



John L. Salomone
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS

MINUTES

**NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELEN NELSON ROOM – TOWN HALL
7:00 P.M.**

APRIL 24, 2012

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

I & II PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & ROLL CALL

Councilors Present

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

Staff Present

John Salomone, Town Manager
Tom Molloy, Superintendent, Highway Department
Rob Hillman, Asst. Superintendent, Highway Department
Ann Harter, Finance Director
Linda Irish-Simpson – Clerk of the Council

III PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

IV CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Wallace School Roof Replacement Project

Councilor Cohen moved the following:

RESOLVED:

Pursuant to Chapter 8, Article X, Section 8-45 (H), Project Building Committees, of the Newington Code of Ordinances, the Newington Town Council hereby approves the final plans and cost estimates for the John Wallace Middle School Roof Replacement as reviewed by the Town Council and as approved by the Board of Education and the Board of Education Roof Replacement Project Building

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Committee and authorizes the project to proceed to bid on receipt of authorization by the State of Connecticut Department of Education School Facilities Bureau.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Klett and the motion passed 9 – 0.

B. SCHOOL CODE COMPLIANCE PROJECT

Councilor Cohen moved the following:

RESOLVED:

Pursuant to Chapter 8, Article X, Section 8-45 (H), Project Building Committees, of the Newington Code of Ordinances, the Newington Town Council hereby approves the final plans and cost estimates for the school code compliance project at Newington High School as reviewed by the Town Council and as approved by the Board of Education and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency in Boston and the School Code Compliance Committee and authorizes the project to proceed to bid on receipt of authorization by the State Department of Education School Facilities Bureau.

Councilor Nagel explained the resolution was for the removal of asbestos in the auditorium, band and chorus rooms in order to prepare for future renovations. He also stated a bid would be going out for dugouts and hoped the work would be completed by the Fall.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Nagel and the motion passed 9 – 0.

C. AGENT OF RECORD – EMPLOYEE INSURANCE AND BENEFITS

Councilor Castelle moved the following:

RESOLVED:

Pursuant to Town ordinance and the recommendation of the Employee Insurance and Pension Benefits Committee, the Newington Town Council hereby appoints Lockton Benefit Group of Connecticut, Farmington, CT as Agent of Record for the Town of Newington for the period covering July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2018 for purposes of soliciting, negotiating, placing, overseeing and monitoring the Town's employee medical, life, long-term disability and dental insurance plans.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Cohen and the motion passed 9 – 0.

V CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

A. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSION UPDATES

Michael Fox gave an overview of items covered by the Commission regarding recycling, removal of PCB's, energy efficiencies such as CNG powered vehicles and solar panels at Wallace School. He discussed the possibility of selling tickets to dump at the landfill for commercial vehicles to generate income to the Town. He also remarked that the Commission has a problem getting a quorum to hold meetings and urged the Republicans to appoint up to five individuals so this would not be an issue. Mr. Fox asked Mr. Salomone to give him the names of the Council liaisons to the Commission.

He stated he had sent a letter to the DEEP regarding stopping the busway and urged the Council members to contact the Commission with any ideas on having only one station or no stations in Newington. Mr. Fox indicated the Commission would like to see Cedar Mountain remain as is and not developed with trails or mini-golf and hoped the remaining piece of Cedar Mountain would be purchased by the Town.

Mr. Fox wanted everyone to know the Commission would be holding an Earth Day event on April 28 and that newspapers had been notified about it.

Mayor Woods indicated that it might be a good idea to reduce the number of individuals on the Commission so that it would not be as difficult to have a quorum for each meeting. Mr. Fox stated that it might be a good idea to do that in the future.

Councilor Castelle mentioned that he and Mr. Fox were both on the Balf Town Commission which meets once a year (October 2011) and he thought it might be a good idea to have another meeting to review the meeting of the TPZ and Balf Ticon Company held in November.

B. Discussion: Curbside MSW Collection Contract

John Salomone gave an overview of the negotiated new contract with Trash-Away which was set to expire on June 30, 2012. He explained that all conditions of the contract would remain but the contracted rate would drop for a three year savings of \$298,492.55. The contract if approved would run from July 1, 2012 and expire in 2015. Mr. Salomone stated that the service was very good with the vendor and did not receive a lot of complaints regarding lack of pick up from residents.

Tom Molloy stated there were three contracts set to expire: Trash-Away, curb side collection, CWPM, collection of recyclables, and All Waste, collection at condos and schools. All three companies have expressed interest in extension of the contracts. He explained that currently the rate per dwelling was \$86.34 and if the new rate was accepted, would go in 2012-2013 to (July-Nov) \$68.89, (Dec-June) to \$74.83, in 2013-14 to \$76.33 and the final year would be \$77.86 per unit. He stated that currently Wethersfield paid \$62, West Hartford paid \$63, Rocky Hill \$66, Manchester paid \$73 and Berlin paid \$81.

Councilor Castelle asked Mr. Molloy how the company could afford to lower the price so dramatically. Mr. Molloy explained competition was very tight and the Town was located close to the disposal site. Councilor McBride thanked Tom Molloy and John Salomone for working hard to save the Town money. He wanted to know if Mr. Molloy felt there was an advantage of accepting the quote and not going out to bid. Mr. Molloy stated that the Town knows the rates that were negotiated and the savings involved and once the Town puts the contract out to bid, the Town will not know what rates would be quoted.

Councilor Klett expressed concern at waiving the bid process and hoped they understood her lack of support in waiving the process since the Council was not a private business but a town government. She stated that she saw a pattern of waiving bids, which concerned her. Councilor Klett said she believed that everyone had a right to try to bid for whatever work was available and waiving the process would take away that right. Mr. Molloy agreed but stated you had to be realistic about the numbers you could get in the bid process since there was no negotiating at that point. Mayor Woods liked the numbers and thought they compared well against other towns and stated part of the Council's job was to weight the best numbers for the taxpayer of the Town. He stated that the Council had to decide in two weeks whether or not to accept or reject the negotiated price and if rejected, the contract would go out to bid. Councilor Cohen asked about the bidding process with one company's numbers public knowledge and the affect on other companies. Mr. Molloy stated that with the numbers being public they would be used as a benchmark for the others. He explained there might be a company who gave a low ball price and might not be able to handle the collection or might not have the service the Town is used to.

Councilor Borjeson explained that he would be more comfortable with waiving the bid process if the vendor was the sole source like the instance of microfiche for the Town Clerk. Councilor Bottalico indicated that in the past the low bidder was awarded and it created a lot of trouble. He stated that the savings of almost 300k over three years was very good. Councilor McBride stated that service counted for something in the process and remembered back to the trouble with the past trash vendor. He felt that the price was important but service should also be considered.

Councilor Cohen stated that service was very important and once a bid was submitted, to reject the lowest bid required definite proof of a problem with the vendor, otherwise the Town would be compelled to accept the bid. She felt that the research had been done by the staff and if they were comfortable with the rate, she was comfortable with it. Mayor Woods asked for more research on other towns' current bids and rates, which Mr.

Salomone indicated they would do. Councilor Castelle was uncomfortable with waiving the bid process and asked if once a bid was received could it be negotiated and Mr. Salomone stated that once a bid was received that was the final non-negotiated rate.

Mr. Salomone indicated that since the Council was uncomfortable with waiving the bid process, he would ask Mr. Molloy to begin the bid process so that if the Council rejected the current bid in two weeks, the Town would have the process started. Mayor Woods asked Tom Molloy to retrieve the old contract and give it to the Council for the next meeting.

C. DISCUSSION: APPOINT AUDITOR

Ann Harter explained that in accordance with the Town Charter, the Council was required each year to appoint the firm that would do the audit. It is currently Blum Shapiro in the last year of a three year appointment. This appointment will appear on the May 8 agenda for action. She stated there was an Audit Committee that was comprised of Chris Banach, Scott McBride, and Dave Nichols. Mrs. Harter indicated the auditors would sit with the committee prior to the auditing process so the Council would have to reappoint two of the committee members and appoint a third individual.

