

**TOWN OF CROMWELL - TOWN COUNCIL  
TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
41 WEST STREET, CROMWELL, CT 06416  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

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Wednesday, June 14, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor S. Fortenbach, Deputy Mayor J. Henehan, Councilman Demetriades, Councilwoman J. Donohue, Councilwoman P. Luna, Councilman J. Polke, Councilman A. Waters

**Also Present:** Finance Director Sharon DeVoe, Town Engineer Jon Harriman, Chief LaMontagne, Captain Sifodaskalakis, Public Works Director Lou Spina

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Fortenbach called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Town Council stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION** made by J. Polke and **SECONDED** by A. Waters to move New Business to after Police Commendations.

**All in favor.**

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

**All in favor.**

**D. POLICE COMMENDATIONS**

Chief Lamontagne read and presented letters of commendation to Dispatcher Gregg Cambareri, Officer David Ellison, Sergeant John Carlson, Sergeant Ryan Parsons, and Detective Kyle Perricone.

**N. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Discussion and possible action regarding Facility Conditions Study for Fields and School Buildings (tabled)

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to take this item off the table.

**All in favor.**

Lynne McKinney, Administrative Assistant II to the Director of District Operations was in attendance to answer questions of the Town Council.

Ms. McKinney answered questions regarding the chart that was provided to the Town Council. See *Attachment A*. There were also questions regarding the Bid Process. She and Finance Director Sharon DeVoe explained that Gordian is on Sourcewell and they will not have to go out to Bid. Town Engineer Jon Harriman added that the Town is familiar with Gordian and said we have used them for projects in the past. A brief discussion was held.

**MOTION** made by J. Henahan and **SECONDED** by J. Demetriades to approve the Facility Conditions Study for Fields and School Buildings for an amount not to exceed \$70,000.

**All in favor.**

2. Discussion and possible action to adopt Cromwell Tax Abatement Ordinance for Surviving Spouses of First Responders.

**MOTION** made by A. Waters and **SECONDED** by J. Henahan to adopt the Cromwell Tax Abatement Ordinance for Surviving Spouses of First Responders.

**Discussion:** Councilman Demetriades asked that the Town or the Mayor send a letter to the Fire Commission on the behalf of the Council encouraging them to also adopt this ordinance for the Fire District.

**All in favor.**

3. Change in Effective Date for Chief of Police Appointment

**MOTION** made by A. Waters and **SECONDED** by J. Henahan to appoint Fred Sifodaskalakis as Chief of Police effective June 30, 2023.

**All in favor.**

4. Discussion and possible action to authorize the Town Manager to swap and sell 14R Winchester Way (1.93 acres) with 1.93 acres from 20 Winchester Way in the amount of \$25,000.

There was a brief discussion regarding drainage issues on the property. It was clarified that an appraisal was received and reviewed in Executive Session by the Town Council at a previous meeting.

**MOTION** made by J. Polke and **SECONDED** by J. Henahan to authorize the Town Manager to swap and sell 14R Winchester Way (1.93 acres) with 1.93 acres from 20 Winchester Way in the amount of \$25,000 with the condition that it meets all land use regulations with a focus on drainage and land use concerns.

**All in favor.**

**E. MULTI PURPOSE ATHLETIC FIELD UPDATE**

Town Engineer Jon Harriman and CHA Consulting were in attendance to give a presentation for the Athletic Field Renovation Project at Cromwell High School. Town Engineer Harriman recommended that the Town Council move forward with these plans and grant approval to move onto Phase 2. He explained that we could always scale back if we need to based on funding limits. However, we are still within the budget that was allocated by the Town Council.

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by J. Polke to move forward to Phase 2 of the Cromwell High School Field Renovation Project.

**All in favor.**

**The Town Council took a brief recess at 8:27 p.m.**

**The Town Council reconvened at 8:34 p.m.**

**F. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

HR Generalist Bonnie Price was in attendance to answer questions of the Town Council regarding the Employee Handbook. The Council had the following corrections: a period needed to be added on Page 23 and Page 40 was included two times. Councilman Demetriades suggested to add language referencing the state statute regarding filing of worker's compensation claims and no employer retaliation.

Ms. Price informed the Town Council that the Handbook would be posted online, on the shared drive, will be distributed to all employees and included in new hire packages.

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to approve the employee handbook and include the suggestion made by Councilman Demetriades.

**All in favor.**

**G. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN REPORTS/LIAISON REPORT/STAFF REPORTS**

**1. CMS Building Committee**

Rosanna Glynn was in attendance to present her report. *See Attachment B.*

**H. MAYOR'S UPDATE**

Mayor Fortenbach read his report. *See Attachment C.* He added, that tonight is Graduation for Cromwell High School. He congratulated CHS Class of 2023.

**I. TOWN MANAGER'S UPDATE**

The Town Manager provided his report in the packet for the Town Council.

**J. FINANCIAL/FINANCE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

**1. Budget Report**

Sharon DeVoe was in attendance to present her budget report and to answer any questions of the Town Council.

**2. Discussion and action to approve an increase of \$10,000 in the appropriation for the Leaf Vacuum within the ARPA Fund using a surplus from the leaf boxes appropriation**

Public Works Director Lou Spina was in attendance to answer questions of the Council. He explained that the leaf vacuum quote was more than he was originally quoted and the leaf box quote came in lower than anticipated, therefore he requested to use the remaining funds from the leaf box appropriation to cover the cost of the leaf vacuum.

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by J. Henahan to approve an increase of \$10,000 in the appropriation for the leaf vacuum within the ARPA Fund using a surplus from the leaf boxes appropriation.

**All in favor.**

**3. Approval of Medical Benefit for the Chief of Police**

**MOTION** made by P. Luna and **SECONDED** by J. Polke to approve the medical benefit for the Chief of Police in the amount of \$10,000 annually until age 65.

**All in favor.**

**4. Tax Refunds**

**MOTION** made by A. Waters and **SECONDED** by J. Henahan to approve Tax Refunds 1-10.

**All in favor.**

**K. CHIEF OF POLICE'S UPDATE**

The Chief of Police was in attendance and presented her report to the Town Council.

**L. PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Public Works Director Lou Spina was in attendance to present his report. He added the following:

- Milling and paving will begin on Pasco Hill Drive and Ledge Road beginning on June 15<sup>th</sup>.
- He is working with Human Services Director Amy Saada on a grant for storage and cosmetic enhancements to the Senior Center.

Transfer Station Operator Tony Salvatore, Jr. was in attendance to inform the Council that the Food Composting Program is underway. He brought in composting bins for all Town Council members. He mentioned that he will be at the Farmers Market on Friday. He will have 50-75 buckets to hand out to residents. Additionally, there will be composting bins available at the Belden Library for residents.

The Council commended him for his hard work on this project and for getting the program up and running.

- M. CITIZEN COMMENTS** *(limited to 2 minutes per speaker, please be respectful)*  
Helen Sullivan, 6 Rosewood Drive expressed concern with the High School Athletic Field Project. She explained that there were large trees, shrubs and bushes that blocked the view from her property to the field at the high school and one day she was blindsided when the Town chopped down all the bushes and shrubs. She also mentioned serious drainage issues in the area and hoped that the Town and residents can work together to find a better place for a parking lot. She said there is a large group of people concerned about this and would like to continue discussions with the Town to make accommodations for residents in the neighborhood.

**O. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. April 27, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by P. Luna to approve the April 27, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

**In Favor:** S. Fortenbach, J. Demetriades, J. Donohue, P. Luna, J. Polke, A. Waters

**Abstained:** J. Henehan

**Motion passed.**

**2. May 9, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** made by P. Luna and **SECONDED** by J. Polke to approve the May 9, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes.

**All in favor.**

**P. APPOINTMENTS**

**1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

- a.** Hina Nasir (U), regular member for a term expiring June 1, 2025.

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to appoint Hina Nasir as a regular member to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee for a term expiring June 1, 2025.

**All in favor.**

**2. Inland Wetland and Watercourses Agency**

- a. Andrew Holt (R), alternate member for a term expiring June 1, 2027

**MOTION** made by A. Waters and **SECONDED** by J. Henehan to appoint Andrew Holt as an alternate member to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency for a term expiring June 1, 2027.

**All in favor.**

**3. Planning and Zoning Commission**

- a. Andrew Holt (R), alternate member for a term expiring June 1, 2025

Mayor Fortenbach explained that unfortunately the Council is unable to appoint Mr. Holt to the Planning and Zoning Commission because of a minority representation issue.

**Q. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

**1. Mattabassett Information**

- Councilman Waters questioned why Mattabassett eliminated some of the names of people that called in with complaints. He explained that he submitted a Freedom of Information Act Request to Mattabassett on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. In the documents he received, there were more names listed than what was provided to the Town Council. He felt that it was to make it seem as though he was the sole person who complained. He is disappointed and feels that the Town Council was misinformed by Mattabassett.
- Additionally, he said that the Town and the Health Department were not made aware of a spillage that occurred in 2021. We are supposed to be notified if there is any spillage into the river. He asked that the Town of Cromwell's Health Department send a letter to Mattabassett requesting that we be made aware of any spillage that occurs.
- Councilwoman Donohue addressed a citizen comment regarding the school items. She clarified that the Multi-Purpose Athletic Field is a separate and different item than the Facility Conditions Study for Fields and School Buildings.
- Councilwoman Donohue assured the resident that the Council wants the Athletic Field project to go well and to not negatively impact residents, however, Land Use and the Planning and Zoning Commission are the appropriate places to address their concerns.
- Councilman Demetriades reported that the Cromwell LGBTQ Committee participated in the Pride Parade in Middletown. The Parade attracted 25,000 visitors. All the

businesses had people going in and out, the restaurants were full, and there were many performers and vendors. He gave kudos to Middletown, the Chamber and everyone who worked on the event. He listed the Cromwell residents who participated. He also thanked Matthew Brown for paying the registration fee for the LGBTQ Committee as an in-kind donation allowing them to march in the Parade.

- Councilman Demetriades attended the DEI Committee meeting. They expressed interest in locating the unity pole at the rose garden and planned to talk to the Mayor and Town Staff regarding this. Mayor Fortenbach added that the DEI Committee had concerns about the condition of the rose garden. Town staff has since worked on the garden beds.
- Councilman Demetriades informed the Council that the DEI Committee received money through a grant through Human Services Director Amy Saada for an ADA event. Stay tuned for a date for this.
- Councilman Waters said he hoped that everyone enjoyed the Memorial Day Parade. He said last year was supposed to be his last year and this year was supposed to be his last year but he is thinking about doing it one more year because it is enjoyable after seeing everything come together. Mayor Fortenbach assured Councilman Waters that the Town appreciates all of his hard work and commitment to the Memorial Day Parade.

**R. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** made by J. Donohue and **SECONDED** by P. Luna to adjourn.  
**All in favor.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

