



Keith Chapman
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

April 14, 2020

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Adam O. Nagel
Town Clerk

This meeting was presented as a Zoom Webinar/Meeting.

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. via Zoom.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. ROLL CALL

- Councilor Anest
- Councilor Braverman
- Councilor Budrejko
- Councilor Camillo
- Councilor Donahue
- Councilor Manke
- Councilor Miner
- Councilor Nagel
- Mayor DelBuono

Staff Attendees:

- Keith Chapman, Town Manager
- Craig Minor, Town Planner
- James E. Krupienski, Town Clerk
- Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Manke to approve the agenda. Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (Via Telephone Only: 860-665-8736)

(4 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)

- Barbara Squillacote, 275 Field Street thanked James for his assistance; wished everyone good health; had questions regarding the Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Grant application.

V. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- None

VI. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken)

- A. Town Hall Project Update

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- Town Manager Chapman stated that still on schedule for the July 27th completion and move in. Lighting being installed; bathroom tiling being installed; construction of vault is nearly complete; network cabling is ongoing; gym exterior brick, east elevation is complete; community center window installation is nearly complete. COVID-19 has not adversely impacted the progress. Nurse on site taking temperature of employees entering site, will continue until further notice.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that at the Town Hall Renovation Committee meeting they mentioned having a company coming in to sanitize, at a nominal cost. Has that happened?
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it is underway and is happening right now.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that thankfully COVID-19 has not impacted the timeline / completion date. Construction Manager stated that we were fortunate to get materials before plants shut down. All those involved have been doing a good job getting us to our completion date.

B. Health Update

- Town Manager Chapman stated that COVID-19 has changed the way we are doing business. Have a number of employees working from home. Have switched the public works/field crews to split shifts. Work they are doing need to be done. Working on ball fields. Fortunate not to have any employees infected by the Coronavirus. There are 90 people in town who have tested positive; significant increases in convalescent homes throughout Newington and the whole state. Town offices remain open; if someone comes to the Town Hall the doors are locked; they can call the department and they will service them at the door.
- Councilor Manke asked how many employees are in the building daily.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that it is about 20-25 people; normally have about 40-45 people.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that when she has been in the building interior doors are propped open, so no one has to touch the door knobs; sanitizer is available in each department. Lots of precautions in place.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that included in the packet was the cost to the Town regarding COVID-19.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that is correct, based upon recent data the town has expended \$10,900 on COVID-19.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that looking at this list, is this the total for a week, month?
- Town Manager Chapman stated that is the total, to date, since beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. May be more depending on how long the crisis continues.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that approximately 75% of these costs will be covered by FEMA reimbursement.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that is what they have been told.

C. Discussion-Anna Reynolds Elementary School Roof Replacement

- Town Manager Chapman stated that the latest report he received from the Superintendent is that the conditions have been very favorable.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she is anxious to see the report regarding the heavy rain we had yesterday.

D. Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Grant

- Town Manager Chapman stated that all the information you requested has been provided.
- Councilor Manke stated that this is applying for a grant; once we get the grant, we will do the study. Correct?

- Town Manager Chapman stated that is correct, if we get the money. May not receive as many grants because of COVID-19.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that a member of the public had a few questions regarding this - group homes and Victory Gardens, and something about the Berlin Turnpike, hotels that are used as housing. She also asked for an explanation of the Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (“NOAH”).
- Town Manager Chapman stated that on the application NOAH in Newington “to include Section 8 units if possible and short-term housing on the Berlin Turnpike”, is what you asked for at the last meeting.
- Craig Minor, Town Planner stated that NOAH is housing that is cheap, because the market dictates that is be affordable. It is not rent controlled or deed restricted, it is just supply and demand, resulting in the rent being low and we have a lot of that housing in Newington.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that NOAH is because Newington has a lot of older homes and the assessed value is not what it is in other towns like West Hartford. Is that correct?
- Town Planner Minor stated that is correct.

