



James Krupienski
Acting Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

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Rosemary Krupienski
Town Clerk

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 6, 2023

This meeting was presented as a Zoom Webinar/Hybrid Meeting.

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

Deputy Mayor Budrejko
Councilor Camillo
Councilor Donahue (*via Zoom*)
Councilor Manke
Councilor Nagel
Councilor Page
Councilor Radda
Mayor DelBuono

Staff Attendees:

James Krupienski, Acting Town Manager
Ben Ancona, Town Attorney

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - IN GENERAL (**Via Zoom Application or Phone**)
(3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ITEMS ON AGENDA ONLY)

A. Public Comments

- Clark Castelle, 167 Connecticut Avenue. At a loss for words, trying to understand this process. Feel that you should honor recommendation of committee.
- Gary Turco (*via Zoom*). You should honor the recommendation of the Democratic town committee in the true spirit of bi-partisanship and elect John Trister and respect wishes of Sharon Braverman.
- Cathy Gonzalez, 44 Basswood Street. In support of John Trister.
- Sandy Nafis (*via Zoom*). Thanked Carol Anest for her years of service. There is decades of precedent regarding appointments of vacancies. Urge you to appoint John Trister as Sharon Braverman's replacement.
- Gia Pascarelli, 62 Welles Drive North. In support of John Trister. Need to honor tradition and respect for each party.
- Kate Farrar (*via Zoom*). Disappointed that the council won't be supporting the nomination put forward. Strongly encourage the council to vote for John Trister for the vacant position.
- Neil Ryan, 237 Brockett Street. Not in support of what the council is doing; truly partisan effort. Vacancies are not filled by sending in a letter.
- Dana Havens, 113 Stoddard Avenue (*via Zoom*). Letter from Carol Anest is allowed by state statute. Tradition doesn't trump law.

- Mark France, 288 Williamstown Court. Think that healing needs to take place; appeal to your hearts and emotions. In support of John Trister.
- Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street (*via Zoom*). John Trister is a good man, not ready to serve on town council. Carol Anest has not lost her way; need her back on the council to guide the two “rookies”.
- Greg Ostrinski, 267 Audubon Avenue (*via Zoom*). In support of John Trister as appointment to the town council.
- Forest Helvie, 282 Lamplighter Lane. Concerned that this process may prevent people from wanting to volunteer in the future.
- York, 150 Dowd Street. Ask the council come together to make an informed decision. Need to move forward with the decision that is being made, not as a Democrat or Republican.
- Mortenson, 17 Fox Lane (*via Zoom*). This this is a bad precedent. Need to reconsider decision to appoint Carol Anest.
- Stein Ramstad, 555 Main Street (*via Zoom*). A lot of concern in town regarding what is taking place. The majority party should not choose replacement for minority party. This has very little to do with the two individuals. Need to respect process.
- Francesca Lucia, 79 Hawley Street (*via Zoom*). Calling in support of John Trister. In 2021 John ran for the office and 3,102 voted for him.
- Patricia Miller, 151 7th Street. First time at town council meeting. What attributes for these two people to make you decide between one or the other?

B. Email Correspondence

- None

4. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Councilor Page stated he has a couple of questions regarding the process. Frustrated with the town attorney regarding this. We need to revisit this tonight and rethink this. In terms of process, I was determined we could push back on this via Robert’s Rules. It’s been explained to me that we cannot do that.
- Mayor DelBuono reminded Councilor Page that we are still under Remarks By Councilors on Public Participation.
- Councilor Page stated he wanted to have discussion prior to the vote. I’ll save the rest of my remarks.
- Councilor Radda stated she has comments but will save them for the agenda item. Would like to thank everyone here and on Zoom who did offer their opinions and commentary. We want to hear everyone’s voices. There was a comment made by Ms. Havens regarding state statute; recall in Mr. Ancona’s first opinion that state statute does not override town charter – would like clarification on that .
- Mayor DelBuono stated she will address her rationale for her voting when the time comes. Thank you to all who reached out by phone, by text and for people taking the time to weigh in on this.

5. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

A. Newington Town Council

1. Appoint a Replacement

Motion by Councilor Camillo

RESOLVED:

The Newington Town Council moves to Renew the Motion taken up during the January 24, 2023 Regular Town Council meeting for the Appointment of Carol Anest for the vacant Town Council seat; and

NOW BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby makes the following appointment:

Newington Town Council

9 members
2-year term
Party Max.: 6

Name	Address	Party	Term	Replaces
Carol Anest	30 Harding Avenue	D	2/6/2023-11/14/2023	Resignation of Sharon Braverman

Seconded by Councilor Manke.

