

Draft Minutes
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL – 14 PARK PLACE – 3RD FLOOR, VERNON, CONNECTICUT
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023
7:30 P.M.

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VERNON TOWN CLERK
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Mayor Daniel A. 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, Ann Letendre, Maryann Levesque, Brian Motola, Ariana Nieves-Matias, John O’Connell, Teri-Lynn Rogers, Jim Tedford, Michael Wendus
- Absent: Nonee
- Entered During Meeting: None
- Also Present: Mayor Daniel A. Champagne, Town Administrator Michael Purcaro, Recording Secretary Meriline Sarkar

C.) **CITIZEN CITATIONS AND AWARDS:** None

D.) **CITIZENS FORUM:**

- Genaro Gonzalez, 133 West Main Street, Vernon, spoke on the upcoming Town election.
- Dan Hayden, President of the Civil War Museum, 14 Park Place, Vernon, spoke on the war museum events, satisfactory attendance throughout the summer, and thanked the Council Members for their support to the Museum. On the last weekend of September, the enactment of the Living History Day event is coming up. Dan Hyden invited everyone to come.
- Maryann Levesque, spoke on the needs of the Greenway Volunteers and informed the council on the inquiries received from the public regarding Pickle Ball Court.

F.) **PUBLIC HEARING:** None

G.) **PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION**

Mayor Daniel A. Champagne updated the Town Council on various topics.

Update by Director Michelle Hill, Youth Services on activities in her department.

- A moment of silence was observed in honor of the memory of the former Mayor Tony Muro. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne spoke on the tradition of planting a memorial tree in honor of passing of the Town of Vernon Mayors. He’ll update on the location of the tree planting.
- The ceremony of the proclamation for Daughters of the American Revolution were held.
- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne updated the Town Council on various topics.
- The Town of Vernon Police Department has been awarded a grant for \$21,000, approved by the Town Council in May of 2023, to fund the purchase of four state-of-the-art eco-friendly electric bikes for the police to use for patrol and community policing. The grant was obtained from the

Gary Sinise Foundation, by Nichole Greco, our Project and Grant Coordinator working with Police Captain Lucas Gallant. The grant covers 100% of the total purchase cost of the four bikes.

- The Town of Vernon's Office of Emergency and Risk Management and the Vernon C.E.R.T. have partnered with the Friends of the Saxony Dog Park to offer for the first time ever, free pet CPR and first aid training to Vernon residents. Training is being held at VCMS and the event is so popular it filled up in the first week. The team is exploring more training opportunities for our residents.
- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne invited everyone to join on 9/20/2023 for the Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening of the Miracle Field located at the rear of Northeast School. The event begins at 4:00 PM. All are welcome.
- Vernon Fire Department held their annual picnic on Saturday, 9/16/2023 at Camp Newhoca. The event was full of fun, food and activities for the membership and their families. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne thanked all Volunteer Fire Fighters for their willingness to protect and serve the residents of Vernon.
- The ceremony of the 10th Anniversary RHS Athletic Hall of Fame Event took place on Sunday, 9/17/2023, at Rockville High School Auditorium. The Class of 2023 included five inductees: Lisa Aschenbrenner (Class of 1988) for volleyball and softball; Carol Hartmann (Class of 1974) as a coach for girl's tennis from 1998-2022; Jamie Sutherland IV (Class of 1996), ice hockey; Bonnie Tierney (Class of 1973) badminton, basketball, gymnastics and softball; AND Gregory Wolniec (Class of 1991) football and basketball. Mr. Wolniec is currently coaching at Rockville High School.
- This summer was not one for outdoor activities with all the rain, but, the Parks Department managed to reschedule and hold all the concerts as planned. 2023 Concert Series has become an annual event that residents look forward to.
- Mr. Sparkle partnered with Valvoline Oil to open a joint location on Route 83. The Mr. Sparkle was renovated and a new Valvoline Oil business was opened. The owners are hoping to create a one stop shopping location for those who travel Route 83. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne congratulates to Paul and Michael Ferri on their new venture.
- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne updated everyone that the Vernon Public Schools will Host a Job Fair this coming Thursday, September 21, 2023 from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm in the library-media center at Rockville High School, 70 Loveland Hill Road, Vernon. There are a variety of open positions including: Biology Teacher, Paraeducators, Secretary, HVAC technician, School Climate Specialist, Bus Drivers, Substitutes and Cafeteria workers. Dr. Joseph Macary invited everyone interested to attend.
- The Town of Vernon is planning an approximately \$1.35 million project to enhance the sidewalk network in Vernon by providing connections between existing sections of sidewalk with the goal of increasing pedestrian safety and convenience. The Town is anticipating a Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program Grant from the Department of Transportation that will fund the construction. The grant will be administered by the Capital Region Council of Governments.
- Enhancing pedestrian safety by expanding sidewalks has been an ongoing effort over the past several years. This project will add significantly to the existing sidewalk network and make traveling along busy roads safer and more convenient for the residents.
- Five locations have been selected: (1) South Street from Hartford Turnpike to Henry Park; (2) Hartford Turnpike near VCMS, from the Baptist Church property along the front of VCMS continuing down Dart Road; (3) Talcottville Road near Naek Road; (4) Two segments on Dobson Road and (5) Lakes Street from Lake Street School to Montauk Drive. A public information meeting will be held on Monday, September 25, 2023 beginning at 6:30 PM in the Town Council Chambers. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne welcomed everyone join.

- Director Michelle Hill, Youth Services on activities in her department presented the program details, and Monthly report to the Council. She also updated the Council on her staff. She answered questions from the Council Members.

H.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA

Note: Due to a clerical error, the body of the proposed motion of item C-2 didn't list budget amendment #39, although it is stated in the sentence above on the agenda. It was the intent to include and approve budget amendment #39.

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

- C 1.** Request the Town Council approve the tax refunds for prior and current year taxes as outlined in the memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue. (See memorandum dated September 11, 2023 to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES FOUR (4) TAX REFUNDS FOR PRIOR YEARS TOTALING \$551.24 AND SIXTY (60) REFUNDS FOR CURRENT YEAR TOTALING \$15,381.30 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED SEPTEMBER 11, 2023.

- C 2.** Request the Town Council approve budget amendment requests #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40 and #41 for FY 23 relative to year end reconciliation as submitted by Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer. (See memorandum dated September 12, 2023 to Mayor Daniel A. Champagne and Town Administrator Michael J. Purcaro from Jeffrey A. O'Neill, Finance Officer and Treasurer relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

RESOLVED, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUESTS #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #40 AND #41 FOR FY23 AS PROVIDED ON THE BUDGET AMENDMENT FORMS SUBMITTED BY FINANCE OFFICER AND TREASURER JEFFREY A. O'NEILL.

- C 3.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Sheila Newell, (U), 180 Taylor Street, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, said term to commence on September 20, 2023 and expires June 30, 2026. (A copy of Ms. Newell's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO VERNON'S CHARTER CHAP. XV, SEC. 3; EST. 03-02-1982, THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF SHEILA NEWELL, (U), 180 TAYLOR STREET, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SAID TERM TO BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 AND EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 4.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Belinda Fortin, (U) 3 Bridle Path Lane, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee,

said term to commence September 20, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2026. (A copy of Ms. Fortin's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO VERNON'S CHARTER CHAPTER XV, SEC. 3; EST. 03-02-1982, THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF BELINDA FORTIN, (U), 3 BRIDLE PATH LANE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SAID TERM TO BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 AND EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- I.) **DISCUSSION OF PULLED CONSENT ITEMS:** None
- J.) **PENDING BUSINESS:** None
- K.) **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Request the Town Council approve the resolution authorizing the Town of Vernon to enter into an agreement with the State of Connecticut for the Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey. (See memorandum from Robert Grasis, Director, Vernon Water Pollution Control to Mayor Daniel A. Champagne dated September 11, 2023 relative to same.)

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE TOWN OF VERNON TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. IN FURTHERANCE OF THIS RESOLUTION, MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR DULY AUTHORIZED AGENT IS AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO AND SIGN SAID CONTRACTS ON BEHALF OF THE VERNON WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY. THE MAYOR OR HIS DESIGNEE IS FURTHER AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND EXECUTE SUCH OTHER DOCUMENTS AS MAY BE REQUIRED BY THE STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTION WITH SAID CONTRACTS AND TO EXECUTE ANY AMENDMENTS, RECISSIONS AND REVISIONS.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or duly agent to enter into and sign said contracts on behalf of the Vernon Water Pollution Control Authority. The Mayor or his designee is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the State or Federal Government in connection with said contracts and to execute any amendments, recissions and revisions.
 - Discussion ensued.
 - The motion carried unanimously.
2. Request the Town Council authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designee to execute the paperwork to make application for and receive Local Prevention Council Grant funds in the amount of \$5,342.00. (See memorandum dated September 11, 2023 from Michelle Hill, Youth Services Director to Michael J. Purcaro relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS TO APPLY FOR AND RECEIVE THE LOCAL PREVENTION COUNCIL GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,342.00 ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN OF VERNON, YOUTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Nieves-Matias, made a motion to authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designee to execute any and all documents to apply for and receive the local Prevention Council Grant Funds in the amount of \$5,342.00 on behalf of the Town of Vernon, Youth Services Department.
 - Director Michelle Hill, Youth Services Department, spoke on the use of the grant and answer questions.
 - The motion carried unanimously.
3. Request the Town Council authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designee to execute the paperwork to make application for and receive the 2024 Highway Safety, Drug Recognition Instructor Support Grant through the Connecticut Department of Transportation. (See memorandum dated September 6, 2023 from Police Chief John Kelley to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS TO APPLY FOR AND RECEIVE THE 2024 HIGHWAY SAFETY, DRUG RECOGNITION INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT GRANT THROUGH THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE AMOUNT \$31,848.36 ON BEHALF OF THE VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designee to execute any and all documents to apply for and receive the 2024 Highway Safety, Drug Recognition Instructor Support Grant through the Connecticut Department of Transportation in the amount \$31,848.36 on behalf of the Vernon Police Department.
- John Kelley, Chief of Police, explained the Drug Recognition Instructor training program and the need for the department and answered the questions from the council.
- Lt. Luke Gallant, further explained the program.
- Discussion ensued.
- The motion carried unanimously.

- L.) **INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:** None
- M.) **ACTION ON ORDINANCE (S) 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 ON *August 15, 2023* AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Rogers, made a motion to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the Regular Town Council meeting on *August 15, 2023*. The motion carried unanimously.

E.) **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 8:17 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made the motion to go into Executive Session #1. The Motion carried unanimously.

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.

- 8:25 PM Executive Session #1 ended.
- 8:25 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made the motion to go into Executive Session #2. The Motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2

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.

- 8:30 PM Executive Session #2 ended.
- 8:30 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made the motion to go into Executive Session #3. The Motion carried unanimously.

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

- 8:38 PM Executive Session #3 ended.
- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush made the following motion to Executive Session #1

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF VERNON AND THE MAPLE STREET CONDOMINIUMS AS PRESENTED, AND FURTHER AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

- The motion carried unanimously.
- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque made the following motion to Executive Session #2

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE TRANSFER OF PROPERTY FROM THE TOWN OF VERNON TO ROBERT AND SHERYL PAQUETTE AS PRESENTED AS PART OF THE WINDERMERE FIELDS BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENTS, AND FURTHER AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO SIGN ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS FOR SAME.

- The motion carried unanimously.
- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Rogers made the following motion to Executive Session #3

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE USE OF ARPA FUNDS TO SUPPORT THE RENOVATION OF THE CITIZEN BLOCK IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$580,800.00.

- The motion carried unanimously.

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

1. Monthly Report – August, 2023 from the Town Clerk as submitted by Karen C. Daigle, Town Clerk.

R.) ADJOURNMENT (8:40 PM)

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Nieves-Matias, made motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Meriline Sarkar
Recording Secretary