

June 7, 2022

APPROVED MINUTES
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL – 14 PARK PLACE – 3RD FLOOR
TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022 – 7:30 PM

RECEIVED
VERNON TOWN CLERK
22 JUL -1 AM 9:15

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: Council Member Rogers at 7:35 PM

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

C.) **CITIZEN CITATIONS AND AWARDS**

None

D.) **CITIZEN'S FORUM**

Genaro Gonzalez, 137 West Main Street, spoke on State and local politics and the need for recreation places or a youth center in the downtown area of Vernon.

7:35 PM Citizen's Forum Recessed

F.) **PUBLIC HEARING (7:35 PM)**

PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE
"NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT SUBMISSIONS FOR 2022".

MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE CALLED THE PUBLIC HEARING TO ORDER

TOWN CLERK READ THE LEGAL NOTICE

MAYOR CHAMPAGNE AND TOWN COUNCIL RECEIVED PUBLIC COMMENT

Steven Schortman, 29 Jan Drive, inquired as to the program and its purpose. Town Administrator, Michael Purcaro, explained the program and the two businesses that applied.

Sarah Adanti of The Village for Families & Children, spoke on the parenting center and its impact on Vernon families.

Council Member Clay asked for clarification of the Council's role. Mayor Champagne spoke on the matter.

MAYOR CHAMPAGNE ADJOURNED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:41 PM

NOTE: Action to be considered in "Section K – New Business #1

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D.) CITIZEN'S FORUM (continued 7:41 PM)

Steven Schortman, 29 Jan Drive, spoke on the Vernon school system and concerns about school environments throughout the country.

Citizen's Forum ended at 7:46 PM

G.) PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION

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

- There were several grand openings:
 - The Academy of Art and Learning, located at 375 Hartford Turnpike
 - Vernon Coffee Roasters, located on Hartford Turnpike
 - MJ Hair Salon, located in the Shops at 30 on Hartford Turnpike
- Agriculture Science and Technology Students (ASTE) are taking farm to table by growing vegetables to be used in the school cafeteria. Project Homegrown is a partnership between the Vernon Public Schools Food and Nutrition Program and the ASTE program, funded by a grant from the North Central District Health Department.
- Daniels Mill received an EPA grant for \$650,000, allowing the Town to continue cleanup efforts at the former mill site, with the assistance of the University of Connecticut.
- The crumbling foundation testing program is extended through February 28, 2023, available to qualifying residents of the towns of Vernon, Ellington and Stafford. Contact Vernon Social Services for further information.
- Annual Awards Night for the Vernon Police Department was held on May 25, 2022, honoring officers and residents for heroism and lifesaving actions. Detective Thomas Van Tasel, Detective Cody Flanigan and Officer Andre Lisee were named Officer of the Year for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021 respectively. Officer Matthew Guilmette was selected "Rookie of the Year". Congratulations to all the honorees.
- July in the Sky is scheduled for July 12th with a rain date of July 13th. The event is sponsored by the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the Downtown Rockville Association. The event begins at 6:00 PM and ends with the annual fireworks display – don't miss it.
- Vernon has attained recertification at the prestigious silver level from Sustainable CT. The silver level is the highest certification - thank you to all who worked on this project.
- Change in the Mil Rate for motor vehicles is on the agenda for adjustment.
- The Memorial Day celebration was a success, thanks to the American Legion, businesses, organizations and Town of Vernon departments.
- Rockville High School graduation is scheduled for June 16, 2022, commencing at 6:00 PM.

Robert Grasis, Director Water Pollution Control, gave an update relative to the Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade. Discussion ensued.

H.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA

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

- C 1. Request the Town Council approve the tax refunds for current year totaling \$32,027.96 as outlined in the memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue.** (See memorandum dated May 19, 2022 to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue relative to same.)

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PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES SEVENTY-NINE (79) TAX REFUNDS FOR CURRENT YEAR TOTALING \$32,027.96 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED MAY 19, 2022.

- C 2. Request the Town Council approve the budget amendment requests #15, #16, #17, #18, #19 and #20 as presented.** (See budget amendment forms attached for Council review. Also see memorandum dated May 31, 2022 from Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer & Treasurer to Daniel A. Champagne, Mayor and Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUESTS, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19 AND #20 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 AS PROVIDED ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FORMS ATTACHED BY FINANCE OFFICER AND TREASURER JEFFREY A. O'NEILL.

- C 3. Request the Town Council approve the amended end date for the appointment of Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer from June 30, 2022 to March 5, 2023.** (Mr. O'Neill should have received a full four year term.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH CHAPTER IX, SECTION TWO OF THE TOWN CHARTER, ENTITLED "OFFICERS AND BOARDS APPOINTED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL, HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF JEFFREY A. O'NEILL, 14 PARK PLACE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS TOWN TREASURER, SAID **AMENDED** TERM BEGAN ON MARCH 6, 2019 AND EXPIRES ON MARCH 5, 2023.

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

J.) **PENDING BUSINESS**
None

K.) **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Request the Town Council endorse the applications for the Neighborhood Assistance Act 2022 by the Village for Families and Children and Opportunity Works Inc.** (See memorandum from Matt Hellman, Director of Social Services included in the Council packet dated May 24, 2022 relative to same. Mr. Hellman will be present to answer any questions.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY ENDORSES THE APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE ACT 2022 BY THE VILLAGE FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN AND OPPORTUNITY WORKS, INC.

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Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Tedford, made a motion to endorse the applications for The Neighborhood Assistance Act 2022 by The Village for Families and Children and Opportunity Works, Inc. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Request the Town Council approve the vehicle tax rate adjustment.** (See memorandum by Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer to Daniel A. Champagne, Mayor and Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator dated May 12, 2022.)

PROPOSED MOTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES A REVISED MOTOR VEHICLE MILL RATE OF 32.46 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2022 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, proposed a resolution to approve a revised motor vehicle mil rate of 32.46 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Mayor Daniel Champagne and Finance Officer and Treasurer, Jeffrey O'Neill, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **Request the Town Council approve the asset disposal request by the Vernon Public Schools.** (See memorandum dated May 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 VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS DISCLOSED ON THE REQUEST FOR DISPOSAL OF FIXED ASSETS FORM.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member O'Connell, made a motion to approve the disposal of assets for the Vernon Public Schools as disclosed on the request for disposal of fixed assets form. Finance Officer and Treasurer, Jeffrey O'Neill, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Request the Town Council approve the bid waiver for the purchase of the Aruba Wireless System.** (See memorandum dated May 23, 2022 from Robert Sigan, Director of Information Systems & Communication Technology to Mayor Daniel Champagne, Michael Purcaro, Town Administrator and Jeffrey O'Neill, Chief Finance Officer relative to same.)

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN CHARTER, CHAPTER 12, SECTION 9, DETERMINES THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE TOWN TO WAIVE THE BID PROCEDURE FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE **ARUBA Wi-Fi WIRELESS SYSTEM FROM ATLANTIC COMPUTING FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$60,000.00** AND FURTHER AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, proposed a resolution that it is in the best interest of the Town to waive the bid procedure for the purchase of the Aruba Wi-Fi Wireless System from Atlantic Computing for an amount not to exceed \$60,000, and further authorizes Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designed to sign any and all documents for same. Director of Information Systems & Communication Technology, Robert Sigan, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

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5. **Request the Town Council approve the waiver of interest on motor vehicle bill list number 2020-03-0077156.** (See memorandum dated May 12, 2022 from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue to the Town Council relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY WAIVES THE INTEREST ON MOTOR VEHICLE BILL LIST NUMBER 2020-03-0077156 AS PRESENTED IN THE MEMORANDUM DATED MAY 12, 2022 FROM TERRY HJARNE, TAX COLLECTOR FOR THE TOWN OF VERNON.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to waive the interest on motor vehicle bill list number 2020-03-0077156 as presented in the memorandum dated May 12, 2022 from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue, for the Town of Vernon. Terry Hjarne explained this is an informational item due to a clerical error. Mayor Champagne stated that no action was required.