- Councilor Page stated he would like procedural clarification. At our last meeting we had a similar document with John Trister’s name on it and were prepared to vote on Mr. Trister, but Councilor Camillo brought up the nomination for Carol Anest.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that procedurally any motion can be brought to the floor and typically it’s by recognizing who I call on first. That’s kind of how we always operated. We can discuss this and see where it lands.
- Councilor Page stated with all due respect, our name was in the packet and it was ignored and immediately Councilor Camillo was allowed to bring his nomination from the floor. Just pointing that out for the record.
- Councilor Radda has two questions that she has not received clear answers one. How did a nomination and vote from the table supersede a resolution on that was a documented agenda item? And why did that disappear? I would like clarification and response to that. Faced with a situation regarding decades-long precedent. In my perception you have determined we are not capable, nor were afforded, the option of discerning a candidate to fill the unexpired term of our colleague, Dr. Braverman. Procedure set forth by both town committees was ignored. As the super majority, I feel your will has been imposed upon us. This overshadows the good work of Dr. Braverman, Mr. Trister and Ms. Anest. Bipartisanship, trust and mutual respect has been tarnished. Regardless of the results of tonight’s vote, we will rise above this, continue to honor the promise we made to our constituents and do our best to work hard for the benefit of our community.
- Councilor Page stated that he wants to reiterate he would like further explanation of parliamentary procedure and how it’s allowed that a name that’s been brought up once already, that has failed to insufficient votes is being allowed to be brought up again. I feel that is improper procedure and we are next in line to bring up our nomination. The super majority has 6 people and that’s the will of the people and 95% of the time we vote with consensus. The majority has control of all boards and commissions and you run the table and this is unnecessary. I have nothing but tremendous respect for all of you, but you are doing a bad thing. Carol is a good democrat and she has served our town well. But tonight we are discussing the act of democracy. Wish Carol had gone through the process with our party to seek the nomination but she didn’t and Mr. Trister was nominated. Find if offensive, patronizing and condescending that the super majority that runs this town is telling the DTC that we’re not capable of naming a replacement to fill Dr. Braverman’s seat. Please do the right thing tonight and respect the minority’s candidate and vote for John Trister for town council.
- Mayor DelBuono asked the town attorney to address the question by Councilor Page on that right for a renewal motion and how a motion can be brought back that failed.

- Town Attorney Ancona stated that Rule #38 specifically states that a motion can be brought or renewed at any future meeting, and here we are.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that Councilor Page was mentioning that there's language in Robert's Rules about not being able to be brought forth again and that's more for the same session. Is that correct?
- Town Attorney Ancona stated that we don't have that situation.
- Councilor Page stated the concern was in the rust and surprise on January 23rd that our rights, procedurally, were being trampled.
- Town Attorney Ancona stated that the rights of the minority have been respected procedurally. Under Section 204 of the Charter, you will see there is no provision that account for a nomination from a party, and that goes for both parties. I suspect that our founding fathers realized that maybe not all nominations from a party may be a good thing, don't know, just speculating. The Charter says that this council has the right to nominate or approve a person to replace a retiring councilor, but is has to be of the same party and that's what we have here. Don't have state statute, but the Charter governs this situation. I'm sorry. I take full responsibility for why we are here again. I should have looked more closely and noted that we need 5 affirmative votes for such a replacement. So we're here doing it again and frankly it's my fault.
- Councilor Radda stated she still has a procedural question. We had two resolutions. Once was the resolution to accept the resignation of Councilor Braverman which was read, voted on and passed. The next was the nomination of Mr. Trister to till that seat, but before that could occur, which would have been in sequential order, there was a nomination from the floor that superseded the original resolution that was in the agenda. My question and my concern is the reorganization of the agenda that took place on the fly.
- Town Attorney Ancona stated that he doesn't think the mayor did it in intentionally, there was a motion that was made...
- Mayor DelBuono stated that I go through the window and I called on the first person who had their hand up. By Robert's Rules a motion can be brought from the floor.
- Councilor Radda stated that her question is why was it not determined that we have a resolution to address, and take your nomination after the first resolution which as part of the agenda was voting on the nomination of John Trister.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that quite simply I called on the councilor that had his hand his hand up thinking that whatever motion was in would be read. Councilor Camillo brought up a different nomination, so that was recognized on the floor. I don't have the right to tell a councilor they can't bring something to the floor. His hand was up, I called on him and his nomination was there.
- Town Attorney Ancona stated that is really the extent of it.
- Councilor Radda stated that she is not going to say anything at this time.
- Councilor Manke stated that I've given this some thought and I keep hearing the word precedence. In my experience in politics, I've known of occasions where councilors have stepped down and a mayor stepped down. In the past the party would send a replacements and they had a number of requirements – they all had experience in town government, served on boards or commissions, elected in their own right and served with many years in public service. That is the precedent that has gone forward to this point. As far as I know, never in the past were there two candidates; how we got here I'm not sure. Why Mrs. Anest didn't go through the party, I can't answer that. My problem is if we take someone from the floor and ignore them because they not nominated by the party is doing a disservice to the town of Newington. In 25 days we are going to start deliberating the town's budgets and these are big, hard, tough decisions that will affect Newington going forward for years to come. Mr. Trister's comments at the end of the last meeting calmed the waters. Need to look at who can serve the town right now. It's a Newington budget. That's

what's important. We need someone who can fill the spot with experience, knowledge and track record. I want what is best for the town.

- Mayor DelBuono stated that in reading the charter language it's clear that it's this body's job to fill a vacancy. This is a new situation we have not been faced with before. Never had a resident express interest on their own as Councilor Anest did in her letter. I see this as an interview process; some people are better qualified or better suited for the position. When I look at the two folks before us, I know that Carol has served 6 years on the council, sat through budgets, sat through town manager search. We don't always see eye-to-eye. Those are the reasons why I'm considering her for councilor. Have no doubt Mr. Trister is a wonderful man. I have to go with my gut and do what I think is right and feel that Councilor Anest is the best person to fill that spot.

Roll Call Vote:

Councilor Budrejko stated I can't vote against Carol because that would be absurd, she'd be a great addition to this council. However we have to go with what we believe and I can't condone or endorse or feel comfortable with the methodology that got us to this point where this resolution was brought forward so I am abstaining.

Councilor Camillo: Yes

Councilor Donahue: Yes

Councilor Manke: Yes

Councilor Nagel: Yes

Councilor Page: This is a terrible precedent. I vote no

Councilor Radda: No

Mayor DelBuono: Yes

Vote: 5 yes, 2 no, 1 abstention

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (Via Zoom Application or Phone)

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- Neil Ryan stated that he would like clarification; two weeks ago a nomination was for John Trister and tonight they are looking to have that nomination on the floor as well correct? It make sense to me to put that on the floor. So John's name never came to the floor even though his name was listed two weeks ago. Only two spoke in favor of what you did tonight; 15-16 not in favor. The people don't like what you are doing.
- Kathleen Gonzalez, 44 Basswood Street. Disturbed by what happened here tonight. Have a lot of respect for Deputy Mayor, you said the trust and how you felt. Everybody knows what's going on and the game that is happening. Don't know how the town moves forward from this. If it was the reverse way, you wouldn't want what is happening.
- Clark Castelle, 167 Connecticut Avenue. I can't imagine any circumstance where you get to choose your opponents. Really respect Deputy Mayor Budrejko more than I ever have.
- Eileen Francolino, 116 Lydall Road. By breaking precedent it's quite possible the opening of Pandora's Box. My hope tonight is that this council can figure out a way to work together, this town can work together. This is now way it an effort to make a better, bipartisan budget. You guys have 6-3, you are going to get what you want. Hope in the future things like this don't happen.
- Eugene Grenier, 11 Webster Court. This is a tough thing for me to think about. I don't have allegiance to either party. Have read all I can about this. On one side you hear about experience, and on the other side you hear about the need for the part to put forward a nomination. Is there good will or evil intent lurking about? When there's such tension between the parties need to rely on structure and law, and in this case the Charter and what is

allowed under the Charter. There were a lot of emotional opinions one way or the other. In my opinion I believe that we have to have good will and go with the legal process backed by the Charter.

- Forest Helvie, 282 Lamplighter Lane (*via Zoom*). Think of when I coached football, let players play and run up the score. It didn't always feel right. There's an element where I can understand that happening. But what is the message in that? This is government – I can't help but feel that this is a 90-7 game tonight. What is the message in the long term? Need to start seeing healing happen. The owness is in the majority party. Really respect decision by Councilor Budrejko.
- John Bachand, 56 Maple Hill Avenue (*via Zoom*). Fully support your decision on appointment Ms. Anest. People are being over dramatic. I am your constituency and I support you. You have a super majority because you were elected by the people in this town.
- Tallard, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Just witnessed another coup-de-ta. You should be proud of yourself. This is Trumpism. At least one person on your side has some class. Sorry you guys got railroaded. This is a serious error. This is very sad. Beth you need to resign, that is why I'm here. All of you need to resign. Councilor Donahue was ready to attack someone after the last meeting. Newington's finest is here tonight.

7. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

- Councilor Camillo stated I wouldn't be ion this room if it weren't for Carol, we have been friends for years an this is a good move for the town.
- Councilor Page thanked everyone for coming out tonight and expressing their opinions. Disagree with Mr. Bachand, don't think anyone can be too dramatic, emphatic or passionate about our democracy. What happened here tonight will go beyond what happens in November and it's greater than a little seat on a small town council. I will never apologize for being passionate or emphatic. We intend to continue to govern responsibly and work on our budget.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that over my 20 years of service, there have been many votes that I was dissatisfied with and difficult to make. Tonight was one of those night and it was not easy for any of us. I agree wholeheartedly that once a vote is taken we move on to the next item. We won't agree on every issue; there are two sides.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Manke to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk