



James Krupienski
Acting Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
IN NEWINGTON, CT

2023 APR 11 PM 12:31

John O. Nagel
Town Clerk

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

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

Councilor Anest
Deputy Mayor Budrejko
Councilor Camillo
Councilor Donahue
Councilor Manke
Councilor Page
Councilor Radda
Mayor DelBuono

Staff Attendees:

James E. Krupienski, Acting Town Manager
Janet Murphy, Director of Finance
Fauna Eller, Town Assessor

Mayor DelBuono asked for a moment of silence in honor of those who lost their lives at the Covenant School Shooting in Nashville, Tennessee

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilor Manke made a motion to amend the agenda to have Item 6.B read Low Income Veterans Exemption; 6.D to read Tax Relief Program for Certain Homeowners Age 65 or over and Permanently or Totally Disabled; and add Item 6.H - 2023-2024 Town Council Budget Meeting Schedule (Revised). Seconded by Councilor Page. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent)

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - IN GENERAL (Via Zoom Application or Phone)

(3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ITEMS IN GENERAL)

A. Public Comments

- Joyce Boncal, 15 Kinnear Avenue. Here on behalf of the Newington Environmental Quality Commission. Here to ask the council to correct a problem caused by the Balf Tilcon quarry. In 2021 at the Balf Committee meeting I asked if anyone had data regarding air pollution quality reports. The high levels of pollution were shocking. As of this day we show higher levels of pollution than other areas. The town sanitarian relates to Tilcon and the crusher the quarry uses to pulverize rock. Something needs to be done to correct the dust coming from the quarry. Not trying to shut the quarry down. There is better technology to control the dust.
- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive (via Zoom). Have many questions regarding how and why the Mill Pond Pool project building committee has not met. Since there is no public

participation listed on the agenda, is there anything in writing that \$4 million has been put aside from the ARPA funds. Several letters to the editor in the Rare Reminder and Newington Life and latest article states “the town is hoping to use \$5 million in state bonding and \$4 million in ARPA funds.” I find it disturbing that a commitment can be made by a former town manager and we’re going to be held to it unless it’s in writing. Hoping what I’m reading is wrong.

- Eileen Francolino, 116 Lydall Road. This past election, citizens were promised an open and transparent government; unfortunately, that is not the case. The Parks & Recreation board and department have asked to come before the council to make a presentation explaining our desired plans for a new pool at Mill Pond Park. The requests have been denied or ignored. One reason is that this has been presented by the building committee, which is not the case according to the Charter. They should be placed on the agenda. Not an attempt to ram through a project but to inform Newington and the council of the plans. We have an opportunity to move this project forward at a greatly reduced expense to our residents. Hope the council takes the opportunity to listen to our presentation to see what a gem this project is.
- Edwin Nueva, 20 Surrey Drive. I understand you will be discussing the budget on April 4th. My concern is that the council is looking to further reduce our school budget and we have a surplus that we can use towards the budget. The children are our future. It does not need to be cut but increased to keep our wonderful teachers in town.
- Mr. Vector, Howard Street. The new pool will take up a lot of space and other projects have been rejected for the desire of preserving Mill Pond open space. Putting that there will take away where you have the fireworks display in July. There will be added cost for putting up buildings and increasing our mill rate which is already at 40.
- Leann Manke, 112 Northwood Road. Speaking as a taxpayer but also as a member of the Library board of trustees. Have serious concerns about the placement of the pool being across Garfield. Already having traffic congestion and parking issues. The current parking lot is on private land owned by the library board with a stipulation that any expansion by the library would include adequate parking. Don’t know the current plans for the pool, but it was stipulated six hundred people would use the pool daily. Already have serious parking issues.
- Michael Schumacher, 4 Gilbert Road. In support of building a new pool facility at Mill Pond. I’m speaking for myself personally and Newington Swim Club. I’ve utilized the pools in Newington my whole life. A new pool is necessary. The pools are leaking the facilities are rundown. My first job was a lifeguard in Newington and they are a valuable. Having a local pool creates a community atmosphere. Having an affordable swim lessons is valuable to our children. Water safety is very important. Discussed swim club in Newington.
- Frank Palbo, C&C Automotive, 416 Hartford Avenue. Want to read email that I sent to Mayor DeBuono. I am writing you to be aware that on March 20 I went to the rescheduled Balf Committee meeting and just so disgusted because there were not enough members to hold the meeting. No representative from Balf Tilcon present either. Waited over 30 minutes hoping that members and representatives would show. We started talking about our issues and the Acting Town Manager stated that Tilcon Balf was there before you. He was completely out of line and disregarded our issues. One member of the committee started shouting “oh I live dust”. What kind of people are on this committee? I asked the fire marshal why the blasts could not be less strong and he stated they were within limits. Requested seismograph be attached to my

meeting; cannot do that; numbers too high. The town council has the power and duty to protect all citizens. (not verbatim).

- Speaker (name?), 426 Hartford Avenue. Stated he did send email as well. I sent it this morning. We've been dealing with the same issues over the years, but the dust is still out of control. The rescheduled Balf Committee meeting, not fair, show up with no results. Acting Town Manager and Fire Marshal aware of meeting, why weren't members of the committee. Think Balf rep should be at future meetings. The issues of dust and blasting are really health issues. Should have Central CT Health District attend as well. Someone who was on the committee stated said she loves dust. We started discussing issues while waiting for the meeting to and Acting Town Manager stated that the quarry was there first. My building is cracking from the blasting. Took manager from Balf to see and he said my building is settling down. Dust, especially on hot summer days in July, is really really bad. Asking for town assistance to deal with the issue.
- John Palbo, Owner of C&C Automotive. Miss Mayor you've known the situation for a long time. Nothing has been done. Who has the right to give a permit to an out of state company to do the blasting. Fire marshal gave permit which he knows causes problems. Its all your responsibility. The Acting Town Manager is worthless, taking their side. I've been there for 44 years. You need to go to the person that created the problem, not us. You shouldn't be issuing a permit to a company that's creating problems.
- Amy Perrotti, 175 Hillcrest Avenue (via Zoom). I listened to some of the meeting on Saturday. Looking for clarification on the CIP budget. Noticed that the for the highway and parks garage, this year you put in \$459,000 but over next four years you'll be adding an additional \$2 million per year for a total of \$8.4 million which his great. Don't doubt that needs to be done. The BOE requested \$3 million per year with a 50% reimbursement from the state for John Wallace. Curious why that project is allowed to be planned as and not go to referendum, when the Wallace was taken out of CIP due to phase project. Hoping you can answer that question. Know that the Board's request has not been met, trying to meet in the middle.
- Diane Stamm, Steeplechase Drive. Member of board of trustees for Lucy Robbins Wells library. Want the council to consider parking and traffic on Garfield Street on Newington. Library and Parks and Rec both have summer programs. Not enough parking as it is. Need to seriously consider these issues when considering new pool. Don't think the proposal is a good recommendation. Concerned with what is happening with the COVID monies – all sorts of things that money can be used for. Now we have a problem with traffic. The library spent money to purchase the parcels of land in hopes of expanding.
- Lillian Bradner, 165 Cedar Ridge Road (via Zoom). I've spent my whole life in Newington. Was surprised by first blast by Balf quarry. No readily found information regarding readings of too much chemicals in the air and over what they should be. Worried about air pollution. Old equipment needs to be updated – don't want people getting lung cancer or respiratory diseases.
- Bernadette Conway, 177 Hartford Avenue. Here for two reasons. First was a letter stating there was going to be a presentation about the pool and that wasn't the case. Very disappointed I didn't get the information. I am here because I am interested in this, grew up across the street from Mill Pond park. Pools in Newington are in absolutely disgusting shape and need to be addressed. Also on the Balf Committee.

Very frustrating as a committee member and not being to do anything. We really don't have any power as a commission. The council needs to come up with a way to measure the impact of what Balf is doing.

B. Email Correspondence

- Mayor DelBuono stated we did receive flyer regarding the pool.

5. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Councilor Page thanked everyone for coming out in person and online, appreciate your comments and participation. Cannot speak to the Balf situation, but will learn more about it so I can respond to residents grievances. As for the library and the pool – we have so many programs happening and should not be fighting about the space. We have an obligation as a council to come up with solutions to accommodate everyone's needs. We need to be smart about how we grow our town and stabilize our grand list. As people move in we are going to have more traffic and more parking issues. Need to seriously look into building a parking garage. We need to grow our library and grow our parks and rec. Pools are in terrible shape. Highway garage needs to be replaced. Need equal urgency for our pools and this is an old problem.
- Councilor Radda stated she appreciates everyone coming out and sharing concerns – encourage that. Want to speak to concerns about Balf quarry. How can that committee be organized so that meetings are not cancelled and are posted. See that there is a public health concern. How can we engage more with local health district to gather information. I want more information and data and want to hear what can be done.
- Councilor Manke thanked everyone who came out to speak, like to hear from the public. As far as the budget, they are difficult for everybody. Doing our best and hope to get to the finish on April 18th. Regarding Balf – would like brief report from fire marshal and health district. Committee is full, except for alternates. Difficult to have meeting if you don't have a quorum. We all did get letters about the pool. If you send letters, please sign it so I can get back to you.
- Councilor Donahue stated that the Mill Pond building committee came back with a pool in the same spot. Tried to get a meeting together but there was pushback. Why does it need to be on Garfield and not in another spot. Committee meeting tomorrow via Zoom. Budgets are difficult. Nothing to do with party affiliation. Even though the town garage, it still needs to go to referendum.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that we will follow the process and hopefully discuss that with our town attorney. Need to review language which was recently revised in our Charter.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that she was the Balf liaison a few years ago. After the last meeting I attend (a couple of years ago) I did contact the town manager and Rob Hillman and hear that they were in touch with Balf. Seems to be conflicting information. Having one meeting a year is not working. We know that there are issues. That information should be provided and gathered and distributed prior to the next meeting. Have experts get together and discuss whether it is an issue or not.
- Mr. Krupinski stated that we do have a follow up meeting scheduled for April 10th.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated she recognizes everyone here regarding the Balf issue and sorry you are still dealing with the issues. Agree with Councilor Page regarding how to look at things, but we need to keep an eye on resources as well.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that regarding Balf, there is some information we need. Not aware that there were readings out of line, thankful you brought that to us. Would like to get further information. I do notice the dust when I drive by sometimes. The town manager at

the time would contact them to discuss the dust issue. Ms. Lyons asked about the ARPA funds. Know there's been a lot out there about \$4 million which are still unexpended and unencumbered on the town side. To my knowledge there is no written agreement for that money to go solely to one project. Any expenditures of ARPA funds have to come through the town council. Ms. Murphy stated that she did not agree to or promise anything. Regarding the school budget, the town manager brought us his budget and each year the BOE requests increases. The budget before us is an increase of 3.5% or approx. \$2.7 million. We just finished hearing all the department requests. We now need to review the budget and deliberate. The next budget meeting is on Tuesday, April 4th at 6:30 p.m. The BOE did request we review the John Wallace security issues and we are having an executive session today regarding that.

6. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Ordinance Adoption – Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses

Motion by Deputy Mayor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby approves the amendment to the Newington Code of Ordinances, Chapter 388, Article VIII, Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses, a copy of said ordinance is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent).

B. Ordinance Adoption – Low Income Veterans Exemption

Motion by Councilor Page

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby approves the amendment to the Newington Code of Ordinances, Chapter 388, Taxation, Article III, Low Income Veterans Exemption, a copy of said ordinance is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Donahue. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent).

C. Ordinance Amendment – Municipal Option to Exempt Certain Motor Vehicles

- Introduce Ordinance & Set Public Hearing

INTRODUCTION,

I hereby introduce for the Town Council's consideration the proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 388, Taxation, Article V, Municipal Option to Exempt Certain Motor Vehicles (FKA – Ambulance-Type Motor Vehicles Exemption), a copy of which has been filed with the Clerk of the Council.

Introduced by: Councilor Donahue

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council hereby schedules a Public Hearing on April 18, 2023 at 6:50 PM to consider the proposed ordinance amendment, Chapter 388, Taxation, Article V, Municipal Option to Exempt Certain Motor Vehicles (FKA – Ambulance-Type Motor Vehicles Exemption), a copy of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent).

D. Ordinance Amendment – Tax Relief Program for Certain Homeowners Age 65 or over and Permanently or Totally Disabled

- Introduce Ordinance & Set Public Hearing

INTRODUCTION,

I hereby introduce for the Town Council’s consideration the proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 388, Taxation, Article IV, Tax Relief Program for Certain Homeowners Age 65 or over or Permanently or Totally Disabled, a copy of which has been filed with the Clerk of the Council.

Introduced by: Councilor Radda

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council hereby schedules a Public Hearing on April 18, 2023 at 6:40 PM to consider the proposed ordinance amendment, Chapter 388, Taxation, Article IV, Tax Relief Program for Certain Homeowners Age 65 or over or Permanently or Totally Disabled, a copy of which is attached to this resolution.

Seconded by Councilor Camillo. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent).

E. Request for Bid Waiver for Blue Wing Services, Public Safety Radio Project

- Mr. Krupienski stated that they are reviewing the amount of radios and extra batteries.

Motion by Councilor Manke

RESOLVED:

WHEREAS, the Town Council has the power under Section 814 of the Newington Charter to waive the process of procuring sealed bids; and

WHEREAS, Town personnel have determined that the proposed consultant services to be provided by Blue Wing Services is an important matter of public safety for the Town of Newington, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby grants a waiver, from the requirement of sealed bids for the proposed consultant services to be provided by Blue Wing Services for the Town of Newington; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the bid waiver to Blue Wing Services, of Gilbertsville, PA, is granted based upon the supplied document entitled “Proposal – Phase 2, Radio Systems Consulting Services”, dated December 19, 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Anest. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent)

- Councilor Manke stated that this was done to not delay the project since we used Blue Wing on the first phase of the project.

F. Department Budget Review:

- a. Miscellaneous programs not previously discussed
 - Mayor DelBuono stated as far as she knows we discussed all program.
 - Mr. Krupienski stated that is correct. As long as now changes were made to be budget we will be advertising the tentative budget (which is the town manager original budget) and that will be part of the public hearing on April 4th.
 - Councilor Page stated that while the town manager set his proposed budget, the council will be presenting their proposed budget, and it doesn’t mean that we’ve agreed to

everything in that budget, Republican or Democrat. Some people need to be reassured we will be having ongoing discussions regarding the budget.

G. Set Tentative Town Council Budget for 2023-2024

- Mayor DelBuono stated that the budget that we have reviewed is the town manager's budget, he brought that forward and has presented that to us. We now take ownership of it and are then able to make changes to it. The budget now will become the Town Council Tentative Budget and will review them again at the public hearing on April 4th.

H. 2023-2024 Town Council Budget Meeting Schedule (Revised)

- Mayor DelBuono has requested the hearing begin at 6:30 p.m., instead of 6:00 p.m., due to the death of a close family friend and will allow her to attend the wake.
- Councilor Page stated that we will expand the public hearing if needed. Not taking time away.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the meeting start time will be delayed if the public hearing goes beyond 7.

Motion by Councilor Radda

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council pursuant to Section 805 of the Town Charter, hereby revises the start time for the Newington Town Council for the start time of the Town Council Proposed Budget public hearing for fiscal year 2023-24 schedule for April 4, 2023 as indicated below.

Tuesday, April 4, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. (Town Council's Proposed Budget)

Seconded by Councilor Donahue. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent)

7. **REFUNDS (Action Requested)**

- A. Approval of March 28, 2023 Refunds for an Overpayment of Taxes

Motion by Deputy Mayor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$2,287.55 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.

Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent).

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. March 7, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes
- B. March 14, 2023 Public Hearing Minutes – Budget
- C. March 14, 2023 Public Hearing Minutes – Commission on Aging & Disabled
- D. March 14, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilor Manke to accept the above minutes. Seconded by Councilor Anest.
Motion passed 8-0. (Councilor Nagel absent)

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Annual Fair Housing Month Resolution

- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that every year in April is fair housing month and the town recertifies its support of fair housing within the town. This document is provided to developers by our planner to people who are interested in coming to Newington. This will be in the April 4th meeting packet.
- Councilor Page stated this is an opportunity to point out the efforts made by this council for affordable housing. I embrace this resolution. We need to continue our good efforts to make housing to all in Newington and throughout Connecticut. It's an impediment to economic growth in our state. There is a discrepancy to those who can and can't afford housing.

B. FY 2024 State Historic Documents Grant Program Application

- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that we are continuing the state grant from last year. We are doing the large volume books. The land record company will then do our indexing and create online access and they will be available 24/7.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that this is a good opportunity.
- Councilor Anest asked if people would be able to see the full version of documents.
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that if you are a subscriber, yes.
- Councilor Manke asked if this was the last of the books.
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that this will be all the land record books. Still other books that need to be done.
- Councilor Radda asked where the books will be housed.
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that they will be housed by the state archives.

10. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that National Welding is 97% complete. Just waiting for one piece from the DECD agent on the affordable housing component. Hopefully it will be completed and executed by mid-April. We have made an offer for a town engineer; just waiting on background check. Hopefully he will be on board soon.

11. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that she and Councilor Radda attending a TPZ meeting. They are looking to change the zoning along Willard Avenue at Alumni to allow personal services (i.e. barber shops, beauty salons, etc.) hopefully it will help fill up vacant building space. Regarding 3333 Berlin Turnpike there is a need to reconfigure the sidewalks and parking and are working with the developer. There was an article on Facebook regarding the grocery store. Also some questions came up regarding the cutting of trees by Bertucci's. Apparently most of the trees were distressed. Town Planner is working with the owner. The new town planner met with the owner of Keeney. The property behind Citgo on the turnpike had trees cut down. Property owned by Citgo and zoned business.
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that they had a discussion with Citgo and they wanted to clear the site for sale.
- Councilor Radda stated that the owner of Keeney is going to be making a presentation to the Economic Development Commission on April 6th. There was a question regarding the number of cars and 1910 and 1934 Main Street.
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that he will be going to the Keeney property with the developer and town planner prior to the meeting.
- Councilor Radda stated that she and Councilor Manke attended the Parks & Rec meeting. There was a geo technician update regarding water tables at Mill Pond and what can be

built where. Two proclamation requests: the 33rd Anniversary of ADA and July is National Parks & Rec month. Beechwood Park ribbon cutting.

- Councilor Manke stated they reviewed the costs of renting the basketball courts.

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

- Bob Tallard stated he paid taxes last year, did you Beth, you stated you didn't want to pay taxes as payment for your job as Mayor. Councilor Donahue tried to attack the citizenry of Newington and Dave restrained you from jumping over the counter because a guy made a comment. You rigged the election and put in who you wanted. I have a quote here. Over 1,000 apartments being built in Newington. Figure maybe two cars per household. Mayor DelBuono stated she was afraid to drive on Cedar Street because of the traffic. You all should resign. Bet if that were someone on the Democratic side you would have them removed and censored.
- Mayor DelBuono asked Mr. Tallard to finish up his comments.
- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive thanked Mayor DelBuono for answering my questions regarding the funds. Seems to me the parks & rec department thinks they can get these pools up and running. Mr. DeMaio was given the impression he should bring his plan to the council. Total lack of communication between parks & rec and the council. The pools are in disrepair and need to be fixed, will hold comments on plan until I see it presented. Thank you call for all you do. Have a good night.
- Diane Stamm, Steeplechase Drive. Stated that on Lewis Street there is a section between Price Chopper and Middlewoods – need another street light there. It's so dark. Where do I go, how do I get that done.

13. **REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

- Mayor DelBuono asked in general who would someone call regarding a street light?
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated the town manager's office, they will send on.
- Councilor Page stated he received the 2021 presentation on probable construction costs of the pool and a memo dated April 22 and revised January 2023. Cost in 2021, was \$13.3 million and in 2022 was \$9.6 million and it goes up an estimated 5% every year until done. Ask that we look at the data from the engineers and let's go based on the facts. Know we don't have endless resources. Have wonderful legislators who are willing to assist us in getting state monies to help us with our pools and parking situation.
- Councilor Camillo stated he called the former town manager and asked if he promised Bill DeMaio \$4 million in ARPA money. He said no ARPA monies were not promised to him. Special fund for the pool. The pool is more of a want than a need. Level pool and put in a splash pad at Mill Pond. Wish Bill went to town manager regarding this.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that they did speak to Rep. Turco about the pool project. I am in favor of a pool project, do not like the idea of it on Garfield Street due the parking issues. Rep. Turco acknowledged getting a project like this off the ground timely, advocate smaller funds for smaller projects. He's continuing to explore and see what projects are needed. Have been looking back at the Owens Report and dollars associated with repairing the pools back then. What were they referring to when they recommend that?
- Councilor Radda stated that at the last parks & rec meeting there was an engineer's report available. Will need an updated engineers report for 2023. Who's budget will that come out of?
- Acting Town Manager Krupienski stated that Councilor Page received that information.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Mane to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Donahue. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Nagel absent).

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk