

June 6, 2023

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**APPROVED MINUTES**  
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
TOWN HALL – 14 PARK PLACE – 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR  
VERNON, CONNECTICUT  
**TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2023**  
7:30 P.M.

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

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

**B.) ROLL CALL:**

- Present: 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: None
- 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, West Main Street, Vernon, spoke on Child Support laws.

**F.) PUBLIC HEARING:**

PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENTS AND ANSWER QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO "ORDINANCE NO. AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAIR RENT COMMISSION". (A COPY OF SAID ORDINANCE IS INCLUDED FOR COUNCIL REVIEW.)

MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE TO CALL THE PUBLIC HEARING TO ORDER

- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne called the Public Hearing to order at 7:37 PM.

TOWN CLERK READS THE LEGAL NOTICE

- Town Clerk Karen Daigle read the Legal Notice as published.

MAYOR CHAMPAGNE AND TOWN COUNCIL RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENT

- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne welcomed public comments. John O'Connell, Bill Cambell, Julie Clay, Mike Wendus, Genaro Gonzalez, West Main Street, Vernon, Brian Edwards, 5 Pinewood Lane, Enfield, Robert Pouillios, 144 Phoenix St, Vernon, spoke on opposing the Ordinance of Establishment of a Fair Rent Commission.
- Ann Letendre, Aiana Nieves-Matius and Laura Bush spoke in favor of the Ordinance of Establishment of a Fair Rent Commission.
- Maryann Levesque spoke on other Town committees.

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ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING

- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne adjourned the Public Hearing at 8:01pm.

NOTE: Action to be considered in "Section M-Action on Ordinance (s) Previously Presented.

Mayor Champagne closed Citizens Forum

**G.) PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION**

Mayor Daniel A. Champagne to update the Town Council on various topics.

- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne reminded all on the upcoming Town events and encouraged everyone to attend.
  1. **Miracle Field Groundbreaking** – June 15<sup>th</sup> 3PM Northeast School (parking behind the school)
  2. **2023 RHS Graduation** – June 14<sup>th</sup> 6PM Rockville HS Courtyard. Tickets and parking passes were distributed at the last Town Council meeting.
  3. **July in the Sky** – July 11<sup>th</sup> Henry/Central Parks Beginning at 6PM – Fireworks at dark.
  4. **National Night Out** – August 1<sup>st</sup> 5-8PM in the former Ladd and Hall parking lot. This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- Council Member Levesque informed the Council of the Friends of Valley Falls Open House

**H.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA:** Council Member Motola moved the Consent Agenda as written, seconded by Council Member Bush, and 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 May 30, 2023 to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue relative to same.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES ONE (1) PRIOR YEAR TAX REFUND TOTALING \$83.98 AND SIX (6) CURRENT YEAR TAX REFUNDS TOTALING \$4,203.31 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED MAY 30, 2023.

- C 2.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of John Lillis, (U), 21 Indian Trail, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Pension Board, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and expires June 30, 2026. (A copy of Mr. Lillis' resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO THE TOWN OF VERNON CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SECTION 9, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF JOHN LILLIS, (U), 21 INDIAN TRAIL, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE PENSION BOARD, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDS ON JUNE 30, 2026.

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- C 3.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of Gary Ruchin, (R), 75 Risley Road, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Pension Board, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2026. (A copy of Mr. Ruchin's resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO THE TOWN OF VERNON CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SECTION 9, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF GARY RUCHIN, (R), 75 RISLEY ROAD, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE PENSION BOARD, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDS ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 4.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of Joseph R. Miller, (R), 27 Tallwood Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Pension Board, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and ends on June 30, 2026. (A copy of Mr. Miller's resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO THE TOWN OF VERNON CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SECTION 9, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF JOSEPH R. MILLER, (R), 27 TALLWOOD DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE PENSION BOARD, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDS ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 5.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of Robert B. Hurd, (R), 7 Rheel Street, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Building Code Board of Appeals, said term to commence July 1, 2023 and ends June 30, 2026. (A copy of Mr. Hurd's resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO TOWN OF VERNON CHARTER CHAPTER VIII, SECTIONS 4 AND 6; C.G.S. §29-266, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF ROBERT B. HURD, (R), 7 RHEEL STREET, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE BUILDING CODE BOARD OF APPEALS, SAID TERM TO BEGIN ON JULY 1, 2023 AND EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 6.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of Janet C. DiTarando, (U), 1121 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee, said term to commence July 1, 2023 and expires June 30, 2026. (A copy of Ms. DiTarando'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 REAPPOINTMENT OF JANET C. DITARANDO, (U), VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SAID TERM TO BEGIN ON JULY 1, 2023 AND EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 7.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of Sheila Dunn, (U), 32 Kevin Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2026. (A copy of Ms. Dunn's resume is included for Town Council review.)

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**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO VERNON'S CHARTER CHAP. XV, SEC. 3; EST. 03-02-1982, THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF SHEILA DUNN, (U), 32 KEVIN DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A MEMBER OF THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SAID TERM TO BEGIN ON JULY 1, 2023 AND EXPIRE ON JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 8.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Kelly Ann Sorrow, (U), 22 Vernwood Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Human Services Advisory Commission, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2025. ( A copy of Ms. Sorrow's resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO CHARTER CHAPTER XV, SEC. 3, 05-02-1989 TOWN RESOLUTION VOL. 24, PAGE 382 AS AMENDED /VOL. 37 PAGE 266 AND TOWN COUNCIL RESOLUTION DATED 02-19-2002, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF KELLY ANN SORROW, (U), 22 VERNWOOD DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT, AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION FOR A TERM BEGINNING JULY 1, 2023 AND EXPIRES ON JUNE 30, 2025.

- C 9.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of William Francis, (R), 41 Pinnacle Road, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Board of Assessment Appeals, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and expires on June 30, 2026. (A copy of Mr. Francis' resume is included for Council review. An updated resume has been requested from Mr. Francis)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO C.G.S. § 7-105 AND CHARTER CHAPTER IX, SECTION 3, THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF WILLIAM FRANCIS, (R), AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS FOR A TERM BEGINNING ON JULY 1, 2023 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2026.

- C 10.** Request the Town Council approve reappointment of Thomas Aitkin, (R), Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's 88 Hatch Hill Road, Vernon, Connecticut, as a regular member of the Energy Improvement District Board, said term to commence on July 1, 2023 and expires June 30, 2028. (A copy of Mr. Aitkin's resume is included for Council review.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

PURSUANT TO THE TOWN OF VERNON ORDINANCE # 292 AND TOWN CODE SECTION 3(A), THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF THOMAS AITKIN, (R), 88 HATCH HILL ROAD, VERNON, CONNECTICUT, AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE ENERGY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD, SAID TERM TO COMMENCE ON JULY 1, 2023 AND EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2028.

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

**J.) PENDING BUSINESS: None**

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**K.) NEW BUSINESS**

1. Request the Town Council authorize, the purchase of an inground vehicle lift for the Vernon Police Department maintenance garage. (See memorandum dated May 18, 2023 from Eric Jensen, Fleet Maintenance Supervisor to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator and Dwight Ryniewicz, Director of Public Works relative to same.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL AUTHORIZES THE PURCHASE OF A VEHICLE LIFT FOR THE VERNON POLICE DEPARTMENT MAINTENANCE GARAGE FROM OMER USA INC., IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$13,816.60 AND ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION FROM THE GENERAL FUND.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to authorize the purchase of a vehicle lift for the Vernon Police Department Maintenance Garage from Omer USA Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$13,816.60 and additional appropriation from the general fund.
- Dwight Ryniewicz, Director of. Public Works, Mayor Daniel A. Champagne and Greg Lesco of Public Works spoke to explain the nature of equipment needed and answered questions. Discussion ensued.
- The motion carried unanimously.

2. Request the Town Council approve a general wage increase (GWI) for all non-union employees at the Town of Vernon. (See memorandum from Mayor Daniel A. Champagne to the Vernon Town Council dated May 31, 2023 relative to same.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL CONSISTENT WITH THE TOWN OF VERNON PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 3.7, 3.19 AND 5.3 (b) (3), HEREBY AUTHORIZES THAT ALL NONUNION FULL TIME, PERMANENT PART-TIME AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES BE GIVEN A GENERAL WAGE INCREASE OF TWO (2%) PERCENT, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made motion to authorize that all nonunion full time, permanent part-time and part-time employees be given a general wage increase of two (2%) percent, effective July 1, 2023.
- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne, spoke to the Council.
- The motion carried unanimously.

3. Request the Town Council approves the placement of properties totaling \$215,702.45 on the Suspense Tax Ledger. ( See memorandum from Terry Harne, Collector of Revenue dated May 30, 2023 to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator relative to same.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

BY THE AUTHORITY GRANTED IN THE CONNECTICUT STATE STATUTES SECTION 12-165, ENTITLED "MUNICIPAL SUSPENSE TAX BOOK", THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVES THE PLACEMENT OF PROPERTIES TOTALING \$215,702.45 CONTAINED ON THE SUSPENSE TAX LEDGER REPORT, AS PROVIDED BY(TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE, DATED MAY, 2023, ONTO THE SUSPENSE TAX LEDGER.

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- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to approve the placement of properties totaling \$215,702.45 on the Suspense Tax Ledger.
- Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue, spoke and answered questions. Discussion ensued.
- The motion carried unanimously.

L.) **INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:** None

M.) **ACTION ON ORDINANCE (S) PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED**

**Action on proposed entitled "Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, An Ordinance entitled "Establishment of a Fair Rent Commission".** (See the Ordinance attached for the Public Hearing. A number will be assigned once the Ordinance has passed Town Council vote.)

**PROPOSED MOTION**

THE TOWN COUNCIL CONSISTENT WITH CHAPTER V, SECTION 4 & 6 OF THE VERNON TOWN CHARTER, HEREBY MOVES THE FOLLOWING ORDINANCE "ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_, AND ORDINANCE ENTITLED "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAIR RENT COMMISSION."

- Council Member Bush moves the following Ordinance "Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, and Ordinance entitled "Establishment Of A Fair Rent Commission," seconded by Council Member Levesque.
- Mayor Daniel A. Champagne and Attorney Spadaccini spoke and answered Town Council Members questions regarding the Establishment of a Fair Rent Commission. Discussion ensued.
- Council Member Clay left the meeting at 8:47PM and rejoined at 8:48PM
- Council Member Wendus left the meeting at 8:54PM and rejoined at 8:55PM
- Council Member Rogers left the meeting at 9:04PM and rejoined at 9:06PM
- Council Member Tedford left the meeting at 9:15PM and rejoined at 9:17PM
- At 9:17 PM, Mayor Daniel A. Champagne announced a recess.
- At 9:29 PM, the meeting resumed.
- The motion carried with 7 in favor, 2 in opposition, Council Members Clay and Campbell, and 2 in abstention, Council Members Motola and Wendus.

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 MAY 18, 2023 AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the Regular Town Council Meeting on May 18, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

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

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E.) **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** (Taken out of order)

- At 9:31 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made the motion to go into Executive Session. The 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 AND DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

- At 9:47 PM Executive Session ended.

**MOTION**

PURSUANT TO THE PRESENTATION MADE TO THE TOWN COUNCIL ON JUNE 6, 2023 THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES AN ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT BUILDING OFFICIAL POSITION AND FUNDING FOR SAME.

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Wendus made the motion to authorize an additional assistant Building Official position and funding for same. The motion carried unanimously.

R.) **ADJOURNMENT:** (9:48 PM)

- Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously at 9:48pm.

Received: June 13, 2023

Approved: June 20, 2023

Meriline Sarkar

Recording Secretary



Karen C. Daigle

Town Clerk