

MINUTES
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL – 14 PARK PLACE – 3RD FLOOR
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2023 – 7:30 PM

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

A) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Recited

B) **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Council Members Laurie Abernathy, Laura Bush, Julie Clay, Maryann Levesque, Brian Motola, Terilynn Rogers, Jesse Schoolnik, Andrew Tedford, Jim Tedford, Michael Wendus and Phillis Winkler

Absent:

Entered During Meeting:

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

ADOPTION OF TOWN COUNCIL RULES

PROPOSED MOTION:

PURSUANT TO CHARTER, CHAPTER V, SECTION 4, ENTITLED "PROCEDURES", THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE ADOPTION OF THE 2023-2025 TOWN COUNCIL RULES AS PRESENTED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, proposed a motion to approve the adoption of the 2023-2025 Town Council Rules as presented. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEMPORE

PROPOSED MOTION:

PURSUANT TO CHARTER, CHAPTER V, SECTION 2, ENTITLED "PRESIDING OFFICER", THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES THE ELECTION OF _____, MAYOR PRO TEMPORE FOR THE 2023-2025 SESSION OF THE VERNON TOWN COUNCIL.

Council Member Clay, seconded by Council Member Rogers, proposed a motion to approve the election of Brian Motola as Mayor Pro Tempore for the 2023-2025 session of the Vernon Town Council. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

ADOPTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE 2024 AS REQUIRED BY FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

PROPOSED MOTION:

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE FOIA 2024 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE AS PRESENTED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE TO THE TOWN COUNCIL DATED NOVEMBER 15, 2023.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, proposed a motion to approve the FOIA 2024 Town Council meeting schedule as presented. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

C.) CITIZEN'S FORUM

None

D.) EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

E.) PUBLIC HEARING

None

F.) PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION

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

- Council members will begin receiving Department Head Reports in December via email. The reports will arrive before the second Town Council meeting for each month.
- As a Council Member, please note the Town Charter requires that members resign from any other elected or appointed Board, Commission or Committee while you are elected to the Town Council.
- Before the December 5, 2023 meeting, photos of town councilors will be taken both individually and in a group. Please arrive by 6:00 PM. These photos will be posted on the Town Council section of our website.
- The 2024 Freedom of Information dates for the Town Council meetings are in the packet. Budget meeting dates will be on a future agenda for approval.
- Council Members are asked to complete the 2023-2025 Town Council information form and return to Diane Wheelock before leaving this meeting.
- Please notify Administration@vernon-ct.gov if one is unable to attend a Town Council meeting.
- The Kidsafe retaining wall is complete. The funding was from the CDBG Small Cities Grant, with a total cost of \$150,000 and a last draw down of \$19,188.23.
- Katie McGray, Chief Medical Officer for Vernon EMS, successfully petitioned the North Central EMS Council for a 5th ambulance license. The application now goes to the State Health Department for final approval.
- At the next Council meeting, the Council will be briefed on all pending contracts and projects in Executive Session.
- Three members are being appointed to the Fair Rent Commission, while discussions with potential nominees are ongoing.
- Town Administrator Purcaro and Social Services Director Matthew Hellman have recently become Certified Mediators through the Quinnipiac School of Law. This will enhance the town's capabilities in town business negotiations, labor contracts and fair housing commission matters.
- The Town of Vernon is sponsoring a second Pet CPR and First Aid training course, specifically for our First Responders.
- Dr. Joseph Macary, our Superintendent of Schools, has been named "2024 Connecticut Superintendent of the Year" by the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. Dr. Macary has many accomplishments including two blue ribbon schools and exceptional academic rankings by the State Department of Education. Congratulations Dr, Macary!
- Vernon Energy Improvement District Board, in partnership with Town Administration, is sponsoring a "PURA-101 Workshop" for members of the Vernon Senior Center on December 12th from 11 to 12 noon. Representatives from the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority will help members compare electric rates and better understand their energy use and utility bills.

- Vernon’s Office of Emergency and Risk Management, in partnership with Vernon Police, Fire and EMS, is sponsoring a Health and Safety Day at the Vernon Senior Center for its members on January 24th from 12 to 4 pm.

G.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Jim Tedford, made a motion to move the Consent Agenda. Council Member Motola pulled C-1. Consent items C-2 through C-7 passed unanimously.

- C 2. Request the Town Council approve the reappointment of Mayor Daniel A. Champagne as a Director for the Bolton Lakes Regional Water Pollution Control Authority, said term to commence November 13, 2023 and expires on November 10, 2025.** (Mayor Champagne’s appointment runs with his term as Mayor.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 242 THE VERNON TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES THE REAPPOINTMENT OF DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE, MAYOR, 14 PARK PLACE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT TO THE BOLTON LAKES REGIONAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY FOR A TERM BEGINNING NOVEMBER 13, 2023 AND EXPIRES ON NOVEMBER 10, 2025.

- C 3. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne’s appointment of Diana Drummond, (R), 31 Oakmoor Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Conservation Commission, said term to commence on November 22, 2023 and expires June 30, 2026.** (A copy of Ms. Drummond’s resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO TOWN OF VERNON ORDINANCE # 189 – TOWN CODE SECTION 10-91 & 10-92, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE’S APPOINTMENT OF DIANA DRUMMOND, (R), 31 OAKMOOR DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION, SAID TERM TO BEGIN NOVEMBER 22, 2023 AND EXPIRES ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 4. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne’s appointment of Amanda Calve, (U), 12 Estelle Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, said term to commence November 22, 2023 and expires June 30, 2028.** (A copy of Ms. Calve’s resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SEC. 2, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE’S APPOINTMENT OF AMANDA CALVE, (U), 12 ESTELLE DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS, FOR A TERM BEGINNING ON NOVEMBER 22, 2023 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2028.

- C 5. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne’s appointment of Kevin Santini, (U), 1031 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Fair Rent Commission, said term commences on November 22, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2025.** (A copy of Mr. Santini’s resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 321 "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAIR RENT COMMISSION" THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF KEVIN SANTINI, (U), 1031 HARTFORD TURNPIKE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON NOVEMBER 22, 2023 AND EXPIRES ON JUNE 30, 2025.

- C 6. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Mary Gordon, (U), 41 Hayes Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Fair Rent Commission, said term commences on November 22, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2025.** (A copy of Ms. Gordon's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 321 "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAIR RENT COMMISSION" THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF MARY GORDON, (U), 41 HAYES DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON NOVEMBER 22, 2023 AND EXPIRES ON JUNE 30, 2025.

- C 7. Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Brian "Casey" Edwards, (U), 121 Brooklyn Street, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Fair Rent Commission, said term to commence on November 22, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2025.** (A copy of Mr. Edwards' resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 321 "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAIR RENT COMMISSION" THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF BRIAN "CASEY" EDWARDS, (U), 121 BROOKLYN STREET, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON NOVEMBER 22, 2023 AND EXPIRES ON JUNE 30, 2025.

H.) DISCUSSION OF PULLED CONSENT ITEMS

- C 1. Request the Town Council approve tax refunds for prior and current years.** (See copy of a memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue to Mayor Daniel A. Champagne dated November 8, 2023 included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES SIXTEEN (16) PRIOR YEAR TAX REFUNDS TOTALLING \$3,919.53 AND THIRTY-SIX (36) CURRENT YEAR REFUNDS TOTALLING \$9,290.70 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE DATED NOVEMBER 8, 2023.

Mayor Champagne explained the tax refund process to the new Council Members.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to approve 16

prior year tax refunds totaling \$3,919.53 and 36 current year refunds totaling \$9,290.70. Motion carried unanimously.

I.) **PENDING BUSINESS**
None

J.) **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Request the Town Council reaffirm Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Attorney Louis A. Spadaccini as Town Attorney.** (See Attorney Spadaccini's resume attached.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH CHARTER CHAPTER XI, SECTION 5, ENTITLED "OTHER OFFICERS", HEREBY AFFIRMS MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF LOUIS A. SPADACCINI, ESQ., AS TOWN ATTORNEY.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to appoint Louis A. Spadaccini Esq., as Town Attorney.

2. **Request the Town Council authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne to submit on behalf of the Office of the Fire Marshal a grant to the Connecticut Fair Plan, Anti-Arson Committee in the amount of \$500.00.** (See memorandum from Fire Marshal, Daniel Wasilewski dated October 26, 2023 to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE TO MAKE APPLICATION ON BEHALF OF THE OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL, THE CONNECTICUT FAIR PLAN, ANTI-ARSON COMMITTEE GRANT REQUESTING \$500.00 FUNDING FOR THREE SETS OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT, 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, made a motion to authorize Mayor Champagne to make application on behalf of the Office of the Fire Marshal, the Connecticut Fair Plan, Anti-Arson Committee Grant requesting \$500 funding for 3 sets of safety equipment, and further authorizes Mayor Champagne or his designee to sign any and all documents for same. Daniel Wasilewski, Fire Marshal and Fire Administrator, spoke and answered questions. Motion carried unanimously.

Stephen Eppler, Fire Chief, and Alan Arel, Asst. Fire Chief, introduced themselves to the new Town Council members.

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 **OCTOBER 3, 2023** AND MOVES TO APPROVE SAID MINUTES.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Wendus, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the October 3, 2023 regular Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

THE TOWN COUNCIL WAIVES THE READING OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON **OCTOBER 17, 2023** AND MOVES TO APPROVE SAID MINUTES.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Wendus, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023 regular Town Council meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

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

None

Q.) ADJOURNMENT (7:49 PM)

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

Received:

Approved:

Karen C. Daigle
Recording Secretary