VI RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

None

VII TAX REFUNDS

Councilor McBride moved the following:

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$597.38 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.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Klett and the motion passed 9 – 0.

VIII MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

A. April 5, 2012 – Public Hearing RE: Town Council's Tentative Budget

A motion was made by Councilor Bottalico to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Borjeson. The motion passed 9 – 0.

B. April 5, 2012, Special Meeting

A motion was made by Councilor Bottalico to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Castelle. The motion passed 9 – 0.

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

None

X COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Cohen indicated there was a newspaper article regarding the Conservation Commission holding a special meeting on May 1 at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers on invasive species that were invading areas like ponds and maintaining Cedar Mountain.

XI PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She expressed concern over the appearance of signage in Town Hall and no directions on how to get to specific rooms. She asked about the Police Department's monthly report lacking a breakdown of the past month and wondered why other departments included the information and not the Police Department.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She was thankful the Environmental Quality Commission was at the meeting. She wanted information on the liaisons for the Parks and Rec Department, Conservation Committee, and TPZ Committee. She felt that if a Councilor was unable to attend these meetings, someone from each of the committees should appear before the Council to give updates. Mrs. Lyons felt there was a lack of communication between the committees and the Council. She stated that several committees lack quorums not just Mr. Fox' committee and that they lacked alternates for many of them as well. Mrs. Lyons asked about the status of the bridge work on Cedar Street and wanted an update on it. She stated that she had talked to Mr. Molloy prior to the meeting regarding debris that needed to be picked up and Mrs. Lyons wanted the public to know they could call the Highway Department in cases where debris needed to be picked up since the department was very responsive to these requests. She thanked Councilor McBride for his help regarding the missing mailbox at Market Square. Mrs. Lyons was concerned about getting the lights on Lowry Place working.

Michael Fox, 1911 Main Street: He stated that his commission would send a volunteer to the Hazardous Materials drop-off on May 5 at the Highway Department. Mr. Fox indicated there would be a cleanup day and nature walk on Cedar Mountain and would put the date and time in the paper.

XII REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Bottalico asked Mr. Salomone about getting the full agenda on the Councilors' Ipads. Mr. Salomone indicated they intended to do a soft opening and enable the Councilors to work on the Ipads informally. Over the next few weeks there will be more formal training.

Councilor Nagel appreciated the soft training given for the Ipads and thought the training was very beneficial. He indicated that in his recent Council packet was a copy of Lucy Welles Library information brochure and would be worthwhile for all residents to pick up at the Library.

Councilor McBride indicated he had contacted the Town Manager's office regarding the tree branch near wires on Candlewood Drive, which will be taken care of along with other tree branches in Town. He stated he had contacted John Salomone about the light on Halleran Drive being out for a long time and indicated it was a CL&P issue and was being repaired.

Councilor Klett indicated that Paul Boutot had finished numbering the light poles with GIS numbers. Mr. Salomone said that all Town poles would have the number so that if a light was out it could be easily identified. There were two currently out that the Town was waiting for parts. Councilor Klett asked about the status of the Blight Ordinance, which will be on the next agenda. She indicated there was a property near the Boulevard and Roberts Street that had been on the Blight Property List for a numbers of years, which seemed to be a small factory or repair shop. She asked Mr. Salomone for feedback as to the status and plan for that property and asked for the 2011 list of blighted property to be sent to each Councilor. Councilor Klett asked about the monthly breakdown of the Police Department's figures. Mr. Salomone indicated that it was a cumulative figure year to date and would have to subtract one month's figure from the next month to get the actual monthly figure.

Councilor Borjeson stated he was the TPZ liaison and would be attending future meetings. Councilor Cohen indicated that liaisons were not required to attend every meeting but each liaison tried to keep in touch with the committees since attending each meeting would be onerous.

Mayor Woods indicated that signage was being made up and should be completed shortly in Town Hall. He stated he had met with members of the Victory Garden and they would be attending the May 22 meeting for a presentation. The shovels were planned to be in the ground in June and permits would be issued shortly.

XIII ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Castelle moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. and was seconded by Councilor DelBuono. The motion passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk