilor Nagel – this money for the turf field is coming from other projects which won't be used if we vote in favor of this, will come up as to where this money will come from within CIP. Also he knows that the previous Council there was discussion about The Clem Lemire field project. He will be supporting this because of the safety factor because it is the right time. Councilor Cohen said that we keep talking about the grant, the CIP committee has advised that we go forward with using the grant. This is additional Town money. Mayor Wright said that this grant is probably not enough to get this project done, for argument sake say it costs \$50,000 used and this amount cannot be pulled back by the State. But the State can pull back the remaining \$450.00 so we should do the work there's a chance we'll lose it. Also, looking at the CIP and all the needs for capital projects on the Board of Education, the vast majority of those projects are reimbursed up to 54% level. This year we're very generous to the Board of Education and the first grants that might be pulled back will probably be like the turf field .

Mayor Wright noted that the time was approaching 10:30 p.m. Councilor Lenares moved to allow for voting past 10:30 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Casasanta Vote 9 – 0

Mayor Wright requested a roll call vote on the turf field item.

- Councilor Banach: no
- Councilor Casasanta: yes
- Councilor Cohen: no
- Councilor Klett: no
- Councilor Lenares: yes
- Councilor McBride: no
- Councilor Nagel: yes
- Councilor Nasinnyk: no
- Mayor Wright: yes

**Motion fails: 5 no 4 yes**

Item #	Account #	Description	Change In Tax Burden
R 7	11100 8502	Eliminate Town Hall Improvements Lower Level (orig (\$86,150))	(\$34,750)

Councilor Cohen asked what this number is based on. The committee hasn't finalized what they are doing at this point. She asked if this the final number after paying all their bills. Mayor Wright answered that this is additional money for downstairs which is not completed.

Mayor Wright stated that this is a reduction in the Town Hall renovations which offset the \$34,750 which is a contingency for Constitution Square.

Mayor Wright requested a roll call vote -

- Councilor Banach: no
- Councilor Casasanta: yes

Councilor Cohen: no  
Councilor Klett: yes  
Councilor Lenares: yes  
Councilor McBride: no  
Councilor Nagel: yes  
Councilor Nasinnyk: no  
Mayor Wright: yes

Motion passes 5 yes 4 no

Mayor Wright stated that he had misspoken earlier about speaking to both the Registrars, he noted that he spoke to the Republican registrar and thought the Democrat registrar referenced that, and apologized for that mistake.

## **VI PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Clark Castelle - it's well known that the teacher's contract has two more years to go and that contracts between Boards of Education and teachers from this day forward will never look the same. In the meantime he feels if we don't have a total financial collapse, his own opinion the contract should not be reopened. If it happens next year we suddenly cannot pay our bond holders he says absolutely yes and the pressure has to be on. But it didn't happen this year. We have according to the 2000 census 12,200 households in Newington of which 8,250 are families. We have 355 certified staff. He cannot believe that 8,250 families cannot get together to support the teachers and honor our obligations with them. Looking at the average real estate bill in this town is \$4,750. A 3% increase would be \$143. on average per family. He for one has the same problems that everyone else has is willing to the \$143. And would also point out that maintaining this contract has nothing to do with the opinions that Councilors Nasinnyk and Banach may have on the matter.

Patty Foley, 51 Crown Ridge – she heard this evening that you restored the \$28,772. to the Library budget and she wanted to rush here to thank you. Thank you for listening to the people who came down here and expressed their needs. She is grateful to this Council for the continued support of our Library.

Peter Gajowiak, 60 Pickens – wanted to say how pleased with the two Councilors for standing their ground on voting on the budget. He is against the teachers raises this year, many reasons but basically it's economics, we have to address the needs of our schools and what we're doing right now is underfunding our schools, and our children and if we say that we have \$2 million dollars increase and it's only 3% the reality is that 2/3 will go to the teachers, very little to our schools. He believes that the teachers do a great job but it's important that we consider the children first. He feels that we're failing in not being aggressive in going after this, and the contracts will always be in place. Let's make sure we're taking care of the children. Thanks the Council for doing a great job.

Sandy Lallier, 27 Elton Drive – listening to the previous speaker, she was listening to a lot of numbers that made no sense to me. She wants to say that the previous speaker struck a cord when he said that 2/3 shouldn't go to the teachers but should go to the system. She said that both her sons have flourished because of the people and not because of the technology that is part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and while the schools should reconsider where they need their money and feels the Board of Education should consider where it can make it's cuts, not in letting go teachers. With fewer teachers we'll be getting less and less and she stated that with her younger son, a teacher going through elementary into middle school all the teachers have done what is necessary to make sure the students learn what they need with what is being presented, and she is appalled that the Mayor would say 'just cut teachers'. Don't cut teachers, cut the technique of what you want the teachers to teach the students, let them be there and connect with a person. She thinks the budget needs to be more easily understood for the average person and she wants to be comfortable when she pays her taxes.

Steven Woods, 94 New Britain Avenue – Chairman of Board of Education – thanks the members of the Council that supported the increase and we would have liked to have a smaller budget, but couldn't do it,

and trying to maintain services. He said Mayor Wright had said that you just don't want to give it to the teachers. The teachers are the heart and bone of our system, that's what drives an educational system. He's very disappointed to hear the Mayor say that, because your wife is a teacher so when you say that it just doesn't make sense. You Mayor have to know how important a role she plays in the classroom and from custodians, bus drivers, teachers, nurses, psychologists everything is about the kids. We're not for profit we're for children. We don't make these decisions lightly, and know it's more difficult for you to make them. As far as health benefits goes, he would like to discuss that with anyone, but will say this. There has been an agreement in place since 1995. It spells out specifically, if there is an overage what happens to that and if there is a shortage. It's very clear, neither side can change that without the other side coming to the table and what you as Mayor are trying to do is circumvent that and you disappoint me, when things don't go your way you like to change the rules. You will come back and argue my points and I have no chance to rebut, you do it all the time, you do it to every Councilor. He believe that the Mayor abuses his power and it's sad to see.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive – hopes that the people who spoke in favor of the turf field realize that my main objection to this project is the way it was presented to the people. She had suggested at a previous meeting that the Councilors refer back when the Council voted to accept the grant for that turf field. She believes it was Councilors Cohen, Nasinnyk, Banach all had questions and the Mayor assured them that there would more discussion to come before anything was done about the turf field. She doesn't recall any conversation, but was there when it was indicated that the savings would be \$20,000 per year if we put this turf field in. She was at a Parks & Recreation meeting where the Superintendant said that it would actually be \$14,000 but he wouldn't correct the Mayor and the email the Mayor just read indicated that there would be a \$30,000 per year savings. Perhaps if the Mayor hadn't pushed so hard to get the Money for the East side of the parking lot there would have been money for the turf field. She feels that there has to be more communication, rather than going to different departments for parts of the picture and certainly does not need to talk in the hallways to Midget Football people for another part of the picture. She would like it all presented to you and the tax payers before you make a decision what to do with my tax dollar.

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane – Vice Chairman Parks & Recreation – thanked the Council for the efforts, personally he sees that the Council relatively committed to seeing this project to completion, he knows the Park and Rec board is very dedicated to that end and will their best to work with the Council to get that achieved. He thinks there has not been enough communication from the Board to the Council. Not making excuses but maybe can offer what some of the problem was. He said that right after our master plan was completed there was a certain amount of turmoil in the Parks & Rec office. We were without a superintendant for quite a while, then with the election there was a new board and then we had an interim superintendent along with the new board. Maybe things fell between the cracks but certainly intentional falling through the cracks and he believes that the Board thought they were communicating but evidently it wasn't coming across to the Council. He assures from this day forward that whatever is necessary to communicate what's going with the turf field will be clearly communicated to the Council.

Mady Kenny – said she is pleased with the way things went with the Board of Education tonight and is disappointed with the attitude of laying off of teachers. She feels that next to parenthood, being a teacher is the most under paid and under appreciated and over worked profession there is.

Billy Michaels – listening to numbers flying around, he is astounded that some people are not getting some of the stuff that's going on out there. People want numbers or a wish list. He said that he would like diesel to be \$1.14 per gallon again. We're not going to get our wish list. This can be broken up into several phases, getting the field in there to begin with, he did some math and from the budget of \$824,000 he came up with \$147,000 left over after the field was put in. He feels that there are people out there who just want to help, volunteering non stop are willing to help this come to fruition. He and his company offers free consulting on the project if wanted. He said he just got a 9% increase on turf two days ago and that will happen again next year, so the field will only get more expensive. He said that 61% of the money is sitting there already. He thinks value engineering needs to be done. He appreciates the teachers but sometimes that needs to come to an end.

Dwayne Thomas, - appreciates the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and says it's too bad that it came down to a huddle and recess with this vote. Obviously the vote was along party lines which is fine and that's just the political process, but a midget football board, we bend we don't break so we'll be at every CIP meeting and whatever it takes to get this done. He thinks it's just a dose of common sense. The reality is it was earmarked for the field whether it can be taken away or not, we'll live with it.

## **VII REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Klett thanked the Town Manager and his staff for all the hard work and every member of this Council and it's important to remind the public that this is not the end of the process and that there is another date set for making additional cuts. She wonders why she puts herself through this as well as other members of the Council. It's not always fun, with some painful moments and she appreciates every member of the public sitting through the process, being respectful. She does not think it's appropriate to mimic speakers and hopes that the next time around that that doesn't happen. No one enjoys having to make a cut anywhere in the process. She applauds every member of the friends of football who came and respectfully made their case for the field. It's important for people to stay tuned to what may happen over the next week or so.

Councilor Cohen – this is not the end of the process, we still have a public hearing in response to what decisions were made tonight and after that and listening to the public other changes can be made and she urges anyone watching on TV, please us hear from you, we're hearing from whatever groups starting up are getting organized, let us hear ideas or complaints. She feels that it's important that we hear from everyone, we only know about whatever groups come before us.

Councilor Nasinnyk – it's late – good night

Councilor Banach – thanks all the speakers, he admires those who are not comfortable speaking up but he admires that they get up and speak their mind. He stated that the proposed Democratic budget amounted to some simple figures to keep in mind. He checked with Mrs. Harter, the Finance Director, on the average assessment of a house in Newington, the tax increase for our proposed budget was \$130. which amounted to \$10.80 per month.

Councilor McBride – he had a lot of friends who are teachers and when he thinks of all those people, they're not people thinking how they can make a ton of money. Listening to the Coach talking about bending and not breaking and seeing how many volunteers came out tonight in favor of the field this is the hardest decision to make. We put lots of hours and time in studying this, crunching numbers and discussing it goes well beyond meetings. He has a profound respect that these volunteers who dedicate to others and don't think for a second that these people are teaching or coaching football, they're not. He looks forward to supporting this football field in the future, sorry that he could not support it tonight but in good conscience he could not.

Councilor Nagel – echoes what has been said, and appreciates everyone who spoke and everyone conducted themselves in an appropriate manner. These people do this for the love of the students.

Councilor Casasanta – this evening has been bitter sweet in the sense that we gave back to the Library the money that they has requested. She stated that sitting on this Council and not on the Board of Education is difficult and challenging and all those you expect when you take a volunteer position and no one here at this table can say they're against teachers, it not true. She says that the Board of Education holds a lot of power, that they don't think they do. She noted with all respect to Chairman Woods, she was disappointed in his tone to Mayor Wright, no matter who sits in that chair they deserve the respect of that chair. To abuse anyone of abuse of power in her opinion is very disappointing.

Councilor Lenares – he will look at meeting with Parks & Rec and opening up lines of communion with our Chairman of CIP Committee. Maybe some good quality value engineering. He thanks all the Councilors for their effort and work, it's nothing personal it's just one side and another side.

Mayor Wright – stated that it has been a good night and clearly not everyone agrees on a lot of things, and he feels disappointed in this budget, and the fact that we are asking the tax payers of Newington to pay almost 3% more in their tax bill next year. He stated that the Republican budget could have been less than 1% and Chairman Woods is right, my wife is a teacher and I have the utmost respect for teachers but I think the teachers should share the sacrifices that we're all making today. He has a problem with all the increases going to the teachers. He said it's been a long night and thanks everyone, all members of the public and we'll see everyone next Thursday.

## **VIII ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Casasanta moved to adjourn at 11:15 PM – Seconded by Councilor Banach – Vote 9 - 0

Respectfully Submitted

Mary Richard  
Clerk of the Council