

February 15, 2022

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APPROVED MINUTES
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING
ZOOM TELECONFERENCE WEBLINK

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CALL IN NUMBER: 1 929 205 6099 US (NY)

MEETING ID: 860 1742 9482 PASSCODE: 021422

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2022 – 7:30 PM

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

A.) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited

B.) **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Council Members Laura Bush, Bill Campbell, Julie Clay, Linda Gessay, Ann Letendre, Maryann Levesque, Brian Motola, Ariana Nieves-Matias, John O'Connell, Teri-Lynn Rogers, Jim Tedford and Michael Wendus

Absent:

Entered During Meeting:

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

C.) **CITIZEN CITATIONS AND AWARDS**

None

D.) **CITIZEN'S FORUM (7:31 PM)**

Genaro Gonzalez, 137 West Main Street, spoke on face masks and other topics.

Teri Lynn Rogers, Council Member, spoke on the signage at 375 Hartford Turnpike.

Citizen's Forum ended at 7:37 PM

F.) **PUBLIC HEARING**

G.) **PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION**

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

- In-person Town Council meetings will resume next month.
- Income tax preparation programs are available to qualified individuals through the Social Services Department. Please call 860-870-3661 for further information.
- Income tax preparation for Seniors is available through the Vernon Senior Center. Please call 860-870-3680 for further information.
- Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, located in the old Shepard's Plumbing building on Talcottville Road, held a grand opening this week. They will sell lightly used furniture, household items and some new items. We are happy to welcome them to Vernon.
- Yale Health System is purchasing ECHN consisting of Rockville and Manchester Hospitals. Information on the acquisition will be forthcoming as it becomes available.
- The 2022 Tax Sale is scheduled for March 9, 2022 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the Town Council Chambers. Attorney Adam Cohen of the law firm of Pullman and Comley LLC will conduct the auction.
- Building Official, Steve Prattson, is leaving the Town of Vernon. Thank you to Steve for his service to the Town.

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- Lyn's Deli and Delights, located at 76 Union Street, held a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony this week. Stop by and check out all the treats.

H.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to move the Consent Agenda. Motion carried unanimously by hand and roll call vote.

- C 1.** Request the Town Council approve tax refunds for prior and current year taxes as presented in the memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue dated February 4, 2022. (See memorandum dated February 4, 2022 from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue included in the Council packet.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THREE (3) TAX REFUNDS FOR PRIOR YEARS TOTALING \$2027.81 AND FIFTEEN (15) TAX REFUNDS FOR CURRENT YEAR TOTALING \$6610.04 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED FEBRUARY 4, 2022.

- C 2.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Jean Luddy, (D), 12 Crown Street, Vernon, Connecticut, as a regular member of the Vernon Board of Ethics, said term to commence on February 16, 2022 and expires February 15, 2027. (A copy of Ms. Luddy's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE # 173, TOWN CODE SEC. 2-91 - 2-98; THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF JEAN LUDDY, (D), 12 CROWN STREET, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF ETHICS, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON FEBRUARY 16, 2022 AND EXPIRES ON FEBRUARY 15, 2027.

- C 3.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Alan Lubin, (I), 55 Elizabeth Lane, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Greater Hartford Transit District Board, said term to commence on February 16, 2022 and expires on June 30, 2022. (A copy of Mr. Lubin's resume is included for Council review. It should be noted that Mr. Lubin is completing the unexpired term of Mary Oliver.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 103a, SECTION 7-273c OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF ALAN LUBIN, (I), 55 ELIZABETH LANE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE GREATER HARTFORD TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON FEBRUARY 16, 2022 AND EXPIRES ON JUNE 30, 2022.

i.) NEW BUSINESS

None

J.) PENDING BUSINESS

None

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K.) NEW BUSINESS

1. **Request the Town Council approve the ten month modification of the lease with Vernon Community Arts Center.** (See lease modification attached. Also included is the 2016 original lease and 2021 modification documents for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO THE TEN MONTH LEASE MODIFICATION WITH THE VERNON COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to authorize Town Administrator, Michael J. Purcaro, sign any and all documents relative to the ten month lease modification with the Vernon Community Arts Center. Mayor Champagne spoke on the topic. Motion carried unanimously by hand and roll call vote.

2. **Request the Town Council approve the request by the Vernon Community Arts Center (dba: Arts Center East) to again authorize the Town of Vernon 50/50 sharing of the utility costs.** (See required request of the VCAC and documentation provided.)

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 Motola, seconded by Council Member Gessay, made a motion to authorize the payment of fifty percent (50%) of utility costs for the property at 709 Hartford Turnpike, paid 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. Vernon Community Arts Center President, Robert Hurd, and Executive Director, Liz Bologna, spoke and answered questions, and well as Town Administrator, Michael J. Purcaro, and Public Works Director, Dwight Ryniewicz. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

3. **Request the Town Council approve the recommendations from the Vernon Registrar of Voters in the memorandum dated February 7, 2022 relative to same.** (Registrars Chris Prue and Lisa Moody will be present at the meeting to answer questions.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS RELATIVE TO THE CHANGES IN THE FOUR VOTING DISTRICTS RELATIVE TO THE REAPPORTIONMENT COMMISSIONS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS 53RD, 56TH AND 57TH AS PRESENTED.

