



Keith Chapman
Town Manager

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

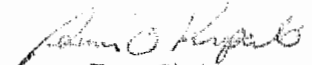
MAYOR BETH DELBUONO

NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

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Town Clerk

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

Mayor DelBuono called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
2. ROLL CALL
Councilor Braverman *(via Zoom)*
Deputy Mayor Budrejko
Councilor Donahue
Councilor Manke
Councilor Page
Councilor Radda
Mayor DelBuono

Staff Attendees:

Keith Chapman, Town Manager *(via Zoom)*
Jeff Trommer, Fire Chief
DJ Zordan, Fire Marshal *(via Zoom)*
James E. Krupinski, Town Clerk
Susan Gibbon, Council Clerk *(via Zoom)*

3. PROCLAMATIONS/AWARDS
 - A. Retirement – Detective Laurence DeSimone, NPD

Introduction by Mayor DelBuono

WHEREAS, Laurence DeSimone was hired as a Police Officer for the Town of Newington on July 18, 2002; and

WHEREAS, Officer Laurence DeSimone was appointed to the Emergency Response Team June 2004 to November 2011 and December 2014 through July 2022; and

WHEREAS, In June 2004, Laurence DeSimone was appointed to Field Training Officer; and

WHEREAS, On April 27, 2008, Laurence DeSimone was promoted to Detective; and

WHEREAS, Detective Laurence DeSimone received a Good Performance Recognition in February 2005; and

WHEREAS, Detective Laurence DeSimone received a Distinguished Service Award in February 2006 and an Excellence in Policing Award in December of 2007; and

WHEREAS, In July 2009, Detective Laurence DeSimone received the Arrest/Investigation of the Month from the Detective Division; and

WHEREAS, Detective Laurence DeSimone received the Distinguished Service Award for the January 19, 2014 incident and received the Outstanding Investigative Work Commendation for the February 27, 2015 incident; and

WHEREAS, On May 21, 2019, Detective Laurence DeSimone received an Excellence in Policing Citation;

WHEREAS, Detective Laurence DeSimone received commendation letters from surrounding police departments including Wethersfield, New Britain and Central CT State University Police Departments, the State Attorney's Office and various companies; and

WHEREAS, Detective Laurence DeSimone received various letters and thank you notes of appreciation from residents and citizens; and

WHEREAS, After 20+ years of service, Detective Laurence DeSimone retired from the Newington Police Department on July 31, 2022; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Newington Town Council hereby recognizes and extends its sincere appreciation to Detective Laurence DeSimone for his professional service and dedication to the Town and wishes him the best in his retirement.

Dated in Newington, Connecticut, this 16th day of August, 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Manke. Motion passed 7-0 (Councilor Camillo and Councilor Nagel absent).

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated through 20 years of service Officer DeSimone rose through ranks in the Newington Police Department and has received numerous awards and accolades. Thank you for your service and keeping our community safe. Wish you well in retirement.
- Councilor Page thanked Detective DeSimone for taking risks and for keeping us safe. Thank you for your years of service; wish you nothing but the best in retirement.
- Councilor Manke stated he wanted to thank Detective DeSimone for his service to our community and wish him well in his retirement.
- Mayor DelBuono stated she too wanted to offer her congratulations and give her sincere thanks for his years of service and all the work he's done for our town and residents. Wish him all the best in his retirement and whatever the future holds. Congratulations.

4. PRESENTATIONS

A. Greater Hartford Mobility Study ("GHMS")

- Nilesh Patel, Engineer, CT DOT, Michael Morehouse and Kevin Rivera with FHI Studio.
- Michael Morehouse stated he wanted to talk about some comments received from TPZ and discuss items important to Newington. For several years there's been discussion about I-84 and realized that there are other options that could be available. We recognized we needed to look at transportation as a system and how rail, bus, greenways can work together. GHMS has a vision and goal to improve mobility by planning an integrated, resilient, multi-modal transportation system in the greater Hartford region. TPZ comments included Route 175, TOD around CTfastrak stations, increased transit abilities to major employment centers, establishment of greenway corridors, improved safety for all modes and reduced congestion, new Hartford line station in Newington, Newington East-West connection. Mr. Morehouse discussed all of these concerns.
- Councilor Page asked if the realignment of Maple Hill Avenue was behind the four houses.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that increasing travel time and removing left hand turns, something that slows down traffic, Route 175 is a raceway now, so that's an issue.
- Councilor Page asked that in all of the work that's been done that Cedar Street needs to remain a two lane road both ways. It's just way too many cars with pollution, congestion and safety issues

with pedestrians and bikers. We need to look at how to calm traffic, can we look at alternative mobility venues and have Cedar Street go back to one lane.

- Mr. Morehouse stated that he will take that comment and pass it along.
- Mr. Patel stated that regarding Route 175 some departments have been talking about project development. Right now they are focused on the Route 9 northbound ramp at 175 and looking at improvement there. Any improvements to Route 175 really do have to take into account all users. If we can calm traffic to a degree we will and by introducing left hand lanes at certain key intersections can improve safety.
- Councilor Page stated our first responders recently had to attend to a tragic accident on East Cedar Street; what can we do to slow traffic down and make that safer. Regarding Cedar Street to Fenn Road, think it's crazy we aren't actively and aggressively working collaboratively with the state to create bike lanes, and pedestrian lanes and bridges so people from Newington can get safely to the Fastrak. Cedar Street is what most of us are concerned about.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that Cedar Street / Route 175 is a disaster and just getting worse and worse and quite frankly before any of these other initiatives, including TOD, including bike paths, I don't think any of those can be implemented until there is a resolution to the traffic, volume and speed on Route 175. Correcting Route 175 has to be done prior to moving forward with any other initiatives. Concerned that we aren't just moving cars from one location to another, for example the East-West connection, any significant impact to wetlands needs to be taken into account. Environmental needs to be towards the top of the list. You're not reducing traffic, you're just taking traffic from one road and moving it to another and that to me is not acceptable. When you talk about final decision making the towns need to be involved in any kind of alteration to traffic pattern, roads, etc. and the impacts to Newington.
- Mr. Morehouse thanked Deputy Mayor Budrejko for her comments. Any performance measures will have quantitative and qualitative analysis done over the next few months and we will be able to show you how these things work together as a system and you will have an opportunity to review and weigh in on it. Every project need requires additional significant study before anything happens which include participation not only from the town but stakeholders of neighborhoods, businesses, schools. There are a lot of factors to determine whether a project fails or advances. You will absolutely be a part of this process.
- Councilor Radda thanked the group for their presentation. When talking about complete streets which really focuses on safety and when I think of that I think of the needs of fire, police, and ambulances to be able to safely navigate our streets. You're talking about qualitative data and I think it's important to include these departments in your discussions and would be interested in their feedback. Has CCSU provided any feedback on this? Also, when is the next phase in this process going to begin? Thank you.
- Mr. Morehouse stated he believes CCSU has been included in our outreach as a stakeholder. The process of design does include first responders and all types of users. All roads have been designed for moving fast and efficiently but can become unsafe over time. It's difficult to reverse that kind of planning, but if that does move forward the state would include all stakeholders. We are in the process of completing our initial draft now and that will go out for review. Not sure when that will go out publicly.
- Councilor Donahue stated as a resident of Cedar Street, and if you're talking about pedestrian sidewalks and bike way on the south side, I'm going to be able to be able to serve hot dogs from my garage with the encroachment on my yard. I've seen plans where sidewalks are a priority, but it's like taking your life into your hands when you go out there. I hope your priority is the residents who live on Cedar Street who are going to be affected by this. That is my concern. If we are going to realign Maple Hill let's do it, we've been talking about this for over 30 years now.

- Mr. Morehouse stated that we are not going to move forward with anything without input from all stakeholders and everything will be done in a transparent process.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that in the past year there was a push to push by the state to have sidewalks installed from the Dakota complex down to Fenn Road. If that's the type of remedy your group is looking at, that will never fly. To put a sidewalk along Cedar Street with no greenbelt, no shoulders, no protection as the public safety director I stopped that project. Secondly, if you are going to be making all these improvements, the town should not be taking on the maintenance which was expected. I want to make it clear, if it's on the state road, it's the state and the town is not going to be responsible for the maintenance. A combination of safety and cost for maintaining need to be considered factors.
- Mr. Patel stated that maintenance is a concern that occurs all over the state and unfortunately there isn't a good answer. State forces are limited and most municipalities have ordinances where there is a property owner, they are responsible for that. But that is something that has to be taken into account.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that at the TPZ presentation the slideshow had 101 slides and some had 100 comments, some had 15, some had thumbs up or down, which surprised me since the ability for the public comment was not well publicized. Are you still collecting comments from the public and if so, until when? Can you put up your information on the website.
- Mr. Morehouse stated that we're never done accepting comments. But we do have a process and are moving ahead. All comments will be heard for this and subsequent projects moving on. We are going to package feedback in a strategic way and provide this information in a report that will be made publicly available online. This is very much the beginning. Over the next several months you will see things for early action. There are going to be grant opportunities for funding.
- Councilor Page stated that he disagrees that the mobility project should be delayed there is urgency and we should have a train platform in Newington to reduce carbon footprint, it would address climate change issues and good for Newington residents and those in the surrounding area. I do agree that Cedar Street issues need to be addressed and talked about. I agree with Mr. Chapman regarding the sidewalks that they would be dangerous and would not support them, but I do hope that a creative and alternate route be created that would be safe for everyone. Also, if the town agrees that we need more pedestrian bike friendly pathways, we should pay for that and help maintain them. I'd be happy to pay more tax dollars to maintain them, along with the state dollars that come in to help maintain them. We need to work together as a team and support this.

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

A. Public Comments

- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive stated she has listened to so many different scenarios for Cedar Street over the past 30 years. Nothing gets done and we just keep talking about it. Thought I heard that there were sidewalks going in on Cedar Street. Listened for years how the CT DOT is not in the sidewalk business; made quite clear when the CT Fastrak came through. If we can't come to a conclusion on sidewalks, how in God's green earth are we going to come up with a solution for traffic on Cedar Street? I hope that the town of Newington, state of Connecticut, residents and stakeholders come together to alleviate traffic and make it safer for everyone. Regarding this project being open and transparent, the first I heard it was at TPZ; glad to see it at the Council meeting. Who in Newington was involved in this process, how many residents were involved. Unbelievable that after 30 years nothing has been done with Cedar Street – do something.

B. Email Correspondence

- None

6. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- None

7. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS

A. Proposed Fee Schedule for Fire Department & Fire Marshal's Office

- Commissioner Whelan stated that the fees are fixed by the insurance companies. If that fee is billed, that fee is paid. Set adjusted amount
- Chief Trommer stated that you will see on the fee schedule it says fixed
- Mayor DelBuono stated that a concern was if a person doesn't have insurance they are directly billed.
- Commissioner Whelan stated that needs to be set by the council.
- Chief Trommer stated that Rocky Hill bills the insurance company and if they don't have insurance they bill the person.
- Councilor Manke stated he comes from a medical billing background. Concerned that the insurance companies will say I paid you a \$1,000 and you billed Mr. Jones \$1,000 but he didn't pay his, I'm not going to pay it and sue you. We need to get a legal opinion on this. Maybe there isn't an issue.
- Councilor Page asked if there was an accident and you extracted the person from the car. You will bill the insurance company, what if they have a deductible, does that potentially get billed to the individual?
- Chief Trommer stated he thinks it would have to if the town decides that's what they want to do.
- Councilor Manke stated his concern is that we're billing the right party.
- Chief Trommer stated that this will be billed after the fact. The third party will determine who to bill.
- Councilor Manke stated that people are going to say I pay taxes, why am I getting a bill?
- Commissioner Whelan stated that these are industry standard fees.
- Mayor DelBuono asked if they have a \$500 deductible, do they pay that.
- Chief Trommer stated that Rocky Hill has done this for a three month trial and made a \$10,000. They have now implemented it full time. They have had no complaints from residents. They call it a "cost recovery."
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko asked if there was going to be a charge or contract with this third party billing company.
- Chief Trommer stated that they take a percentage of the insurance payment. We will not be paying them. We will need to vet some companies and see who is the best. They don't collect monies if they don't collect.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated it won't be perceived by the insurance companies that Newington is charging higher fees.
- Chief Trommer stated that most fire departments around the state are doing this now. There are lots of departments trying to recover costs and that is what we are trying to do.
- Councilor Manke stated that it's important to know that these are not added costs, just trying to recoup costs. Billing company will go out to RFP?
- Commissioner Whelan stated that will be done after this is approved.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that we will look at different companies and their track records and then bring our findings back to the council with final selections and have them make a presentation to the council of your approval. We will do this through the RFP process.
- Councilor Manke stated he think it's best to have a company that takes the fee right off the top.

- Town Manager Chapman stated that the revenues generated will come into the general fund and the council will look at the revenue stream and you can make adjustments as you want on an annual basis the fire department budget and help them achieve what they are seeking to achieve.
- *Fire Department Fee Schedule tabled until August 23, 2022 meeting.*

- DJ Zordan stated that these costs are not included in the operational budget. These are incurred by the town and we are passing the cost to the person who needs the service.
- Councilor Manke stated that these fees charged to individuals and not the insurance companies.
- DJ stated that is correct. Regarding the fireworks permit my office is required to be there for 12-13 hours and it's a cost not budgeted. If we were required to be at a bar or wherever special effects are taking place, we need to be there.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that item 4 just lists fireworks permit. Does that need to be changed?
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that you are voting on the fees.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she read the statute and agrees with DJ about broadening it.
- DJ stated that CGS regarding fireworks also includes pyrotechnics.
- Mayor DelBuono asked if the description should be changed to include that.
- DJ stated that his recommendation would be to change it to read "fireworks or special effects".
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko asked about number 5, application for open burning permit.
- DJ stated that is for people who have large amount of brush that needs to be burned. Done in conjunction with the fire department. Not done if fire warnings or bad conditions.

Motion by Deputy Mayor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That the Newington Town Council hereby approves changes to various fees on the Town of Newington's "Schedule of Fees and Charges" as amended for Item 4. Application for Fireworks / Special Effects Permit in accordance with the Newington Town Code, Chapter 225, Fees, and as indicated in the attached document, Fire Marshal Fees Listing, August 2022.

Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 7-0 (Councilor Camillo and Councilor Nagel absent)

B. Fire Department Apparatus Replacement – Engine 2

- Mayor DelBuono stated that the department is due to replace Engine 2 next year, but because lead times to receive the truck once ordered is approx. 30 months. If we waited until next year to place the order we would be behind.

1. Introduction of Ordinance & Scheduling of Public Hearing

INTRODUCTION,

I hereby introduce for the Town Council's consideration the proposed Special Appropriation Ordinance for the purchase of a replacement fire apparatus for Engine #2.

Introduced by: Councilor Manke

RESOLVED,

That the Newington Town Council hereby schedules a Public Hearing on August 23, 2022 at 6:45 PM to consider the proposed Special Appropriation Ordinance for the purchase of a replacement fire apparatus for Engine #2.

Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 7-0 (Councilor Camillo and Councilor Nagel absent).

- Councilor Donahue asked if money was being moved from next year's budget to this year's budget.

- Town Clerk Krupienski stated it is coming out of the general fund. It's a special appropriation. This is actually the first time we've had to do one. It's in excess of the \$375,000 but under the \$975,000 so by ordinance is how it will pass.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there will be no expenditure made until we get closer to delivery. We are just getting the order in now due to lead times being extended up to two years. We won't be spending any money out of CIP or anywhere else for the next couple of years or until we get close to getting delivery. This is just basically a purchase order.
- Chief Trommer stated that they are already talking about price increases in the fall. This locks in our price and it can't be raised over the next couple of years.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there will be no money paid out now. It's all about the timing and our timing has been extended out and the payments will be extended out accordingly.
- Councilor Page stated that this is good for the taxpayers.

8. **REFUNDS (Action Requested)**

A. Approval of August 16, 2022 Refunds for an Overpayment of Taxes

Motion by Deputy Mayor Budrejko

RESOLVED:

That property tax refunds in the amount of \$3,180.41 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 Donahue. Motion passed 7-0 (Councilor Camillo and Councilor Nagel absent).

9. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- A. July 20, 2022 Public Hearing Minutes
- B. July 20, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes
- C. July 26, 2022 Public Hearing Minutes
- D. July 26, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion by Councilor Manke to accept the above referenced meetings. Seconded by Councilor Radda. Motion passed 7-0 (Councilor Camillo and Councilor Nagel absent).

10. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Financial Information Access MOU (Town & BOE)

- Mayor DelBuono stated that the Town and BOE are using two very different platforms in their financial departments and managing finances. Some of us would like to see them move to the MUNIS platform, and are hoping that may happen. This is an agreement that will alleviate some of the inefficiency in the two systems now. There are a lot in inefficiencies in the system now. The MOU will provide read only access, for both sides, to help alleviate the inefficiencies. You have before you a draft that will need to be tweaked. This was written a while ago, the date of July 1 will need to be updated. The BOE still needs to review this. The Town Attorney has already reviewed it.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that the language is a little loose. I'm hoping this will be a cooperative effort, but if there should be a disagreement who will the final arbitrator be?
- Mayor DelBuono stated that ultimately they would both have to agree and if one doesn't agree, it won't happen. In our discussions, Janet said the BOE should have access to everything.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that just in case there is a disagreement who would be the final arbitrator? The superintendent of schools? The town manager?

- Councilor Page stated rather than anticipating a litigious interaction based on potentially anticipated lack of cooperation I would like to leave it looser and in the spirit of this move forward as written. Hopefully this will build trust.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that she hopes this will be done in cooperation, but should there be an issue because of any number of reasons, just in case, it should be identified in advance.
- Councilor Radda stated she thinks it should be brought to both sides – the BOE and the town council so we can all be apprised of the issue.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she is of the mindset that we are putting our chief financial officer's on both side in charge of making this work. If for some reason after we sign the MOU and they say it's not working they would have to come back to us.
- Councilor Radda stated she agrees with Councilor Budrejko that maybe some sort of language should be written into the MOU, not to relay any mistrust, but may be beneficial for both sides.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that she is hesitant to do that.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that is already in the 4th paragraph. If there is an issue, it would go through the superintendent and the town manager first.
- Councilor Manke agrees that the MOU should be left as is and have it be a starting point. If there were any issue, it would be brought to us by the town manager.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that the goal of this document is to ensure financial transparency between the BOE and the Council. I understand your points, but paragraph 4 says it is acting through the superintendent and the town manager.
- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated that she is ok with that as long as there is a process.
- Mayor DelBuono stated she will discuss with the BOE and Janet Murphy regarding changing the date of July 1, 2022.

11. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

- Town Manager Chapman stated that you will see work on Maple Hill Avenue, hopefully done prior to winter; next spring/summer they will work on Robbins Avenue. We are meeting with a consultant and the staff now to see what they would like to see contained within the citizen survey and you as a council will have input into the questions that will be asked. This should help in some with respect with some of the major decisions you're going to be faced with, as well as help with next year's budget preparation. There hasn't been a citizen survey done in over 20 years. A percentage of households will be asked to participate in this. The town hall hours are being extended until the end of December and then we will determine the future schedule for next year.
- Councilor Page asked for an explanation of the work being done on Maple Hill and Robbins.
- Town Manager Chapman stated that there will be milling and paving, with the width of the road staying the same, drainage will be improved, there will be some sidewalk improvements, lineage will be updated and it will blend well with the work being done on Willard Avenue, the whole quadrant will be done. Once done we will have two roadways the same width; there will be some reconfiguration of the bus stop at Robbins and Main. They will be starting within the next week.
- Councilor Page asked to have the unaffiliated member of the ethics committee made.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that for Robbins Avenue, they will be changing it from two lanes to one with a bike path.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that the town engineer will be holding an information meeting regarding that on August 25th.

12. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Councilor Manke stated that the employee insurance and benefits committee yesterday. We're in good shape and there is no action coming out of that committee. Getting final reports on year end claims.

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

- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. (via Zoom) Glad to hear that the pilot program is being extended. Where are the hours posted, other than on the door of the town hall when you walk in? Think is should be publicized other than just on the door and website. Glad to hear there is an informational session on Maple/Robbins streetscape project.
- Brian Rainier, 11 Webster Court stated she is not sure of the appropriateness of discussing things germane to our country in terms of red and blue and all that is happening in our country. Not sure if you have such discussions to weigh in on national issues. You do a wonderful job.

14. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS

- Deputy Mayor Budrejko stated in today's Hartford Courant there is an article regarding a \$16 million to finish the Farmington Trail to help with the completion of the trail from Plainville to the New Britain bus station at the CT Fastrak and construction is expected to begin this year. By doing this it will allow Newington bicyclists access to the Farmington Heritage Trail. I'm thrilled by this. It will also extend the Heritage Trail from New Britain to Newington Junction and the historic loop and developing that and it could be a destination place for cyclists. It's exciting for cyclists in Newington to have a safe place to cycle and be part of a larger greenway system.
- Councilor Page stated that when they talked about the greenway, we have rails to trails and would like to the proposed greenway mentioned in the presentation. It encourages some commercial activity around these areas and increase property values.
- Mayor DelBuono stated that our council follows council rules and is based on Robert's Rules of Order and there's no back and forth discussion, but we don't usually discuss national politics, because our role here is to serve Newington, so we just talk about Newington and what we can do for Newington.

15. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

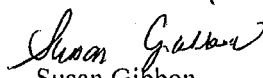
A. Human Services Newsletter

- Mayor DelBuono stated it is available on the website.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Manke. Seconded by Councilor Donahue. Motion passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Susan Gibbon
Council Clerk