



Thomas Hutka
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
IN NEWINGTON, CT

2023 JUL 19 AM 11:45

James E. Krupienski
Town Clerk

This meeting will be presented as a Zoom Webinar/Hybrid Meeting

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

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

Staff Attendees:

Thomas Hutka, Town Manager
James E. Krupienski, Town Clerk
Bill DeMaio, Superintendent of Parks & Recreation (*via Zoom*)
DJ Zordan, Emergency Management Director (*via Zoom*)
Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk

Also present:

Lou Jachimowicz, BOE, Chief Finance and Operations Officer

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilor Manke to approve the agenda. Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Page absent).

4. AWARDS/PROCLAMATIONS

A. Americans With Disabilities Act – 33rd Anniversary

Introduced by Mayor DelBuono

PROCLAMATION - Americans with Disabilities Act – 33rd Anniversary

WHEREAS; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law 33 years ago on July 26th, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush, and

WHEREAS; Newington, CT affirms the principals of equality and inclusion for persons living with disabilities as set forth for the State of Connecticut and as embodied in the ADA, the laws of the State of Connecticut and ordinances of Newington, CT, and

WHEREAS; the ADA has transformed the lives of the more than 61 million American people living with disabilities, and

WHEREAS; the ADA has promoted equal access to employment, government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and public transportation, and

WHEREAS; the ADA has prohibited discrimination against people living with disabilities, and

WHEREAS; the ADA has guaranteed that people living with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life, and

WHEREAS; all of Newington's governmental departments work with constituents and residents to bring forth the promise of hope, freedom, and independence that is envisioned by the passage of the ADA, and

WHEREAS; in addition, the ADA Coalition of Connecticut (ADACC) has granted funding to provide education and awareness at a celebratory anniversary special event at Mill Pond Park on July 20, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED; the Newington Town Council renews our commitment to empowering Americans with disabilities through equal access so they can achieve their full potential and have every opportunity to realize the American Dream while we hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing July 26, 2023, as Americans with Disabilities Act Awareness Day.

Dated in Newington, Connecticut, this 11th day of July, 2023.

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

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated this is an important proclamation. The ADA benefits us as a community and allows us more inclusivity and diversity. People with disabilities are able to participate equitably in all our community has to offer. Honored we were able to read this proclamation into our record.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that while we do this every year as a reminder to our commitment to ADA. This council is continually committed to improving our town and making sure we are increasing our ADA opportunities throughout town, in our communities and especially in our parks.
- Bill DeMaio thanked the council. Between you Mayor and Councilor Budrejko those were nicely put words. Thank you to the mayor and the council for all you are doing to make things accessible in Newington. Over 25% of the people throughout the country have a disability – some you can see and some you can't, physical and mental. You have supported handicapped accessible playgrounds, paths, and facilities in the town hall and community center. The Parks & Rec board supports the ADA as well. The ADA Coalition of Connecticut has donated \$500 to give the first 100 people that show up to the concert on July 20th a free ice cream cone. Newington has such great diversity. Want to commend the Senior Center, Library and Human Services as we work together to provide handicapped accessibility.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Introduction – Tom Hutka, Town Manager

- Mr. Hutka stated he is glad to be here, appreciate the confidence of the mayor and councilors put into hiring me for this position. I have many years of experience in local government, in consulting, on Wall Street in support of local government. I look forward to doing all I can to make a great community great and face the challenges of the future. I've met an awful lot of people in just over a week, everyone has been wonderfully nice, and everyone shares a love of their community and that's fantastic. I encourage everyone who hasn't met me to call or send me an email to schedule a meeting. I look forward to hearing input from everybody – suggestions, atta boys, even complaints.

