

**TOWN OF CROMWELL
TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
41 WEST STREET, CROMWELL, CT 06416
February 9, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Present: Mayor A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters

Also Present: Town Manager A. Salvatore, Chief of Police D. Lamontagne, Captain Sifodaskalakis, Finance Director M. Sylvester, Public Works Director Russo

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Spotts called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Town Council stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Under Item G. add:

3. Approve refund of \$70 to Adam Zalinski as a result of overpayment in tax dollars due to assessment.
4. To approve use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds under revenue replacement category.

- Swap Item H and Item G.

- Remove Item N.2.b. - Appointment of Jessica Downes-Obrenovic to Board of Assessment Appeals

- Add Item N.1.b. – Appointment of Heather Jacobs to Building Committee as an Regular Member

MOTION made by J. Henehan and **SECONDED** by A. Waters to approve the agenda as amended.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

D. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN REPORTS/LIAISON REPORTS/STAFF REPORTS

- Councilman Fortenbach read an update from the Board of Education Chairperson. See Attachment.

E. MAYOR'S UPDATE

The Mayor reported the following:

- January 20th was the Cromwell Chamber Board of Directors Meeting held virtually.

- On January 24th he attended a meeting with the Director of Finance, Town Manager, and two Board of Finance members to discuss the 2022 budget process.
- He and State Representative Christie Carpino talked to a 4th grade class via Zoom about local and state government.
- Board of Finance member, John Ireland joined him for one of his Mayor's Evening Hours. He hopes to have someone from another board and commission join him on March 3rd.
- On February 1, he virtually attended the RiverCOG Affordable Housing Conference by Sam Gold and his staff. It was an excellent presentation and he learned some very surprising statistics.
- On February 3, the Town Manager, Director of Finance, Board of Finance Chairman and Vice Chairman attended a Capital Planning Meeting. Bond Attorney, John Healy was also present. The meeting lasted for about two hours. It was very informative and well organized.

F. TOWN MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The Town Manager reported the following:

- After consultation with the Health Director, and looking at local and state cases, he removed the mask mandate for inside municipal buildings.
- A test kit distribution was held last week. The turn out was significantly less than the first distribution event. He informed the Council and the public that the Health Department is handing out test kits and masks if anyone needs any. They were handed out at the transfer station this past weekend.
- We have been working and continuing to work on the upcoming year's budget. We hope to have it wrapped up by early next week.
- The Warehouse withdrew their IWWA permit as a result of receiving the peer review. Time was running out before they could address any of the issues. They will be resubmitting their application in the near future.
- The apartments on Route 3 and Court Street are moving forward. The property sold, a new developer is taking over and is resubmitting an application to PZC.
- The Red Lion property is continuing talks with the developer.
- We are looking at putting a charging station at Town Hall and in the Community Field Road parking lot. They will be using a grant proposed by Eversource.
- Town Engineer Jon Harriman is looking at using the money from DOT to classify the culvert at Shadow Lane as a bridge so we can receive funding to assist with the drainage problem in that area.
- We are working with Little League regarding lighting at Henderson Field. The Town Attorney recommends we get a letter in writing stating that if Little League defaults, then the bank would not hold the Town responsible. After that happens, he will be comfortable and ready to allow them to make an application to the PZC.

G. CHIEF OF POLICE'S UPDATE

Police Chief LaMontagne submitted a written report and presented it to the Town Council.

In addition to her written report, she added the following:

- Recruits Cyr and Sylwia are attending the Academy and are in the commuter class. They will be graduating in the beginning of August.
- On January 30th, there was a robbery at the CITGO station. All officers responded, there was great coordination, communication, and they managed to seize his car and gather a significant amount of evidence. The person was captured and it was a swift arrest. This person is a suspect in numerous other robberies.

H. FINANCIAL/FINANCE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

1. Budget Report

Finance Director Marianne Sylvester submitted a written report and presented it to the Council. She informed the Town Council that as of last week, we have spent \$65,000 in overtime this winter. She also informed the Council that the CCM anticipated revenue in Education Cost Sharing will be \$86,000 more in this coming year than what it was in this past year.

2. Tax Refunds

MOTION made by A. Waters and **SECONDED** by J. Henahan to approve Tax Refunds 1-16.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henahan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

3. Approve refund of \$70.00 to Adam Zalinski as a result of overpayment in tax dollars due to assessment.

MOTION made by A. Waters and **SECONDED** by S. Fortenbach to approve the \$70.00 refund to Adam Zalinski as a result of overpayment in tax dollars.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henahan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

4. To approve use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds under Revenue Replacement Category.

MOTION made by S. Fortenbach and **SECONDED** by A. Waters to approve use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds under the Revenue Replacement Category.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henahan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

5. Discussion and possible action regarding use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds for tennis courts at Watrous Park

A brief discussion was held.

Public Works Director Russo was in attendance and explained this is something we would go out to bid for. He suggested we fix the Tennis Courts at Watrous Park vs. the High School because they will be available to use during the day.

Athletic Director and resident Kelly Maher, 31 River Road is in favor of using these funds to renovate the tennis courts because they bring kids and parents to the park. Tennis is both a leisure and a competitive sport bringing kids of all ages to use the tennis courts. They will be used all day.

Lydia Murphy, Cromwell High School Math Teacher, Tennis Coach, and resident, 15D Country Squire Drive feels that the tennis court at Watrous Park needs to be renovated. It is currently a danger to the community and the players. If it is not renovated there will not be any useable courts in Town. She added that Pickleball is a growing sport and can also be played on the tennis courts.

Kelly, Number one on Tennis Singles for Cromwell High School feels that the tennis courts are vital and important to the team and community. These courts feel like home to many people and it is important that there are playable tennis courts in Town.

MOTION made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** S. Fortenbach to approve the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for tennis courts in the amount of \$900,000 to allow Public Works and the Town Manager to begin the process of going out to bid to get the courts ready for the season.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henahan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

I. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Public Works Director Russo reported the following:

- He complimented his crew on the work they did with both storms. They worked almost 24 hours during the last storm. He kept in communication with the Superintendent throughout the storm's duration.
- Rail 99 opened his business for the crew and cooked them breakfast. He thanked and praised the owner for opening for them when everyone else was closed during the snowstorm.
- He will continue to work on the tennis courts and to work with Mike Conant on suggestions on how to get seasonal workers to the parks. They are going to come up with a plan for all fields.
- He presented his budget to the Town Manager and Director of Finance. There is a cost increase in the Public Works World, everything has increased in price.

- As far as the snow overtime, he charts the numbers and gets 3-5-year averages. He said the numbers are usually 5% of each other. Charting helps him project budget numbers for overtime.
- He would like to assist the Town Manager with the lighting proposal at Henderson Field as he has previous experience similar projects.

J. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Brian Grogan, 2 Gatesville Lane. He came to the meeting tonight regarding C.G.S. 12-124(a)(b). He received a notice that his house was coming up for tax sale because he owes taxes. He believes this statute will allow for his real estate taxes to be paid upon his death or transfer of the property. He is asking for the Town Council's consideration. He added that he had \$35,000 stolen from him which set him back in paying his taxes. His case was finally just resolved. He again asked to have his taxes postponed.

K. NEW BUSINESS

1. Rename Allen Place to Allen Road

Town Manager Salvatore explained to the Town Council that the road was approved in the 1930's as Allen Place. To make the name of the road consistent in all places where it is referenced, we would like to formally change it to Allen Road.

MOTION made by S. Fortenbach and **SECONDED** A. Waters to rename Allen Place to Allen Road.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

L. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. January 12, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

The following change was made: To add Shannon Hughes-Brown as a regular member appointment to the Building Committee.

MOTION made by P. Luna and **SECONDED** S. Fortenbach to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2022 as amended.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

2. January 12, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by P. Luna and **SECONDED** S. Fortenbach to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2022 as presented.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

M. RESIGNATIONS.

1. Board of Assessment Appeals

- a. Angela Ryan

MOTION made by S. Fortenbach and **SECONDED** J. Demetriades to accept the resignation of Angela Ryan from Board of Assessment Appeals with regret.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

N. APPOINTMENTS

1. Building Committee

- a. Jessica Lamb
b. Heather Jacobs

MOTION made by J. Demetriades and **SECONDED** S. Fortenbach to appoint Jessica Lamb and Heather Jacobs to the Building Committee as Alternate Members.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

O. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Councilman Demetriades informed the Town Council that LGBTQ partnered with Community Theater for the Laramie project. Custodial fees are about \$600, which is outside of their budget. They planned two fundraisers for Spring instead. The Community Theater will ask the town for an allocation for the play. They plan to approve the letter at the next meeting. Tickets will be sold for \$10 each. The proceeds will be split between the LGBTQ Commission and the Community Theater.

P. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION made by P. Luna and **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to come out of Executive Session. The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:07 p.m.

MOTION made by S. Fortenbach **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to provide the Director of Finance a \$6,000 health benefit upon the date of her retirement.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P. Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

Q. ADJOURN

MOTION made by S. Fortenbach and **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to adjourn.
The meeting adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

In favor: A. Spotts, J. Donohue, J. Demetriades, S. Fortenbach, J. Henehan, P.
Luna, A. Waters.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amanda Calve".

Amanda Calve
Secretary

Good Morning - below is my report for tonight's meeting as I am unable to attend in person. Thank you!

BOE Report for Town Council Meeting Wednesday Feb. 9th

Our board met last night and approved our CHS course of study which had some newly added classes, changes to the structure of our leveled classes as well as gpa calculation. We also discussed the new CHS and CMS schedule planned for next fall which drops the 90 minute block schedule and instead we move to an 8 period drop schedule, which means there are 6 classes per day that are generally 55 minutes long with the exception of one day that has all 8 classes that meet for a shortened time. It's a rotating schedule and it varies by school. It also adds an advisory period at CHS where students can schedule a meeting with their teachers or use the time for clubs or other purposes. This information can all be found on our website in the references to the agenda.

Our board also voted unanimously to pass our 2022-2023 Proposed Board of Education Budget at 3.81% after Dr. Macri responded to a variety of questions from board members. The drivers for the increase are salaries and special education costs.

It was reported that positive covid cases are trending down in the past two weeks and the district is awaiting further guidance in relation to the anticipated end to the mask mandate.

Our board would also like to express support for the tennis court project on the town council agenda for tonight's meeting as our students do utilize them and we want them to be as safe as possible. Our CHS tennis courts are no longer usable so the district does rely on the Watrous Park courts for our student tennis players.

Our meeting can be viewed on you tube and our next meeting is scheduled for March 8th. Any changes that come out prior to then will be communicated by our district leadership.

Respectfully Submitted,

Celina Kelleher

Board of Education Chair