Motion by Councilor Anest

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby authorizes Keith Chapman, Town Manager to execute all documents necessary for the submission of the application for an Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Grant with the Connecticut Department of Housing, a copy of the executed application to be attached to this Resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 9-0 (*Roll Call vote*)

E. Update to the Elections Emergency Operations Plan

- Town Manager Chapman stated that in you packet there is a grant application to receive funding from state and federal agencies to apply for and receive funds during a declared emergency declaration. Add language to apply for grants; not in previous ordinance; timely with what is going on now. Not sure of upcoming primary and costs involved. The only other major change for backup for voting if the schools were not available was the police department; after reviewing that we want to allow ourselves the ability to maneuver and have flexibility to select voting locations depending on the type of emergency we are going through. That is new language in the ordinance.

Motion by Councilor Nagel

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby moves to repeal the Elections Emergency Contingency Plan previously adopted on February 26, 2013, Resolution #2013-20, and adopts a Revised Elections Emergency Contingency Plan, a copy of which is attached to this resolution, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 9-174, Emergency Contingency Plan for Elections.

Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 9-0 (*Roll Call vote*)

F. Discussion - Anna Reynolds PBC Funding Request

- Town Manager Chapman stated the Anna Reynolds PBC received quotes regarding this; all above \$50,000.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that at the agenda setting meeting, we asked how much money was in the account. If we approve this \$50,000 out of the Town Council Contingency Fund, there is slightly over that in the account.

- Town Manager Chapman stated that when the low bid \$60,000 submission was made it was not in writing and it was raised during an interview.
- Councilor Manke recommends we stay at the \$50,000, unsure of what is going to happen within the next few months.
- Councilor Donahue stated that he agrees to keep it at \$50,000. That will get them started.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she agrees, stick with the \$50,000 that was requested. If more money is needed, maybe they can go to the BOE for additional funds. Right now with so much uncertainty taking more out of the contingency doesn't make sense.

Motion by Councilor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

CERTIFICATION: In accordance with Section 808 of the Town Charter, I hereby certify that there exists, free from encumbrances, in the Special Contingency Account 10962-8220, \$50,000.

Janet Murphy, Director of Finance

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Board of Education is requesting, for the Anna Reynolds Public Building Committee, to transfer the above certified funds in the Special Contingency Account, to the following account:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Amount</u>
31190	Public Building Fund	\$50,000

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Newington Town Council, as fiscal authority for the Town hereby transfer \$50,000 from the Special Contingency Account to the expense account listed above.

Seconded by Councilor Braverman. Motion passed 9-0 (*Roll Call vote*)

G. Revised Budget Meeting Schedule

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby revises the Budget Meetings and Public Hearing schedule, as previously approved under Resolution #2020-6, on the proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The final Public Hearing, to review the Town Council's Proposed Budget, will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2020.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0 (*Roll Call vote*)

- VII. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS (**Action May Be Taken by Waiving the Rules**)
- A. Participation in State Deferment Program & Low Interest Rate Program (EO-7S) (**Waiver Requested**)

Motion by Councilor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

The Newington Town Council, in accordance with Section 11 of the Town Council, Rules of Procedure, adopted February 11, 2020, hereby moves to allow action on Agenda Item VII.A, to Consider and Take Action on Municipal Tax Assistance Programs.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0 (*Roll Call vote*)

Motion by Councilor Miner

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby moves that the Town of Newington shall participate in the Municipal Deferment Program and the Low Interest Rate Program, as authorized under Executive Order 7S, Section 6, executed by Governor Lamont on April 1, 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 9-0 (*Roll Call vote*)

- Town Manager Chapman stated that this offers an extension of 90 days for the July 2020 tax bills. It would be deferred for 90 days and there would be a grace period, which normally ends August 1, will now end October 1 with no penalty or interest. It is the opinion of the tax office, they recommend that the deferment program be adopted for all tax payers because of the significance of the crisis we are in. The second item is a low interest rate program that will extend to all tax payers who have delinquent taxes as of March 10, 2020, and will be charged 3% annually or 2.5% monthly. Payment has to be received within 90 days, if not it will go back to 18%.