M.) ACTION ON ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED
None

N.) IDENTIFICATION/ADOPTION OF ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Clay, made a motion to add an additional agenda item, Executive Session #3. Motion carried unanimously.

O.) DISCUSSION OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS AND INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

See Executive Session below.

E.) EXECUTIVE SESSION (Taken Out of Order)

8:32 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #3. Motion carried unanimously.

THE TOWN COUNCIL, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY GIVEN IN CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES §1-200, (6) (B), HEREBY GOES INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING REAL ESTATE TAX APPEAL: ***People's United Bank, N.A. F/K/A United Bank vs Town of Vernon et al***, AND INVITES MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, TOWN ATTORNEY, LOU SPADACCINI AND TOWN OF VERNON ASSESSOR, DAVID WHEELER, TO ATTEND.

8:34 PM Council Member Nieves-Matias left the meeting.

8:43 PM Executive Session #3 ended.

8:43 PM Council Member Wendus left the meeting; returned at 8:44 PM

8:43 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Tedford, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #1. Motion carried unanimously.

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 TO ATTEND.

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9:52 PM Came out of Executive Session #1. Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to extend curfew to end of business. Motion carried unanimously.

10:07 PM Council Member Rogers left the meeting; returned at 10:07 PM

10:07 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Tedford, made the following motion to go into Executive Session #2. Motion carried unanimously.

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.

10:50 PM Executive Session #2 ended.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following motion to Executive Session #1:

Motion #1

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 4.1 (B) ENTITLED "JOB DESCRIPTIONS", HEREBY ADOPTS THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PAY SCALE OF ***DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT*** EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Motion #2

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 4.1 (B) ENTITLED "JOB DESCRIPTIONS", HEREBY ADOPTS THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PAY SCALE OF ***PART-TIME FIRE ADMINISTRATOR*** EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Rogers, made the following motion to Executive Session #1:

Motion #3

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 5.0 COMPENSATION SYSTEM, HEREBY ADOPTS THE NEW PAY SCALE FOR THE POSITION OF FIRE MARSHAL.

Motion carried unanimously.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Wendus, made the following motion to Executive Session #1:

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Motion #4

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 5.0 COMPENSATION SYSTEM, HEREBY ADOPTS THE NEW PAY SCALE FOR THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT FIRE MARSHAL.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Motion #1

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH **OPPORTUNITY WORKS** TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY CLEAN UP EFFORTS IN DOWNTOWN VERNON AREA IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$8900.00, AND FURTHER AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Motion #2

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH **VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEXT STEP PROGRAM** TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY CLEAN UP EFFORTS IN DOWNTOWN VERNON AREA IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5500.00, AND FURTHER AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

Motion #3

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE **MIRACLE LEAGUE OF NORTHERN CONNECTICUT** TO DEVELOP AN ADAPTIVE/INCLUSIVE SPORTS COMPLEX FOR ALL CHILDREN, AND AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

Motion carried unanimously.

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P.) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

THE TOWN COUNCIL WAIVES THE READING OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF **MAY 17, 2022** AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Wendus, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the May 17, 2022 regular Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following motion to Executive Session #3:

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES TOWN ATTORNEY LOU SPADACCINI TO SETTLE TAX APPEAL HHB-CV21-6066466-S, CAPTIONED "PEOPLE'S UNITED BANK, N.A. F/K/A UNITED BANK VS TOWN OF VERNON ET AL, THE PROPERTY ADDRESS COMMONLY KNOWN AS 25 PARK STREET, MAP 40, BLOCK 0107, LOT 00005, FOR TAXES ON THE GRAND LIST OF OCTOBER 1, 2020 FOR THE ASSESSED VALUE OF \$490,000 OR THE 100% FAIR MARKET VALUE OF \$700,000 AND TO ADJUST ASSESSMENT AND TAX BILL FOR THE 2020 GRAND LIST.

Motion carried unanimously.

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

None

R.) Adjourn (10:56 PM)

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member O'Connell, made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

Received: June 15, 2022

Approved: June 21, 2022



Karen C. Daigle
Recording Secretary