

January 18, 2022

RECEIVED
VERNON TOWN CLERK
22 JUN -8 PM 1:25

**APPROVED MINUTES
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL
VIRTUAL REGULAR MEETING
ZOOM TELECONFERENCE WEBLINK**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85958777254?pwd=d1JKWFhSL21nWDhOOTlzQzAzL3grdz09>

CALL IN NUMBER: 1 929 205 6099 US (NY)
MEETING ID: 859 5877 7254 PASSCODE: 0118
TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 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: Linda Gessay at 7:54 PM

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

C.) CITIZEN'S FORUM (7:34 PM)

Maryann Levesque, 183 Bolton Road, was grateful to the Town of Vernon employees and volunteers for their dedication in distributing masks and test kits and for all their service to Vernon's residents.

Genaro Gonzalez, 137 West Main Street, spoke on the vaccine, needing stop signs and several other topics.

Citizen's Forum ended at 7:41 PM

F.) PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION

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

- Thank you to Lisa Moody, Fundraising chairman, including Julie Clay, Martha Kane, Tim Poloski, Patty Noblet and Kathy Stavens, and all donors who successfully raised \$30,000 to purchase and train a new K-9. Vernon residents are consistently generous and always supportive of the Police Department.
- The Vernon Voice Magazine is due in mailboxes this week. Thank you to photographer Ron Sperry for the cover photo. Anyone who would like to advertise in the quarterly magazine may call Administration at 860-870-3601 for more information.
- Last March, two residents were trapped by fire on the third floor of 80-82 Union Street, and were bravely rescued by Vernon firefighters, police officers, a registered nurse from Rockville Hospital, an Air National Guard sergeant and Vernon's Town Administrator and Emergency Management Director. These selfless acts of bravery are being showcased in a nationally televised documentary series entitled "Hearts of Heroes", airing Saturday mornings on ABC.
- The Town of Vernon completed the public distribution of N-95 masks and COVID-19 test kits. Thank you to everyone who assisted with the distribution.
- The Town of Vernon is seeking community input for use of the American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA), which can be used for the following purposes: support for public

January 18, 2022

health expenditures, such as funding Covid-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare and certain public health and safety staff; addressing negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency; replacing public sector revenue lost due to the pandemic; and investing in clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and storm infrastructure and expanding broadband internet access. Residents can visit www.vernon-ct.gov and click the form to submit their input.

- The Town of Vernon has partnered with the State of Connecticut, State Department of Public Health, local Public Health officials, Griffin Hospital and Jackson Laboratories to provide expanded Covid testing for our residents and the region. Testing is available four days per week, up to 40 hours, all with no out of pocket costs. We are proud to again form a partnership that provides the best possible services during this pandemic for our residents and neighbors.

E.) PUBLIC HEARING

None

G.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to move the Consent Agenda. Council Member Letendre pulled Consent items #2, #3 and #4. Motion to approve Consent item #1 and #5 carried unanimously by roll call vote.

- C 1.** Request the Town Council approve tax refunds for current and prior years taxes as presented in the memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue dated January 7, 2022. (See memorandum dated January 7, 2022 from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue included in the Council packet.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES FIVE (5) TAX REFUNDS FOR PRIOR YEARS TOTALING \$1,265.87 AND CURRENT YEAR TWENTY-FIVE (25) REFUNDS TOTALING \$13,874.40 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED JANUARY 7, 2022.

- C 5.** Request the Town Council approve budget amendment request #9 for fiscal year 2021-2022 as provided on the budget amendment forms by Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer. (The budget amendment form is attached for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUEST #9 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 AS PROVIDED ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FORMS ATTACHED BY FINANCE OFFICER AND TREASURER JEFFREY A. O'NEILL.

H.) DISCUSSION OF PULLED CONSENT ITEMS

- C 2.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Yelena Damsky, (R), 16 Vernon Avenue, Vernon, Connecticut as an alternate member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said appointment will begin January 19, 2022 and expires on December 31, 2025. (A copy of Ms. Damsky's resume is included for Council review. It should be noted that Ms. Damsky is completing the unexpired term of alternate Mr. Bard who is moving to regular member.)

January 18, 2022

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO THE VERNON TOWN CHARTER, CHAPTER VIII, SEC. 1 & 6, AND CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES SEC. 8-4a & b, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF YELENA DAMSKY, (R), 16 VERNON AVENUE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT, TO ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A TERM COMMENCING ON JANUARY 19, 2022 AND EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2025.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to approve the appointment of Yelena Damsky (R), 16 Vernon Avenue, Vernon, Connecticut to alternate member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term commencing on January 19, 2022 and expires December 31, 2025.

7:54 PM Council Member Gessay entered the meeting.

Discussion ensued. Mayor Champagne responded. Motion passed by roll call vote with 9 in favor and 3 abstentions, Council Members Levesque, Nieves-Matias and Rogers.

- C 3. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Carl Bard, (U), 25 Grady Road, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said term to commence January 19, 2022 and expires December 31, 2024.** (A copy of Mr. Bard's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SEC. 1,6 & 11 DATED JANUARY 1, 1985; C.G.S. §8-4A&B, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF CARL BARD, (U), 25 GRADY ROAD, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A TERM TO COMMENCE ON JANUARY 19, 2022 AND EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2024.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member O'Connell, made a motion to approve the appointment of Carl Bard (U), 25 Grady Road, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Planning & Zoning Commission, said term to commence January 19, 2022 and expires December 31, 2024. Discussion ensued. Motion passed by roll call vote with 8 in favor, 2 against, Council Members Letendre and Nieves-Matias, and 2 abstentions, Council Members Levesque and Rogers.

- C 4. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Michael Baum, (D), 194 Washington Street, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said term to commence on January 19, 2022 and expires December 31, 2024.** (A copy of Mr. Baum's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SEC. 1,6 & 11 DATED JANUARY 1, 1985; C.G.S. §8-4A&B, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF MICHAEL BAUM, (D), 194 WASHINGTON STREET, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION FOR A TERM TO COMMENCE ON JANUARY 19, 2022 AND EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2024.

January 18, 2022

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Gessay, made a motion to approve the appointment of Michael Baum (D), 194 Washington Street, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for a term to commence on January 19, 2022 and expires December 31, 2024. Discussion ensued. Motion passed by roll call vote with 8 in favor, 2 against, Council Members Letendre and Nieves-Matias, and 2 abstentions, Council Members Levesque and Rogers.

I.) **PENDING BUSINESS**
None

J.) **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Request the Town Council authorize the Youth Service Bureau to apply for and operate the Summer Youth Employment Program.** (See memorandum dated January 10, 2022 from Michelle Hill, Director of Youth Services to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU TO APPLY FOR AND OPERATE THE TOWN OF VERNON, SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR THROUGH CAPITOL WORKFORCE PARTNERS. THE TOWN COUNCIL FURTHER AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, authorized application for and to operate the Summer Youth Employment program offered by the State of Connecticut Department of Labor through Capitol Workforce Partners. Michelle Hill, Youth Services Director, spoke. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

2. **Request the Town Council authorize the Vernon Fire Department to submit application for and receive the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistance for Firefighters Grant for 2021.** (See the memorandum dated January 13, 2022 from Fire Chief Stephen Eppler to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE VERNON FIRE DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR AND RECEIVE THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY, ASSISTANCE FOR FIREFIGHTERS GRANT FOR 2021, AND FURTHER THE TOWN COUNCIL AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, authorized application to receive the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistance for Firefighters Grant for 2021. Town Administrator, Michael Purcaro, and Fire Chief, Stephen Eppler, spoke. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

3. **Request the Town Council consider the request of the Vernon Housing Authority Director Betsy Sotto relative to the waiver of building permit fees for two of the**

January 18, 2022

Vernon Housing Authority properties. (See memorandum dated January 13, 2022 relative to 55 Grove Street from Executive Director Betsy R. Soto to Mayor Daniel Champagne relative to the permit fee reimbursement and the memorandum dated January 13, 2022 relative to 80 Franklin Street from Executive Director Betsy R. Soto to Mayor Daniel Champagne relative to the permit fee waiver.)

PROPOSED MOTION #1

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE WAIVER OF BUILDING PERMIT FEES RELATIVE TO THE INSTALLATION OF SECURITY CAMERAS AT GROVE COURT, 55 GROVE STREET, A VERNON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to authorize the waiver of building permit fees relative to the installation of security cameras at 55 Grove Street, a Vernon Housing Authority property. Mayor Champagne spoke. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

PROPOSED MOTION #2

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE WAIVER OF BUILDING PERMIT FEES FOR THE GAZEBO PROJECT AT THE FRANCIS J. PITKAT CONGREGATE FACILITY, 80 FRANKLIN STREET, VERNON, CONNECTICUT, A VERNON HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to authorize the waiver of building permit fees at 80 Franklin Street, a Vernon Housing Authority property. Mayor Champagne spoke. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

4. **Request the Town Council approve the modification to the Personnel Rules presented by Dawn Maselek, Assistant Town Administrator.** (See memorandum from Dawn Maselek, Assistant Town Administrator to the Town Council relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN OF VERNON CHARTER, CHAPTER XIV, SECTION 3 – PERSONNEL RULES, AND THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 7.0 ENTITLED “LEAVE”, HEREBY ADOPTS THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 7.0 IN ITS ENTIRETY, AS PRESENTED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Campbell, made a motion to adopt the amendments to Section 7.0 entitled “Leave” of the Vernon Personnel Rules and Regulations. Mayor Champagne and Assistant Town Administrator, Dawn Maselek, spoke and clarified correction to 20 years. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

5. **Request the Town Council approve, consistent with the State of Connecticut Minimum Wage Laws and the Town of Vernon Personnel Rules and Regulations, the new 2022-2023 Pay rates for Seasonal Parks and Seasonal Cemetery workers.** (See memorandum from Dawn Maselek, Assistant Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT MINIMUM WAGE LAWS AND THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES

January 18, 2022

AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 1.1 ENTITLED "GENERAL POLICY", SECTION 3.5 ENTITLED "CLASS," AND SECTION 3.8 ENTITLED "COMPENSATION", HEREBY ADOPTS THE PROPOSED WAGE TABLE FOR SEASONAL POSITIONS IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION AND CEMETERY DEPARTMENTS.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to adopt the proposed wage table to seasonal positions in the Parks and Recreation and Cemetery Departments, consistent with the State of Connecticut minimum wage laws and the Town of Vernon Personnel Rules and Regulations, Section 1.1 entitled "General Policy" Section 3.5 entitled "Class". Mayor Champagne, Assistant Town Administrator, Dawn Maselek, and Parks and Recreation Director, Martin Sitler, spoke. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

6. **Request the Town Council approve the asset disposal for the Department of Public Works.** (See memorandum dated January 12, 2022 from Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer to Daniel A. Champagne, Mayor and Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE DISPOSAL OF ASSETS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FLEET OPERATIONS AS DISCLOSED ON THE REQUEST FOR DISPOSAL OF FIXED ASSETS FORM.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to approve the disposal of assets for the Department of Public Works fleet operations as disclosed on the request for disposal of fixed assets form. Public Works Director, Dwight Ryniewicz, spoke. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

K.) INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES
None

L.) ACTION ON ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED
None

M.) IDENTIFICATION/ADOPTION OF ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS
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 OF **DECEMBER 21, 2021** AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Campbell, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the December 21, 2021 regular Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

January 18, 2022

D.) EXECUTIVE SESSION

9:13 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, 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) (D), HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS, AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously by hand and voice vote.

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

9:58 PM Recess; 10:05 PM Reconvened

10:07 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made the following motion to 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, STEPHEN EPPLER, FIRE CHIEF AND JEFFREY O'NEILL, FINANCE OFFICER, TO ATTEND.

Motion carried unanimously by hand and voice vote.

10:46 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made the following motion to Executive Session #1:

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMAPGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE VILLAGE/KIDSAFE CT TO SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY FOR VERNON RESIDENTS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$80,000.00.

Motion carried by roll call vote.

Council Member Gessay, seconded by Council Member Gessay, made the following motion to Executive Session #2:

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY DIRECTS AND AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO PREPARE A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT AND PLAN FOR THE VERNON AMBULANCE SERVICE UNDER THE VERNON FIRE DEPARTMENT, TO INCLUDE BUT NOT LIMITED TO REVIEW OF ALL APPLICABLE LAWS, REGULATIONS, STATISTICS AND COSTS SAID RECOMMENDED COMPREHENSIVE REPORT AND PLAN TO BE PRESENTED TO THE TOWN COUNCIL AT THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 15, 2022.

Motion carried by roll call vote.

January 18, 2022

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

1. Monthly Report for November, 2021 for the Town Clerk's Office as submitted by
Karen C. Daigle, Town Clerk.

Adjourn (10:48 PM)

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

Received: January 24, 2022

Approved: February 1, 2022



Karen C. Daigle
Recording Secretary