Public Participation

- Representative Gary Turco stated he wanted to express his opinion on the motion of deferment of property taxes for Newington residents. With the difficulties Newington residents are facing now with the COVID-19 crisis that he deferment of payment of taxes is much needed right now and I urge the council to please vote for it. Thank you.

Council Comments

- Councilor Minor asked the town manager to clarify the October 1 deadline, would a 30 day grace period bring it to November 1 or it is just October 1?
- Town Manager Chapman stated it is October 1.
- Councilor Manke stated that he agrees with this action and it will give our citizens a chance to catch their breath. It's been a trying couple of months and it is the least we can do.
- Councilor Budrejko stated that it applies to business as well as residents. As we discussed before, we are a working class town and a lot of our residents may not be working within this time period. Is there a way to get statistics as to how many residents applied for unemployment to help us plan for the future.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that we can request that information; not sure how relevant it will be until we know what businesses won't be opening or taking all employees back. Speaking with some businesses, it may not be beneficial to employees or town. If you look at the landlords, they are not getting any rent. Will try to gather information as it becomes available.
- Councilor Camillo stated that most of the mortgage companies have deferred payments for 90 days so I think we will be ok there. 15-20% of the small business that have closed won't reopen again. Keep our fingers crossed that we can get back to work sooner, rather than later.
- Councilor Anest asked if the deferment was for automobile taxes as well.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that yes, motor vehicle taxes are deferred as well.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she is happy that this was passed. Received calls from businesses.

B. Fair Housing Month Resolution

- Town Manager Chapman stated that this is an annual event. It is called the Small Cities Grant program and it is intended to assist in fair housing and working with realtors and property owners. It is a grant we may or may not receive this year, but we should apply.

VIII. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- A. March 3, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes
- B. March 10, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
- C. March 24, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

- Town Clerk Krupiensi stated that the minutes were not included in the packet.
- Councilor Anest made a motion to table Item VIII, Minute of Previous Meetings to the next council meeting. Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 9-0. (*Roll Call vote*)

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

- Town Manager Chapman stated that yesterday was a challenging day for operations due to the heavy winds and rain. We had nine trees fall in town. We had no flooding anywhere in town, which is amazing with the amount of water we got. Overall everything is going well. No employees have tested for the virus. Do have park ranger program in effect, they are doing a good job, some people are ignoring the rules, not here to arrest, guide them. Most people are abiding by rules, not major altercations.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that today she saw a dad and two kids playing at Badger Field; another family walked up the street, entered the park and respectfully waited. Nice to see that. Using the open park space as appropriate.

X. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Councilor Budrejko stated that TPZ had an interesting meeting last week. A place of worship application has been received for Lowery Place, believe hours will be Thursday night and Sunday evenings. The Peckham Farm behind Walgreens is going to be developed into a subdivision of homes. It would have been nice if the town could have purchased this property for open space. The TPZ has reviewed the 8-24 the Council submitted, actively working on it, will have site visits and get back to us with recommendations.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the Town Hall Reno committee did meet via Zoom. Trying to sanitize; biggest concern is the health and safety of the workers.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (**Via Telephone Only: 860-665-8736**)
(3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)

- None

XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

- Councilor Manke thanked everyone for their patience while trying to navigate these Zoom meetings. Appreciate you sticking with us. Hopefully we will all be together soon.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she too wanted to thank everyone for their patience with these Zoom meetings; there is a lot to navigate on the screen. Hopefully we will get better each time we do this. Want to thank our employees and Mr. Chapman for all the efforts that went on behind the scenes to get these Zoom meetings up and running. A quick shout out to all of our employees who are still working, they are doing everything to keep our town hall up and running and to provide services to our residents. Mr. Chapman, thank you, you have done an amazing job through this crisis, hope you stay on for the long haul. Can't thank you enough. I received no calls or emails regarding flooding in town yesterday, our town employees have been working diligently cleaning out our waterways to get rid of the flooding issues.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Camillo to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 9-0. (*Roll Call vote*)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Gibbon".

Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk