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Draft Minutes
VERNON TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
TOWN HALL – 14 PARK PLACE – 3RD FLOOR
VERNON, CONNECTICUT
TUESDAY, February 20, 2024
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: Council Members Laurie Abernathy, Laura B. Bush, Bill Dauphin, Maryann Levesque, Brian R. Motola, John B. O’Connell, Jesse Schoolnik, Andrew J. Tedford, Jim Tedford, Michael D. Wendus, Phyllis Winkler
- Absent: Terilynn Rogers
- 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 recycling and other topics.
- David Howey, 55 Grove St. spoke on the Vernon Housing Authority and implore that they do not forget the disabled.
- Citizen’s Forum ended at 7:41 PM

F.) PUBLIC HEARING: None

G.) PRESENTATIONS BY THE ADMINISTRATION

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

1. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne reminded that the Town of Vernon is continuing to look for people interested in the America 250 Celebration. If anyone is interested please call the Mayor’s Office.
2. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne informed that this morning Vernon had a ceremony to swear-in two new Police Officers Jacob Ruwe and Gregory Webster. In the coming days these two officers will enter the Academy for their formal training.
3. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne also informed that today the Department of Public Works installed another set of Solar Powered Crosswalk lights to assist pedestrians as they cross the road. This is the sixth pair to be installed in Vernon. Today the lights were installed at the crossing on West Road.
4. Mayor Daniel A. Champagne reminded that the Rockville High School Musical Theater Company presents “Mamma Mia”, the hit musical featuring the music of ABBA. Opening Night is Friday, March 1st 7:00 PM, with additional shows on Saturday, March 2nd at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM with the final

show on March 3rd at 2:00 PM. The tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. Tickets can be purchased in advance on the Town of Vernon website vernon-ct.gov or at the door.

H.) ACTION ON CONSENT AGENDA

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

- C 1.** Request the Town Council approve the tax refunds for current year taxes as outlined in the memorandum from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue. (See memorandum dated February 8, 2024 to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator from Terry Hjarne, Collector of Revenue relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES TEN (10) REFUNDS FOR CURRENT YEAR TOTALING \$6351.68 AS OUTLINED IN THE MEMORANDUM FROM TERRY HJARNE, COLLECTOR OF REVENUE TO MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR DATED FEBRUARY 8, 2024.

- C 2.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's reappointment of Steve Wakefield, (R), 152 Brookview Drive, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Vernon Housing Authority, said term to commence on February 29, 2024 and expires February 28, 2029. (A copy of Mr. Wakefield's resume is included for Council review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 8, SECTION 5 OF THE VERNON TOWN CHARTER THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S REAPPOINTMENT OF STEVE WAKEFIELD, (R), 152 BROOKVIEW DRIVE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE VERNON HOUSING AUTHORITY, SAID TERM TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 29, 2024 AND EXPIRES FEBRUARY 28, 2029.

- C 3.** Request the Town Council approve Mayor Daniel A. Champagne's appointment of Cara Clay, (R), 631 Talcottville Road, Vernon, Connecticut as a regular member of the Fair Rent Commission said term to commence on December 6, 2023 and expires June 30, 2024. (A copy of Ms. Clay's resume is included for Council review.) (At the December 5, 2023 meeting Ms. Clay's term was incorrectly listed as June 30, 2025.)

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 CARA CLAY, (R), 631 TALCOTTVILLE ROAD, VERNON, CONNECTICUT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE FAIR RENT COMMISSION SAID TERM TO COMMENCED ON DECEMBER 6, 2023 AND EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2024.

I.) DISCUSSION OF PULLED CONSENT ITEMS: None

J.) PENDING BUSINESS: None

K.) NEW BUSINESS

1. Request the Town Council approve the application and receipt by the Vernon Social Services Department for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Community Challenge Flagship Grant. (See memorandum dated February 12, 2024 from Nichole Greco, Projects and Grants Coordinator 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 THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR AND RECEIVE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED PERSONS (AARP) COMMUNITY CHALLENGE FLAGSHIP GRANT FUNDS FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$10,000.00.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designee to execute the necessary documents to make application for and receive American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Community Challenge Flagship Grant Funds for the Social Service Department in the amount of \$10,000.00.

Matt Hellman, Social Services Director, spoke to the Town Council and answered questions from the Council Members. Nichole Greco, Projects and Grants Coordinator, spoke and answered questions regarding the selection of American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Community Challenge Flagship Grant Funds for the Social Service Department. Discussion ensued.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Request the Town Council approve the application and receipt of the State of Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Recreational Trails Grant on behalf of Vernon Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the Vernon Greenways and Hop River Trail.-(See memorandum from Nichole Greco, Projects and Grants Coordinator to Michael J. Purcaro, Town Administrator dated February 12, 2024 relative to same.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY AUTHORIZES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE OR HIS DESIGNEE TO EXECUTE THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO MAKE APPLICATION FOR AND RECEIVE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$14,000.00, ON BEHALF OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AND IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VERNON GREENWAYS AND HOP RIVER TRAIL.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member O'Connell, made a motion to authorize Mayor Daniel A. Champagne or his designee to execute the necessary documents to make application for and receive State of Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Recreational Trails Grant in the amount of \$14,000.00, on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department and in partnership with the Vernon Greenways and Hop River Trail.

Martin Sitler, Parks and Recreation Director, spoke and answered questions.

The motion carried unanimously.

L.) INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

Proposed Ordinance entitled "Ordinance No. _____, An Ordinance entitled "ESTABLISHMENT OF FEES PAYABLE UNDER BUILDING, FIRE AND DEMOLITION CODE, FIRE MARSHALS AND FIRE HAZARDS, SAFETY OF PUBLIC AND FIRE MARSHAL INSPECTIONS". (See Ordinance attached for Council review. A new number will be assigned once the Ordinance has passed Town Council vote.) (A copy of the fee schedule is also included for review.)

PROPOSED MOTION

THE TOWN COUNCIL, CONSISTENT WITH CHAPTER V, OF THE VERNON TOWN CHARTER, SEC. 6, ENTITLED "PUBLIC HEARING ON AND PUBLICATION OF ORDINANCES," HEREBY SCHEDULES A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING, **ORDINANCE NO. _____ "AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED " ESTABLISHMENT OF FEES PAYABLE UNDER BUILDING, FIRE AND DEMOLITION CODE, FIRE MARSHALS AND FIRE HAZARDS, SAFETY OF PUBLIC AND FIRE MARSHAL INSPECTIONS"**, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH CGS §7-157(b) FURTHER AUTHORIZES THE TOWN CLERK TO PUBLISH A SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ACTION, SAID PUBLIC HEARING TO TAKE PLACE AT 7:35 PM ON TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2024 LOCATED AT THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THIRD FLOOR, 14 PARK PLACE, VERNON, CONNECTICUT TO RECEIVE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made a motion to schedule a Public Hearing regarding, Ordinance No. _____ "an Ordinance entitled " Establishment of Fees Payable Under Building, Fire and Demolition Code, Fire Marshals and Fire Hazards, Safety of Public and Fire Marshal Inspections", and in accordance with CGS §7-157(b) further authorizes the Town Clerk to publish a summary of the proposed action, said Public Hearing to take place at 7:35 pm on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 located at the Town Council Chambers, Third Floor, 14 Park Place, Vernon, Connecticut to receive comments and questions relative to the proposed ordinance.

Mayor Daniel A. Champagne spoke on the nature of the motion. Dan Wasilewski, Fire Marshall, spoke and answered questions.

The motion carried unanimously.

- 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 OF **FEBRUARY 6, 2024** AND THAT MINUTES OF SAID MEETING BE APPROVED.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made a motion to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the Regular Town Council meeting on *February 6, 2024*. The motion carried unanimously.

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

1. Town Clerk Monthly Report – January, 2024 as submitted by Karen Daigle, Vernon Town Clerk.

E.) EXECUTIVE SESSION

8:08 PM Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following 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 (2) HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL AND INVITES DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

8:34 PM Executive Session #1 ended.

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Levesque, made the following 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 (2) HEREBY MOVES TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE **AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES LOCAL 818 OF COUNCIL #4 AFL-CIO** AND INVITES DAWN MASELEK, ASSISTANT TOWN ADMINISTRATOR AND MICHAEL J. PURCARO, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR TO ATTEND.

8:54 PM Executive Session #2 ended.

Mayor Daniel A. Champagne announced that the Fire Department Award's Ceremony is on March 4, 2024 at Rockville High School. Doors open at 6:30 with ceremony at 7:00, and all are encouraged to attend.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION #1

THE TOWN COUNCIL PURSUANT TO CHAPTER X, SECT. 3 AND CHAPTER XI, SEC. 1, 3(a) AND 9 OF THE VERNON TOWN CHARTER, APPROVES MAYOR DANIEL A. CHAMPAGNE'S APPOINTMENT OF JOHN KLEINHANS AS FINANCE OFFICER FOR THE TOWN OF VERNON, AND FURTHER ACCEPTS THE CONTRACT AS PRESENTED.

The motion carried unanimously.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2

THE TOWN COUNCIL HEREBY ACCEPTS THE CONTRACT NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE TOWN OF VERNON AND THE **AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES LOCAL 818 OF COUNCIL #4 AFL-CIO** FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2027 AS PRESENTED.

The motion carried unanimously.

R.) ADJOURNMENT (8:56 PM)

Council Member Motola, seconded by Council Member Bush, made motion to adjourn at 8:56 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Meriline Sarkar
Recording Secretary