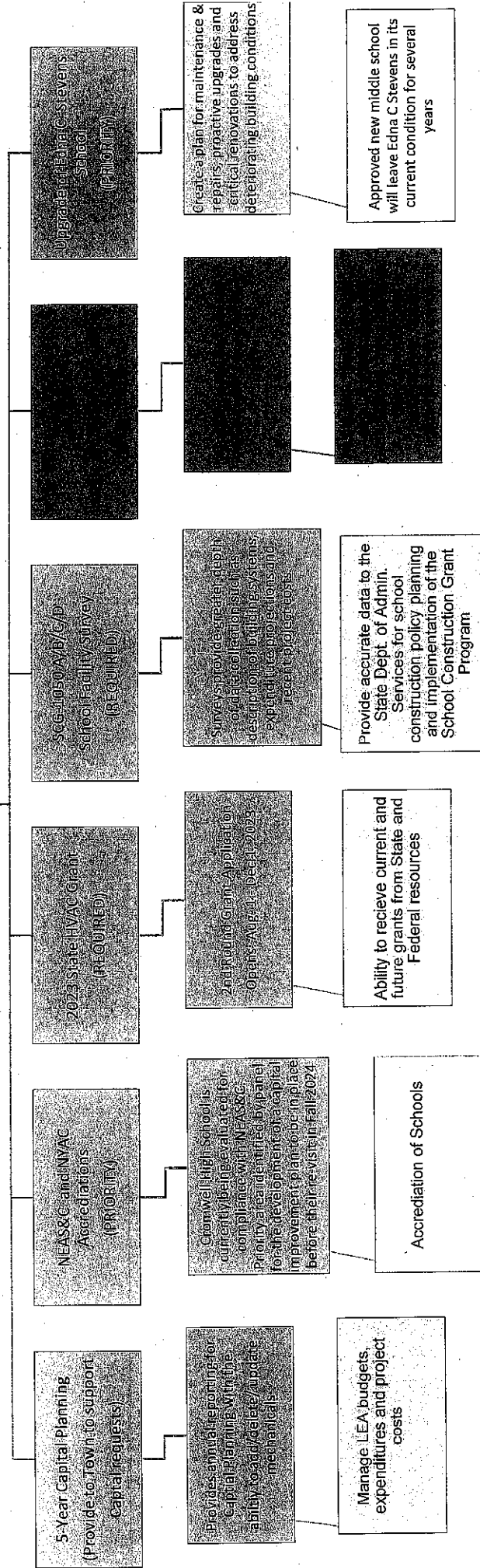
Respectfully submitted,



Amanda Calve  
Secretary

DRAFT - June 2023

Cromwell Public Schools District-Wide  
Facility Study 2023  
(excluding Cromwell Middle School)  
Reasons for a Facility Study





## Attachment B

CMS Building Committee

June 14, 2023 Report

Submitted by: Rosanna Glynn

Good evening everyone. This has been a very exciting month for the CMS Building Committee. As you are aware, last month the building committee's request for additional funding passed referendum, bringing the new project ceiling to \$72.6M. Last week, the state legislation approved the bill that funds the grant for this project. Additionally, through the collaborative efforts of our partners at Arcadis, State Rep Carpino and State Senator Lesser, we were also granted the additional 10% to our reimbursement rate, bringing it up from 39.64% to 49.64%. This could mean up to an additional \$7M back to the town in reimbursement funds. Around the same time we were also made aware that our space waiver, which was required due to the expansion of the auditorium, was also approved. The verbiage essentially waves a space limit requirement for the town. So, the full square footage of the building is now reimbursable as opposed to the allotted amount. This could mean an additional reimbursement amount of around \$1.2M to the town. As you may recall, our original projections assumed that we would not get this waiver in order to preserve conservatism to the impact to the town. So, the additional reimbursable expense is another opportunity that the building committee, with collaboration with Arcadis and our legislators, worked hard to earn for Cromwell.

While we have reduced the burden to Cromwell from the perspective of the reimbursement rate, we are also sensitive to the overall project cost and are continuing in our value management efforts to further reduce the total project cost, which in turn will result in reduced cost to the town. At our most recent meeting, the building committee voted on an additional \$1M worth of value management cost savings. We are continuing to find opportunities to reduce cost while maintaining quality, curriculum goals, and reducing long term maintenance impacts.

Moving forward, Perkins Eastman is continuing to complete the construction documents and are preparing to present to the town at the Planning and Zoning public Hearing on July 6<sup>th</sup>. One of the topics that is sure to come up by the town is the soccer field. Currently, our scope does NOT include a turf field. Inserting a turf field will require an additional \$1M of funding, that is not reimbursable by the state. This cost includes not only the turf itself, which will have to be replaced every 10 years or so, but also the piping under the field for drainage. Current plans do not include any piping for field drainage. Unless told otherwise by this town council, the committee will continue to plan assuming no turf field. If the town council would like to raise the issue, a decision would need to be made soon as the site plans need to be solidified to support our current project timeline. Our timeline right now has us breaking ground in January of next year, with a school opening in time for Fall 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rosanna Glynn  
CMS Building Committee Chairperson



## Town of Cromwell Office of the Mayor

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### MAYOR'S REPORT

**Date:** June 14, 2023  
**To:** Members of the Town Council  
**From:** Steve Fortenbach, Mayor  
**Subject:** Mayor's Report for 6/14/2023 Town Council Meeting

- Continuing to work on the culture study. I am hopeful to have a special meeting before the end of June for BerryDunn to submit its findings.
- Final plans for the multi-use field have been submitted and is in everyone's packet.
- West Street sidewalk project has been awarded. We anticipate work beginning in July.
- Attended the Memorial Day weekend car show. There was a record-breaking number of cars entered.
- Attended and threw out the first pitch for the first Cromwell Little League night game.
- Spoke at the ceremony at the start of our Memorial Day Parade. The weather was great and a good time was had by all.
- Unfortunately, the Cromwell High School Softball Team lost 3-2 to Coventry in the Class S state championship finals. It was a very competitive game and the panthers played their hearts outs.
- Attended Coffee with the Mayor at the Senior Center. We had great conversations regarding the town.
- Employee handbook has been completed and everyone on the council received a copy for comment.
- Please check out the new sign to Pierson Park. It came out amazing.