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Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Gessay, made a motion to approve the recommendations from the Registrars of Voters relative to changes in the four voting districts and to the Reapportionment Commission's recommendations for Assembly Districts 53rd, 56th and 57th. Registrars of Voters, Lisa Moody and Chris Prue, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

4. **Request the Town Council establish a Cultural District and Cultural District Advisory Board.** (A copy of the resolution being discussed for same is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

PURSUANT TO VERNON CHARTER CHAPTER XV, ENTITLED "MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS", SECTION 3, "ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS", THE TOWN COUNCIL ESTABLISHES A **CULTURAL DISTRICT AND CULTURAL DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD** BY PASSING THE RESOLUTION ENTITLED "**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A CULTURAL DISTRICT AND CULTURAL DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD**", AS PRESENTED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member O'Connell, proposed a resolution to establish a Cultural District and Cultural District Advisory Board. Mayor Champagne, Town Economic Developer, Shaun Gately, and Library Director, Jennifer Johnston-Marius, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued. Council Member Rogers, seconded by Council Member O'Connell, proposed a motion to amend the wording in paragraph 4 from "...create a Cultural District in downtown Vernon..." to "...create a Cultural District in Vernon, **specifically downtown Rockville...**". Discussion ensued. Motion to amend with the changed wording, carried unanimously by roll call vote. Main motion, as amended, a resolution establishing a Cultural District and Cultural District Advisory Board, carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5. **Request the Town Council accept the very generous gift for the new K-9 for the Vernon Police Department.** (See memorandum from Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer to Mayor Daniel A. Champagne, Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator dated February 10, 2022 relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTS THE DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$36,142.62 TO BE RESERVED FOR THE PURCHASE OF A SPECIFICALLY-BRED CANINE, NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING WITH A POLICE OFFICER HANDLER.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, proposed a resolution to accept the donation in the amount of \$36,142.62 for the purchase of a specifically-bred canine, necessary equipment and training with a police officer handler. Lisa Moody spoke and acknowledged the assistance of Julie Clay, Kathy Stavens, Tim Poloski, Martha Kane, Patty Noblet, and others. Mayor Champagne spoke and discussion ensued. Motion carried with 11 in favor. Council Member Nieves-Matias was not on the call for said vote, but came back into the meeting shortly thereafter.

6. **Request the Town Council authorize the purchase of two (2) police cruisers.** (See memorandum dated February 10, 2022 to Mayor Daniel A. Champagne and Michael J. Purcaro. Town Administrator from Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer relative to same.)

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PROPOSED MOTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE PURCHASE OF TWO POLICE CRUISERS WITH FUNDING TO BE APPROPRIATED FROM THE POLICE SPECIAL SERVICES CRUISER HOURS ACCOUNT.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, proposed a resolution to approve the purchase of two (2) police cruisers with funding to be appropriated from the Police Special Services Cruiser Hours account. Mayor Champagne spoke and discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

L.) INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES
None

M.) ACTION ON ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED
None

N.) IDENTIFICATION/ADOPTION OF ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS
None

O.) DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS
None

P.) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

THE TOWN COUNCIL WAIVES THE READING OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF **FEBRUARY 1, 2022** AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Clay, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 regular Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

E.) EXECUTIVE SESSION

8:54 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #2.

THE TOWN COUNCIL PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY GIVEN IN CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 1-200 (2) HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL, AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, TOWN ATTORNEY LOU SPADACCINI AND FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF STEVE EPPLER TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

9:55 PM Council Member Levesque, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to extend curfew until the end of business. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10:00 PM Executive Session #2 ended.

10:01 PM Council Member Levesque, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #1

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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 NEGOTIATIONS, AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

10:06 PM Executive Session #1 ended.

10:07 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following motion to Executive Session #2:

RESOLVE, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE COMPREHENSIVE EMS AMBULANCE STAFFING PLAN AS PRESENTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION, AND FURTHER, THE TOWN COUNCIL AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO DRAFT AN ORDINANCE FOR SAME TO BE PRESENTED AT THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON MARCH 1, 2022 FOR REVIEW AND FORWARDING TO PUBLIC HEARING ON MARCH 15, 2022.

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Q.) INFORMATIONAL ITEMS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, CORRESPONDENCE, REPORTS, ETC. NOT REQUIRING ACTION
None

R.) ADJOURN (10:08 PM)

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Rogers, made a motion to adjourn.
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Received: February 22, 2022

Approved: March 1, 2022



Karen C. Daigle
Recording Secretary