B. Anna Reynolds School Project Update

- Steve Woods, Chairman stated that the project is on track and on budget. We still have plenty of contingency money and dollar wise 1/3 of the way through the project; have expended \$12 million and have \$19 million to go. There is a lot going on at the school now. Mr. Woods reviewed a PowerPoint with pictures of the project. Busses will enter and exit from Fenn Road. Reservoir Road will be parent drop off and pick up. Each room will have their own temperature controls. The construction manager has a contingency of \$582,000 only used \$60,000. We've had problems but the construction team has worked well together to come up with solutions.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated you got our attention when you said it was on track and on budget. Seeing they created solutions to problems you encountered speaks volumes, so I just wanted to say I'm impressed and thank you.
- Mr. Woods stated that we have a great team. It's nice to see that everyone works together.
- Councilor Radda thanked Mr. Woods for his leadership. Questions are answered quickly and immediately. We get detailed reports bi-weekly from the team. Do occasionally report that we are on track and on budget.
- Councilor Manke stated he appreciates Mr. Woods leadership and efforts to keep things going. Thank you for the update.
- Councilor Radda stated the attention to detail and the quality of work is outstanding.
- Mr. Woods stated he will be happy to come back again with updates.

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

A. Public Comments

- Bob Tallard wanted to know if tests were done on Anna Reynolds regarding the materials and whether they contain contaminants.
- Dan Horrigan, 30 Candlewyck Drive (via Zoom) stated he is calling regarding the apartments on Culver Street. Want to discuss deficiencies on public hearing process. Appreciate efforts of Councilors Budrejko and Radda regarding my concerns during the process.
- Neil Ryan, 237 Brockett Street stated that Newington should reconsider the apartments at the current vacant National Welding site. Should have capitalized on the FastTrack station and put in something similar to Front Street in Hartford to bring people into Newington and spend money. You should support train stop on Newington.
- Steve Woods, 94 New Britain Avenue stated that there are no contaminants any longer in the school, they have been remediated.

B. Email Correspondence

- None

7. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that the town planner has received no proposals regarding Citgo property and the owners are clearing the property and removing all the junk. Owner can use for expansion, or they can see it. It is parceled as business / Berlin Turnpike. Any new business will need to conform to new building specifications.

8. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. ARPA Funds Request -- Emergency Management

- DJ Zordan stated he understands the concern regarding the town fleet; has done some research and tried to answer all the questions you had. Councilor Page asked for a summary of surrounding towns (information provided at tonight's meeting). Mr. Zordan provided reasons for trucks needs. Do not have any place to store supplies. Currently renting facility on Alumni Road. Many other departments have interest in the need and feel the box truck would be beneficial. Have withdrawn request for EMS support vehicle, will revisit in the future. Need a Fire Marshal/Emergency Management vehicle for two new staff members (20 hours FMO / 15 hours Emergency Management). Fire department has been gracious and has allowed us to use extra vehicle when available. Hopefully, we can use ARPA money to purchase this. Did review other options. Staff members would need to use personal vehicles and be reimbursed for mileage and the fire marshals office does not have an expense for mileage. This vehicle will be used on a daily basis. The Tahoe was chosen due to the fact it was the cheapest vehicle through the state bid process. According to the highway director, the town fleet is primarily Chevy Tahoe and Ford Explorers. Want to keep fleet consistent. Interest from the BOE in the electrical equipment / upgrades to schools. BOE concern is that the \$5,000 would not be enough.
- Councilor Donahue asked if you are storing stuff in the box truck, wouldn't the trailer be a better option?
- Mr. Zordan stated that a trailer would be harder to maneuver than a box truck. If there is a potential for a significant event, we would prep the box truck before that. The box truck would be otherwise empty and available for town use.
- Councilor Manke stated that when a member of CERT we moved cots and equipment and kept it there in case we needed to use it. Will support the box truck, since the town as a whole can use it and appreciate the fact it could be shared by all town departments. The council just approved five new town vehicles and five will be coming offline; think that will be the better way to. Would rather get an idea of the whole cost for the electrical and generator before spending any money.
- Councilor Radda stated she has a couple of concerns. Definitely see the need for a box truck. Surprised the that support vehicle request was withdrawn. Not convinced of the need for a fire marshal/EMS vehicle; especially since other vehicles are coming offline. Why couldn't the EMS support vehicle be used as a multiple purpose vehicle. Regarding the electrical upgrades -- would Phase 1 be the survey and report? What is the cost of a generator for town use and how often would it be used for apart from emergency situations rather than renting one.
- Mr. Zordan stated that the concern with emergency management is moving personnel around. The pickup would carry traffic equipment, etc. with the thought of CERT assisting and the town already has a vehicle similar to that. Regarding the electrical works -- phase 1 would be the electrical surveys on the two middle schools. I can withdraw the request and get a true quote of what the cost would be. We would have a contract with a company for the generator and would have a right of first refusal. I've spoken to town agencies and there really is no need for a generator that size and the cost would not be justified. It may be a better option to look at installing a generator at a school. Cannot speak to price comparison without doing further research.
- Councilor Anest thanked DJ for the presentation. Don't have a problem with the box truck. Regarding the emergency management vehicle, feel that there are enough coming offline. What would the town capabilities be used for?
- Mr. Zordan stated that would be for a trailer (in the future).
- Councilor Anest stated she would like to see a cost estimate from the engineers.

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated regarding the electrical survey, especially for John Wallace we are going to doing an extensive renovation, there is going to be extensive studies, etc. Couldn't that be thrown in with that instead of spending additional funds?
- Mr. Zordan stated he was unaware of the John Wallace project. Have no problem working with the BOE.
- Councilor Manke asked if we were looking to do electrical and generators at both schools.
- Ms. Zordan stated that was the thought. In preliminary research done previous to me, indicated \$1,500 per school which I thought was low. Primary focus now will be on John Wallace. The original thought was to do both schools. The high school gymnasium has shelter for about 120 people. The town hall has never been discussed as a shelter site and that is something we are working on.
- Lou Jachimowicz stated that he and DJ chatted over the past couple of days. My experience with the high school project is that the generator was only able to service certain portions of the building. You will need a second level of power intervention for the generator and what do you want powered? Don't have anything specific. We welcome the opportunity to work with DJ.
- Councilor Nagel stated he found DJ's presentation confusing. Definitely see the need for a box truck. Cannot make a decision of the electrical at this time and would like to see more specifics and information. In fact, I wouldn't be displeased if indeed this was either tabled or if it was presented in a more definitive package.
- Mr. Hutka stated he thinks Councilor Nagel said it best. Not prepared to make a recommendation on any of these items. Would like to discuss with DJ. Just to mention – a very involved citizen has offered the use of a used box truck to Newington, and I've asked the highway department to take a look at the truck to see if it's worth considering or more definitively what it would cost to bring it up to town standards. A lot of questions were asked today, I have a few more as we go along. I'd like an opportunity to review the information, pull it all together and make sure all of your questions are answered.
- Mayor DelBuono stated it sounds like the general consensus is to table this item and move it to the next agenda and allow us more time for discussions and to gather information. Thank you to you DJ for all your work on this and for providing the information requested.

B. Disband Inactive Committees

- Town Clerk Krupienski stated he met with Chairman Francolino and she brought in her book and some other information, is finalizing her report and we will be able to present to the council to disband within one or two meetings from now. The Blight Ordinance Subcommittee completed it's work in 2016 and that resolution is included here. I've attached a Full Boards and Commissions listing for your information.
- Lou Jachimowicz stated that right now there is one old high school project out there. That committee has gone through four or five phases over 10 years and was for all the ADA work in the building as a result of the 2007 audit and we just finished the last of that work. It can be reassigned to the general committee of the town for closing purposes. I will be putting together all the final paperwork with the state to get a final sign off.
- Councilor Radda asked if there are any updates on the Town Hall Renovations.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that he has a question into Mr. Salamone and once that is received, we can close it.

- Councilor Manke stating that looking through the list of inactive committees, these should be closed out. Some of these committees have not met in over 20 years. Any committee that's here and isn't being used should be closed. I support the motion to disband the Blight Ordinance Subcommittee. Disbanding this committee does not mean we don't take blight seriously; we're just getting rid of the committee that made changes to the ordinance.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko asked if you are looking for recommendations. The Town Manager Search Committee should be disbanded.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that he provided the list for reference.

Motion by Councilor Nagel

RESOLVED:

The Blight Ordinance Subcommittee was created on February 9, 2016, under Resolution #2016-28, for the purpose of reviewing and considering amendments to Chapter 182, Blighted Premises of the Newington Code of Ordinances, and has completed its intended task; and

The Newington Town Council received the proposed recommendations from the subcommittee during the July 12, 2016 Regular meeting; and

On August 9, 2016 the Town Council scheduled a Public Hearing, to take place on September 13, 2016, to receive comments from the public on the proposed revisions to the ordinance; and

The Newington Town Council, on October 16, 2016 adopted the final ordinance language, as revised.

The Newington Town Council hereby moves to dismiss the current membership and disbands the Blight Ordinance Subcommittee.

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

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. June 27, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. June 28, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilor Manke to accept the minutes from the June 27, 2023 Regular Meeting and June 28, 2023 Special Meeting; seconded by Councilor Nagel. Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Page absent)

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. AMR Services Contract

- Town Clerk Krupienski stated Attorney Ancona has reviewed the contract and has no issues. I'm hoping that the EMS committee will hold a makeup meeting this month to review the contract completely, prior to our July 25th meeting. The representative from AMR did comment that in 2026 they will be negotiating a new contract at that time since this is effectively an extension of the current contract in place as of June 30th.
- Councilor Anest stated she has two comments to the Term. Paragraph 11, page 3. Shouldn't the term expire on June 30, 2026 and not July 1, 2026; and under Renegotiated, it should be January 1, 2026 and not January 1, 2027.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko asked what the change to the Compliance Plan was.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that under the original Compliance Plan they had standards put in lace based on time of service and we were assigning fines to them.
- Mayor DelBuono asked if Section 5 was added or replaced? If you could get that information for our next meeting.

- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that he thought he added the old contract to your K Drives.
- Mayor DelBuono stated we will review this at our next meeting and take action if appropriates.

B. John Wallace Bond Language

- Town Clerk Krupienski stated if you recall on May 9th the BOE came to you to discuss the John Wallace project and you were presented with an estimated cost of \$10,717,573 with an estimated 57% reimbursement rate from the state of Connecticut. You will notice in the bond language presented this evening, those amounts are blank, just as we did on Anna Reynolds. Not sure if you are looking for a split on that, a higher number. Mr. Jachimowicz can address the timeline of the project and recommendations. Based on the discussion we had whether it would be staggered three terms or a continuing term and the escalation cost rise based on that. If the work is done over threes summers, you are looking at escalating costs, and not many contractors will want to do that.
- Lou Jachimowicz stated he will update everyone on what transpired since the cost estimate was provided in May. We finalized the grant application and that was submitted by June 30th so everything is full speed ahead from that perspective for a referendum in November. We also had an informal review of the project with the State Office of School Construction Grants to make sure we vetted key important points they want to be aware of. They reviewed the cost estimates, and we did fine during that, they had no issues with our numbers. The only concern was PCBs and that is basically confined to the caulking around the windows and would need to get that taken care of. Dr. Brummett has reached out to our state reps regarding bonus funding for this project and any decisions regarding that will happen during session next December. The 57% rate is our guaranteed state funding. The biggest benefit for the project now is the contingency and the project is estimated \$8 million with those numbers added (to \$10 million). It should be a pretty smooth and easy project since the wings are similar. The costs are based on the fact it will done over three summers which creates the need for the escalation. Recommend compressing time frame as much as possible. The \$10.7 million is our starting point. Thank you all for your time and consideration of this project.
- Mayor DelBuono stated to clarify the escalation is if the project is spread over three years and you're saying you would like to compress the timeline. Is that feasible in terms of moving students and making that work?
- Mr. Jachimowicz state yes, it is. We would immediately start another wing once one is finished. If we are finished with one wing November 30th, on December 1 or over vacation for a smooth transition. If we went with one wing per year over three years, we'd finish November 2027 and if we do it concurrently, we would finish around the end of 2025 or maybe a bit into January 2026. Compressing our 18 months of time and saving money.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that seems to be the most favorable way to do the project. Can we plan for those savings?
- Mr. Jachimowicz stated based on the cost estimate, if we are able to knock off 18 months of time that number should decrease.
- Mayor DelBuono asked if you could provide those numbers before we approve the bond language.
- Mr. Jachimowicz stated he will get that number. Accelerating the start date will help and compressing the construction schedule will help. All those decisions of the comfort level of the town council without having the absolute authorization in hand is just a matter of the comfort level of the council to more forward at that point. We're ok with going ahead with the architectural firm and getting reimbursement, which won't be an issue. We are trying to do what is best for the community.

- Councilor Manke stated that the current cost is \$10,773,000. My sense is that we want to get this done as quickly as possible, concurrently. The council understands that this is critical and important. When do we send this to the new PBC to review?
- Mr. Jachimowicz stated he is more than happy to get them up to speed on the project.
- Councilor Manke stated after we take our vote on the 25th we send it to the PBC at that point.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that on July 25th we are scheduling the public hearing for August 8th for passage of the bond language to supply to the state.
- Councilor Manke stated he's got that. Is that the logical time to send it to the committee? We don't have to wait until next June. We need to get the leg work as quickly as possible.
- Town Manager Krupienski stated that we usually put forth funding for architectural into the budget and this didn't get funded because it came in on May 9th.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that she knows this is for the complete renovation of three wings, but within the language it states "media center equipment." Are you building a new media center within these three wings or the school overall?
- Mr. Jachimowicz stated it is not for the media center. I reviewed this and I thought I scratched that out. Media center equipment would not be part of that project, it would be classroom furniture.

11. **WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER**

- Town Manager Hutka stated with all due respect, not this week. Thank you for the opportunity.
- Councilor Donahue asked about Alumni Road.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that Mr. Dean has signed off on his traffic review and Chris has signed off on the state; just waiting for officials to give her report.

12. **COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated at the last TPZ meeting there were pre-applications for a drive thru DD at the old Santander Bank on Cedar Street and it would require a special exemption or zone change because currently drive-through's are only allowed for banks, drycleaners and pharmacies; a redemption center, for the return of recyclables, on Pane Road and on Kitts Lane an event space at the old VFW building.
- Councilor Donahue stated he and Sandy attended the ACM Alliance for Community media event in attended in Brooklyn. It was interesting to see. One station has a \$500,000 budget. Overall, it was a good conference.

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

- Tom Tallard stated he has an article dated Tuesday, November 20, 2021 regarding the Culver Street project – a couple of buildings, about 255 apartments about five stories high. Many, many people were against this. The TPZ passed special zoning regulations to get this through. The area has beautiful woods and it's very majestic. They are going to knock down these woods and put in a driveway. Cambridge Arms is a beautiful place. Dominic Pane totally ignored everybody and just pushed this through. Driving on Cedar Street between 4 and 6 p.m. is absolute madness. There needs to be moratorium on the amount of construction going on in Newington. Imploring you to please put a halt to this madness.

14. **REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

- None

15. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilor Manke to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. Seconded by Councilor Anest.
Motion passed 8-0 (Councilor Page absent).

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk