

March 17, 2020

**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**VERNON TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**TOWN HALL - 14 PARK PLACE - 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**  
**VERNON, CONNECTICUT**

RECEIVED  
VERNON TOWN CLERK  
20 APR 17 PM 11:54

March 17, 2020 - 7:30 PM

Mayor Daniel Champagne called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM

**A.) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**B.) ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Council Members Pauline Schaefer, Thomas DiDio, Brian Motola, Julie Clay, Michael Wendus, Steve Wakefield, Laura Bush, Bill Campbell, Linda Gessay, Ann Letendre (via telephone), Maryann Levesque

**Absent:** Jim Tedford

**Entered During Meeting:**

**Also Present:** Town Administrator Michael Purcaro, Recording Secretary Karen Daigle

**C.) CITIZEN'S FORUM**

None

**E.) PUBLIC HEARING**

None

**F.) PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION**

Mayor Daniel A. Champagne made a presentation to the Town Council on various topics.

- Update on Coronavirus – COVID 19. Outlined precautions, conference calls with State and Federal Officials, public meetings, building access to Town Hall with Senior and Library closed to the public, and sanitizing work areas.
- Ribbon cutting ceremony at the Vernon Shop Rite on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to all who attended.
- Last week, Cheryl Forbes, our new Communications Specialist was introduced to the Vernon Community Stakeholders Group. She will be working with the Board of Education and Administration to share information and engage our greater Vernon community partners.
- FY 2020-2021 Budget Books at the table. The amended schedule reflects the first meeting at 7:00 PM on March 26, 2020.

**G.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA**

Council Member Wakefield, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to move the Consent Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

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- C 1. Request the Town Council approve Tax Refunds for Current year.** (See copy of a memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue, to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator dated March 5, 2020 included in the Council packet.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES TWENTY (20) CURRENT YEAR TAX REFUNDS TOTALING \$7694.65 AS REFERENCED IN THE LETTER FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED MARCH 5, 2020.

- C 2. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Christiane Abraham, (D), 175 Blue Ridge Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Board of Directors of the North Central District Health Department, said term to commence on March 18, 2020 and expires on December 31, 2022.** (A copy of Christiane Abraham's resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO C.G.S. §19a-241; CHARTER CHAPTER XI, SECTIONS 1, 5, & 14, THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF CHRISTIANE ABRAHAM, (D), 175 BLUE RIDGE DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT. SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON MARCH 18, 2020 AND EXPIRES ON DECEMBER 31, 2022.

- C 3. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Justin Hicks, (U), 110 Old Ellington Road, Broad Brook, Connecticut as the YMCA Representative to the Vernon Youth Services Board, said term to commence on March 18, 2020 and expires on December 31, 2020.** (A copy of Mr. Hick's resume is included for Council review. It should be noted that Mr. Hicks is completing the unexpired term of John Reilly.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO CHARTER CHAPTER XV, SECT. 3; TOWN COUNCIL RESOLUTION DATED 08-24-1976 AND TOWN COUNCIL RESOLUTION DATED 03-01-1994, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF JUSTIN HICKS, (U), 110 OLD ELLINGTON ROAD, BROAD BROOK, CONNECTICUT AS THE YMCA REPRESENTATIVE TO THE VERNON YOUTH SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON MARCH 18, 2020 AND EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2020.

H.) **DISCUSSION OF PULLED CONSENT ITEMS**  
None

I.) **PENDING BUSINESS**  
None

J.) **NEW BUSINESS**

- 1. Request the Town Council consider the Vernon Community Arts Center (dba: Arts Center East), relative to their annual request for a 50/50 split of utilities as provided**

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for in their current lease. (See memorandum from Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator to Daniel A. Champagne, Mayor and the Vernon Town Council dated February 26, 2020 relative to same. Also attached is the requested documentation from VCAC per the lease.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE PAYMENT OF FIFTY PERCENT (50%) OF THE UTILITY COSTS FOR THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS 709 HARTFORD TURNPIKE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT. SAID FIFTY PERCENT (50%) UTILITY COSTS WILL BE PAID DIRECTLY TO THE UTILITY COMPANY AS REQUIRED THROUGH THE PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET. THE REMAINING FIFTY PERCENT (50%) WILL BE PAID BY THE TENANT, VERNON COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER PER SAID LEASE DATED APRIL 25, 2016.

Council Member Wakefield, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made a motion to approve the payment of 50% of the utility costs for 709 Hartford Turnpike. Executive Director of Arts Center East, Jennifer Kowal, and Robert Hurd, President of Arts Center East, made a presentation on activities, revenue and expenses. Public Works Director, Dwight Ryniewicz, and Town Administrator, Michael Purcaro, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued. Motion carried with 10 in favor and 1 opposed, Council Member Campbell.

2. Request the Town Council schedule a Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting on March 25, 2020 in the Town Hall Memorial Building, third floor, 14 Park Place, Vernon, Connecticut to hear comments and take the necessary action relative to the following resolution, "A Resolution regarding an Additional Appropriation for the Purpose of Prepayment of Internal Financed Lease Obligations in the amount of \$2,986,198.44". (See resolution and memorandum dated March 12, 2020 from Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY SCHEDULES A PUBLIC HEARING AND SPECIAL TOWN MEETING FOR MARCH 25, 2020 AT 7:35 PM ON THE THIRD FLOOR, TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN THE TOWN HALL MEMORIAL BUILDING, 14 PARK PLACE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT TO HEAR COMMENT AND TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION RELATIVE TO "A RESOLUTION REGARDING AN ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREPAYMENT OF INTERNAL FINANCED LEASE OBLIGATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,986,198.44."

Council Member Wakefield, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made a motion to schedule a Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting for March 25, 2020 at 7:35 PM on the third floor, Town Council Chambers in the Town Hall Memorial Building, to hear comment and take the necessary action relative to a Resolution Regarding an Additional Appropriation for the Purpose of Prepayment of Internal Financed Lease Obligations in the Amount of \$2,986,198.44. Mayor Champagne spoke. Discussion ensued. Finance Director, Jeff O'Neill, answered questions. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Request the Town Council amend the 2020-2021 Budget Meeting dates. (See memorandum from Diane Wheelock, Executive Assistant dated March 12, 2020 relative to same.)

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**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AMENDS THE BUDGET MEETING SCHEDULE PREVIOUSLY PASSED AT THE JANUARY 21, 2020 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING TO REFLECT THE CANCELLATION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING AND BUDGET MEETING ON SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2020 AND ADDS THE PUBLIC HEARING AND BUDGET MEETING ON SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020, SAID MEETING TO BEGIN AT 9:00 AM AND PUBLIC HEARING TO BEGIN AT 9:05 AM.

Council Member Wakefield, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to amend the above Budget Meeting date for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

**K.) INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES**

**A Proposed Ordinance entitled "Ordinance No. No. , An Ordinance Restricting Activities on Town-owned Property and School Grounds.** (A number will be assigned once the Ordinance has passed Town Council vote.) (The Ordinance amending Ordinance #45 and #127 respectively will be sent via email on Monday, March 16, 2020.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH CHAPTER V, OF THE VERNON TOWN CHARTER, SEC. 6, ENTITLED "PUBLIC HEARING ON AND PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCES," HEREBY SCHEDULES A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING, AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "**AN ORDINANCE RESTRICTING ACTIVITIES ON TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY AND SCHOOL GROUNDS**", AT 7:35 PM ON TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2020 LOCATED AT THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THIRD FLOOR, 14 PARK PLACE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT TO RECEIVE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE.

Council Member Wakefield, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to schedule a Public Hearing regarding an Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance Restricting Activities on Town-owned Property and School Grounds at 7:35 PM on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Mayor Champagne, Town Administrator Purcaro and Town Attorney, Louis Spadaccini, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued.

Council Member DiDio, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made a motion to add the following language to (8) Any Town property "exclusive of roads and sidewalks outside of parks". The amended sentence would read: "(8) Any Town property, exclusive of roads and sidewalks outside of parks." Motion carried with 10 in favor and one abstention, Council Member Levesque.

Council Member Campbell, seconded by Council Member Motola, made a motion to remove "or permitted by the Town:" after "meeting or event sponsored by the Town" and replace the word "permitted" with "allowed" in (4) and (5) The amended paragraph would read: "It shall be unlawful for any person to enter or be upon, or have a vehicle parked upon the following Town-owned properties each day from one-half hour after sundown to sunrise of the following day; without the permission of the Town except when participating in or attending any activity, meeting or event sponsored by the Town." The amended sentence would read: "(4) All public school grounds within the Town unless otherwise allowed by the Vernon Board of Education;" and "(5) Any Vernon Water Pollution Control Authority property unless otherwise allowed by the Vernon

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Water Pollution Control Authority;" Motion carried with 10 in favor and one abstention, Council Member Wendus.

Main motion, with amendments to the Ordinance language, carried unanimously.

**D.) EXECUTIVE SESSION**

8:33 PM Council Member Wakefield, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #1:

THE TOWN COUNCIL PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY GIVEN IN CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 1-200 (6) (C) HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS SECURITY AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR; AND DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously, then Council Member Letendre disconnected from the teleconference.

No action taken.

9:22 PM Council Member Wakefield left the meeting.

9:22 PM Council Member Campbell, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #2:

THE TOWN COUNCIL PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY GIVEN IN CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 1-200 (6) (C) HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS SECURITY AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR; AND DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously.

No action taken.

9:28 PM Council Member Campbell, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #3:

THE TOWN COUNCIL PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY GIVEN IN CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 1-200 (6) (D) HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT NEGOTIATION AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR; AND DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously.

No action taken.

9:43 PM Executive Session ended.

**L.) ACTION ON ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED**  
None

**M.) IDENTIFICATION/ADOPTION OF ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

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None

**N.) DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**  
None

**O.) ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

THE TOWN COUNCIL WAIVES THE READING OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON MARCH 3, 2020 AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the March 3, 2020 regular Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

**P.) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS, ETC. NOT REQUIRING ACTION**

1. Monthly Report – January, 2020 for the Vernon Police Department as submitted by Captain John Kelley.
2. Monthly Report – February, 2020 for the Town Clerk's Office as submitted by Karen Daigle, Vernon Town Clerk.

**Adjourn ( 9:44 PM)**

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Schaefer, made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Received:

Approved:

Respectfully Submitted,



Karen C. Daigle  
Recording Secretary