



John L. Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS**

## MINUTES

**NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
Conference Room L-101 Lower Level – Town Hall  
7:00 P.M.

**October 27, 2015**

---

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:00 p.m.

### **I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Councilor Banach  
Councilor Borjeson  
Councilor Castelle  
Councilor DelBuono  
Councilor Klett  
Councilor McDonald  
Councilor Marocchini  
Councilor Nagel  
Mayor Woods

#### Staff Attendees:

Paul Boutot, Chief Information Officer/Acting Town Manager  
Peter Boorman, Town Attorney  
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

### **III. AWARDS/PROCLAMATIONS**

#### **A. Teacher of the Year – Jonas Roberts**

Mayor Woods moved the following:

**WHEREAS, Mr. Jonas P. Roberts, a Grade 3 Teacher at Anna Reynolds Elementary School, has been designated as Newington's 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts was selected based upon his exceptional skill and dedication to children and the teaching profession; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts is intelligent, a strong communicator, an advocate for all students and a strong believer that public education is the vehicle to prepare all children for participation in our society; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts is poised and articulate with an outgoing nature and possesses the superior ability to inspire learning in all students; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from the Central Connecticut State University, a Master's of Science in Reading at Central Connecticut State University; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts has been teaching in Newington for fourteen years at Anna Reynolds Elementary School and prior to Newington, Mr. Roberts was a teacher with the Meriden Public Schools; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts is dedicated to his students and fosters a strong rapport between students and himself and establishes early communication with students and parents. Mr. Roberts is a dedicated professional, leader and trendsetter amongst his colleagues, and the teacher that every parent wants his or her child to have; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts is a very reflective, motivated professional who is always learning and stays abreast of current research and applies new learning in his classroom; and**

**WHEREAS, Mr. Roberts leads, inspires, teaches and cares. Mr. Roberts consistently models a love of learning and demonstrates patience and genuine interest in his students; and**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Newington Town Council hereby recognizes Jonas P. Roberts as Newington's Teacher of the Year and extends its sincere congratulations and appreciation to his dedication and commitment to Newington's children.**

Mayor Woods congratulated Mr. Roberts for standing out amongst his peers. Newington presented the award each year and the Mayor felt it sent a strong message to the residents that education was very important. Mr. Roberts thanked the Town Council for the recognition and was proud to represent his community. He felt Newington stood out and was known for its quality education, Councilor McDonald stated it was a great honor and achievement and even more so since his peers had nominated him.

Councilor Castelle stated he was still a sub in the school system and appreciated everything the teachers did. He did say that he could not work in the elementary schools since nobody worked harder than elementary teachers, and he no longer had the stamina it took to teach at that level.

Councilor Nagel thanked Mr. Roberts for his dedication and service to the children of Newington. As a previous high school teacher he was amazed at the hard work, dedication and ingenuity it took to teach at the elementary school level.

Councilor DelBuono congratulated Mr. Roberts and said that one part of the proclamation stood out and that was the section stating his dedication and leadership among his colleagues as well as being the teacher that everyone wanted. She said her daughter had had Mr. Roberts and it had been a pleasure. The Councilor was glad that he was being recognized after all this time.

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

#### **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (In Person/Via Telephone: 860-665-8736)**

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive: He thanked the Town Council for all they had done and recognized they all did what they thought was in the best interests of Newington. He also congratulated Mr. Salomone for having a well-run town even though he got a lot of criticism. Regarding the Town Hall renovation he questioned the need for as much space as was requested. He felt the current standards of office space required much less than was projected. He stated his company had planned to move 107 people into approximately 22,000 square feet, which included conference rooms, offices, etc.

Maddy Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She was pleased with the recent planting of trees on her street and hoped in 40 years they would create a beautiful canopy like in the past. She suggested doing this in other parts of town.

Gail Budrekjo, 21 Isabelle Terrace: She thanked the Town Council and the Mayor for their dedication over the years. No matter what the Council did, someone was not going to be happy. She felt she agreed with the Council a lot even though they only heard from her about the times she disagreed. Mrs. Budrekjo knew they spent many hours of work behind the scenes and appreciated their efforts.

Roy Zartarian, 25 Stuart Street: He agreed with the previous comments and appreciated their work over the past two years. He indicated in the monthly report that the Governor had reduced the pay in lieu of taxes to towns for State owned property by approximately 20 percent. The amount was included in the budget as a revenue item and asked what the impact might be and might there be further reductions in State aid.

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue: He thanked the Council for their efforts during the past two years. He indicated the failure of the renovation was not partisan division but it was clear from the public hearing that the cost was too high. He thought the Board of Ed could be moved from the building and put in a rented space which would save maintenance costs or build a space at a current school. He stated this was the first night they did not smell the sewer at the meeting but asked about the cost of the break and if it could have been prevented by doing maintenance.

#### **V. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May Be Taken)**

##### **A. Town Hall/Community Center Project Discussion**

Mayor Woods said the committee had done everything they had been asked to do but that it was obvious from the public hearing it would not have passed. He felt since the Council had been divided on what to do it was difficult to move the project forward. He stated the Council needed to collectively decide on how to progress or the Town could not move forward. The Mayor appreciated the work of the committee and was proud the Council was willing to move forward with the project.

Mr. Bongiovanni said the committee served at the pleasure of the Town Council and was proud of the work they did and the attempt to meet the needs of the Town. However, it was clear the Town was not in favor of the proposed plan. Mr. Bongiovanni indicated there was an issue with the format of the public hearing which suffered from misinformation, etc. He urged the format of the public hearing to change so that you could present a plan, have people speak for and against and then have a rebuttal period. That would ensure misinformation, inaccuracies, etc. could be addressed immediately. There were many

structural issues in the current building that would need to be addressed in the near future and hoped the project could move forward.

Mr. Mortensen stated he had been very frustrated with the outcome and felt he had been too naïve. He strongly felt the committee should not be disbanded since the new Council would have to start at the beginning of the process. He felt the committee did all the right things and met the charge of the Council. He indicated there was a lot of misinformation and lies from the very beginning of the process and they continued to be seen in the local papers. Mr. Mortensen stated the building should be torn down since maintaining more space than was needed was costly and inefficient.

Councilor Klett agreed the process for holding public hearings could be changed. The Town Attorney stated the Council could change the process, and he could review the plan if any legalities were in question. She felt the people who came to speak at the public hearing were not encouraged by one side or the other but felt strongly they needed to express their opinions.

Councilor DelBuono said there were concerns at the public hearing regarding certain comments that were made. It was good to get feedback from the committee and moving forward could change the process. She thought it might have been a good idea for the committee to put something in writing for the public to ensure accurate information was given and received.

Councilor Borjeson agreed with the comments regarding misinformation and especially those comments made through social media. He felt that had been the politics of Newington for the past several years and made a motion to disband the committee, which Councilor Castelle seconded.

Councilor Castelle supported the idea of altering the format of public hearings and indicated the power of the people had been shown in the past. He said that only twenty people killed the project and that a rebuttal period would have been a good idea.

Councilor Marocchini indicated the first public hearing went well, the second one did OK and the third public hearing killed the project. He questioned how to figure out in the future the true mood of the public from a hearing. He was part of the committee and felt their pain since so much work had gone into the proposal. Mayor Woods said it was obvious from the mood of the 100+ people in attendance that they were not in favor of the plan and the Council should not have gone forward if it was going to fail.

Councilor DelBuono said it was difficult to disband the committee since so much work had been done. It could be counterproductive to select a new group to start at the beginning. She felt the public had lost faith in the architect and did not believe the plan presented was the best one.

Councilor McDonald agreed with Mr. Mortensen and wondered if the Town was looking to save money now and not considering what it would cost down the road. She felt the Town needed to get serious about the renovation and needed to ensure accurate information was received by the public without assumptions or lies. She was in favor of keeping the present committee.

Councilor Nagel agreed with the Mayor that the mood of the town would have defeated the project at referendum. The committee worked very hard on the renovation and everyone was respectful of other ideas. The committee needed to make sure the public was comfortable with the cost and trusted the committee and Council. He felt there was no reason the same people could not be on the committee and thought a fresh start was needed. The committee could be disbanded and the new Council could appoint the same individuals if they agreed to stay.

Councilor Banach was reluctant to disband the committee since the individuals involved showed a great deal of integrity. The project had to be resolved one way or the other. He wanted to retain the committee and give the new Council the option of retaining or having different individuals on it.

Councilor Klett asked the Town Attorney if the committee could be disbanded without a final report, and he indicated that it could be or it could be continued. She had served with both Mr. Bongiovanni and Mr. Mortensen in the past and did not think anyone could question their integrity. She had no problem with maintaining the same committee and having a new charge from the new Town Council.

Mayor Woods asked Mr. Bongiovanni if he thought the committee would consider staying on for the new Council and he indicated yes. Councilor Borjeson said that he could understand the frustration of the committee and did not want to push a committee on the new Council; however, he would withdraw his motion for disbanding the committee. Councilor Castelle withdrew his second of the motion.

Councilor Nagel wanted clarification on what had been decided. He asked if the Council was retaining the committee to let the new Council determine if they wanted to keep the same individuals or to change the makeup. Mayor Woods indicated the new Council could do whatever they wanted to do.

## **B. Acceptance of Green Avenue Update**

Mayor Woods said that no action was required by the Town Council since Green Avenue was already a town road. It was not up to Town standards and would be maintained by the Highway Department in the future. Councilor Klett wanted the Town Manager to ensure the road was taken care of by the Town Engineer and the Highway Department.

## **C. Town Manager Contract Compensation Issue**

Councilor Castelle moved the following:

### **RESOLVED:**

**That reflective of the Town Manager's performance from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, the Town Council hereby authorizes a salary increase of two percent (2) %, (\$2,891.79) on the current salary of the Town Manager, John L. Salomone, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015.**

Councilor Banach indicated Mr. Salomone was worth every penny and Councilor Marocchini agreed. The Mayor indicated the current salary was \$144,589.26 and with the increase it would be \$147,481.05. The difference was \$2,891.79.

Councilor Klett asked if a final summary had been given to the Town Manager since the minority party had not received it. Councilor Borjeson indicated he had met with Mr. Salomone and given him the report and thought it had been passed onto the majority and minority parties. The amount had been discussed at the last executive session but no final document had been received.

Councilor DelBuono said it was difficult to vote on a matter without reviewing the final document and asked if it could be tabled until the next meeting. The Mayor indicated with the new Council being elected, it was up to the present Council to vote on the matter. Councilor Nagel said it was problematic since he had been out of the country and a final summary would have clarified the discussion for him.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Borjeson and the motion passed 6 – 3 on a roll call vote:

Yes: Councilors Banach, Borjeson, Castelle, Marocchini, McDonald, Mayor Woods

No: Councilors DelBuono, Klett, Nagel

## **VI. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS (Action May Be Taken)**

### **A. Appointments to Boards and Commissions**

- 1. Affordable Housing Monitoring Agency**
- 2. Commission on Aging and Disabled**
- 3. Balf-Town Committee**
- 4. Board of Education Roof Replacement Project Building Committee**
- 5. Board of Ethics**
- 6. Capitol Region Council of Governments**

7. Central Connecticut Health District Board of Directors
8. Committee on Community Safety
9. Conservation Commission
10. Development Commission
11. Downtown Revitalization Committee
12. Employee Insurance & Pension Benefits Committee
13. Environmental Quality Commission
14. Board of Ethics
15. Fair Rent Commission
16. Newington Housing Authority
17. Human Rights Commission
18. Library Renovations/Addition Project Building Committee
19. Newington School Career Technical Program Renovation Project Building Committee
20. Open Space Committee
21. Board of Parks and Recreation
22. School Improvements Project Building Committee
23. STEM Academy PBC
24. Senior & Disabled Center Roof Replacement Project Building Committee
25. Standing Insurance Committee
26. Town Hall Renovations Project Building Committee
27. Town Plan & Zoning Commission
28. Tri-Town Community Cable Access
29. Vehicle Appeals Board
30. West Meadow Cemetery Expansion Project Building Committee
31. Zoning Board of Appeals

Councilor Banach moved the following:

**RESOLVED:** that the Newington Town Council hereby makes the following appointment(s):

**Ethics Committee**

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Susan E. Mazzoccoli	149 Harris Drive	D	10/27/15 – 11/30/16	Barbara DeMaio

**TPZ, Alternate**

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Vincent Camilli	287 Cedarwood Lane	D	10/27/15-11/30/17	Brian Andrejewski

**Sr. & Disabled Commission**

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Therese Nadeau	76 Vincent Drive	D	10/27/15-11/30/17	William DeMaio

**20. Open Space Committee**

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Sharon Dunning	528 Churchill Drive	D	10/27/15-11/30/17	New

Councilor Borjeson seconded the motion and the motion passed 9 – 0.

**VII. TAX REFUNDS (Action Requested)**

Councilor Marocchini moved the following:

**RESOLVED:**

**That property tax refunds in the amount of \$3,802.70 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 Nagel and passed 9 – 0.

**VIII. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Action Requested)**

- A. Public Hearing, October 13, 2015**
- B. Regular Meeting, October 13, 2015**

Councilor Nagel moved to accept the above meeting minutes with the caveat they be corrected as requested. The motion was seconded by Councilor Castelle and 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**

Mr. Boutot, Acting Town Manager, gave an update on the recent sewer issue in Town Hall. He indicated there was still an odor in the building and was in the process of determining the cause. A camera will be used to determine if there were any other issues that needed to be addressed. He said the cost to date was \$101,000.

## **X. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilor Castelle said the Standing Insurance Committee had met and there was an offer to extend the coverage from July 1, 2016 for two years with a modest increase. The new Council would have to make a decision regarding it but did not need to add it to the next agenda.

Councilor DelBuono indicated the BALF Committee had met. There were three individuals with concerns but some were not in the committee's charge but were the Fire Departments. The issue regarding dust would be monitored and followed up on.

## **XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (In Person/Via Telephone: 860-665-8736)**

Gail Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive: She thanked the Councilors for their hard work, the hours they gave to the Town and the sacrifices of their families.

Scott Greczkowski, 46 Miami Avenue: He said after attending many of the renovation committee meetings he was not pleased with the way the members treated the public speakers. Mr. Bongiovanni had said at a meeting that they did not want to hear the public's ideas since they were the experts and should be left alone to do their jobs. He felt their attitude was elitist and some people who wanted to talk to the architect after meetings found him rude. He felt a better effort should have been made to make the public aware of the hearing and found the Town website confusing and difficult to find things. He thanked the members of the Council

Dana Woods, 94 New Britain Avenue: She thanked the Council for their services and wished good luck to all the candidates who were running for election. She wanted to thank her father, Stephen Woods, who she was very proud of. He was the best dad and Mayor and was always able to attend her functions through the years. Although all good things come to an end, she was glad to get her father back.

Maddy Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She indicated at the recent public hearing there was not a lot of intense criticism but felt people wanted a second opinion or find a new architect. From the focus groups communication was an issue because of the misinformation, misinterpretation or lies that had been disseminated. She felt a summary of the meetings should have been published. She felt the new committee had been charged to start anew and at the first meeting she saw the original architect, which meant it was the same old thing. She thought they would discuss getting a different architect or at least a discussion on whether or not to keep the original one. There was distrust of the architect from the public.

John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue: He said there was no shame in not getting the job done since sometimes it took time to get it right. He supported keeping the current building committee since they were all top notch people. He felt Mr. Mortensen needed an attitude adjustment because it might derail the next proposal. He felt his attitude towards the public's opinion was disappointing even though he was frustrated with the failure of the proposal. He thought it was a fair question to ask if the sewer problem could have been avoided through a maintenance program. He thanked the Council for their efforts and especially the Mayor and Mr. Castelle.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She thought the Town needed to look at the big picture when planning the renovation of Town Hall. She disagreed with Mr. Bongiovanni's attitude that the committee meet the needs of the departments and to get Park and Rec within the building at any cost. In her opinion the charge was to work with the Town staff to determine an acceptable answer to meet the charge. There was confusion as to whether or not the department heads had been contacted at all. During public hearings there should be time available to get answers to questions. Mrs. Lyons felt communication was important and the committee should have published summaries of discussion so that the correct information would have gotten out.

John Slusarski, 40 Grandview Drive: He said there was a need to understand the needs of the employees in the building. He did not understand why 107 people at his office needed only 22,000 square feet and the Town employees needed three times that. He felt more questions needed to be asked in that regard. He asked if anyone had compared Town Manager salaries with surrounding towns since the information was out there. He felt the hard questions were not being asked.

## **XII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Borjeson said it had been an interesting ride for the past four years and felt they had a very good leadership team. He thanked the Mayor for his leadership, Councilor Banach, Jim Marocchini as well as Myra Cohen who was no longer here. He felt they had accomplished a lot and that the right decisions had been made. He also thanked John Salomone and his staff, the Board of Education and all the Town volunteers who care so much about the Town.

Councilor Marocchini thanked all the members of the Town Council and especially Steve for being his mentor. He had learned a lot during the past two years and thanked Maureen for encouraging him to run for office.

Councilor Nagel mentioned the opening of the new Aerospace Academy and what a positive thing it was for the Town. He thanked all the members for serving.

Councilor Klett asked the Town Manager for the number of motel calls and their nature from January to the present from the Police Department, and would like an update on the regional dispatch situation since the State had pulled back from it. The Councilor thanked all the members of the Council for their service and for the public who attended the meetings. She thanked Mayor Woods for his service since nobody had the background knowledge that he did, and he left big shoes to fill.

Councilor DelBuono also thanked the members for their service and was glad to be back on the Council working with them and to get to know the new members. She hoped the Town residents realized the sacrifices made by the Council members who were volunteers.

Councilor McDonald echoed the other members' comments and felt it had been a wonderful experience. She was honored to work with Steve Woods who was an exceptional person with a great deal of integrity. The Councilor also thanked John Salomone and his staff for the work they do.

Councilor Banach thanked everyone for their service and especially Steve Woods. He indicated the Town Hall renovation would continue since something had to be done.

Councilor Castelle wanted to thank Myra Cohen who played a major role in mentoring him and had hoped to fill her void by continuing on the Council. He planned on being a private citizen and being a watch dog of future Town Council activities. He expressed gratitude to John Salomone and his staff, the department heads and employees for all the work they did. He also thanked the public for supporting him in previous elections and hoped they did not feel their faith in him was displaced. He stated several initiatives undertaken by the Council which included the Blight Ordinance, Charter Revision, and hiring an economic director. He hoped the new Council would treat the busway as a gift to the Town and hoped the Town would take advantage of it.

Mayor Woods stated he was happy and honored to serve the Town. He felt they had done a lot of good things and had served with a lot of good people. The Town was in a better place because of what had been done collectively. He felt it was good the public attended the meetings but said the Town could not be governed by the whim of individuals. The public needed to trust the officials they elected to do the right thing with the information given. The Council should not govern by what was written on social media sites. He felt the public had the final say regarding the referendum and to date the Council had not gotten it right. Mayor Woods felt both of the proposed plans would have worked but obviously the public did not.

He mentioned the Town would face financial difficulties in the future since it was built out. The Mayor said the taxes in Town brought a lot of services to the residents like the Library, safety, good education, etc. He wished the new Council luck and had a wonderful experience for the past four years.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Borjeson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. and was seconded by Councilor Castelle. The motion passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson  
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk