

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

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**Monday, September 26, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Mayor Steve Fortenbach, James Demetriades, Jennifer Donohue,  
Paula Luna, Jack Henehan, Al Waters, Jay Polke

**Also Present:** Town Manager Salvatore, Athletic Field Committee Members:  
Rino Ferrarese, Jason LeBlanc, Kelly Maher, Kathryn Russ.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Fortenbach called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

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JoAnn Doyle  
TOWN CLERK  
CROMWELL, CT 

**B. NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Set a charge for the Athletic Field Committee**

Rino Ferrarese made a presentation to the Town Council proposing field improvements to the grass varsity soccer field of Cromwell High School. It is currently a natural grass field with a hidden track that is used for high school sports and activities. We would like to convert this natural grass field to a synthetic turf field, that will continue to allow for year-round multi-use play of various sports and activities.

Our committee is made up of representatives from Cromwell High School, the Cromwell Board of Education, Town of Cromwell administration, the Cromwell Chill Soccer Club and Cromwell town residents. Members include Rino Ferrarese, Jason LeBlanc, Kelly Maher, Kathryn Russ, Matthew Zabroski, Robert Guyon, Kelly Franklin and Dan Brisson.

We met bi-monthly back in August, and we will continue to meet in support of the project. For this project we've conducted research and evaluated surrounding towns with turf fields like Rocky Hill, Middletown, Berlin and Meriden. We reached out to these towns and most were supportive and willing to provide information. A project like this first begins with design services, to understand first what is possible, what is reasonable and what is it going to cost? We will consider the impact this field will have to neighboring sports fields at the high school that include the tennis courts, the JV soccer field and the baseball fields. We will also need to evaluate the impact on the parking lot and traffic flow. Since this field will include football, we will need to consider additional football-related utilities such as lighting, bleachers, a scoreboard, an announcer booth, restrooms, etc.

We would initially need to hire a consultant for the development of design documents and this is done through an RFP process. Once hired, the consultant would support permitting

approvals and the construction administration services for proposed site improvement as required. We would then require an RFP for construction and we might consider retaining the services of a consultant through the construction phase, as an independent third party. This was a recommendation from one of the other towns we spoke with. We've been talking, particularly with Berlin. Steve Wood is their Field Director and Jen Ochoa, their field support. Berlin has done turf projects like this - they secure grant money and they've been very helpful and willing to support us in our endeavor. They recommend hiring a consultant and keeping them on board throughout the construction process.

The cost for a design services consultant would be up to \$100,000. The timeline might be about 12-18 months, possibly a little longer. The scope of the services would include the following: Design development documents, permitting approvals, construction documents (suitable for public bidding), bidding phase consulting services and construction administration and project close-out phase.

Mayor Fortenbach asked what the \$100,000 included. R. Farrarese stated that this would include the design services portion. We would hire a consultant who would come in and evaluate the field, what it supports, what the impact is on the existing fields, and structures and support for the rest of the site. All of this would be considered design services and the \$100,000 figure is based on similar projects in other towns. Berlin High School, for example, is converting their grass field to a turf field and they are paying about \$100,000 for their design services portion.

J. Demetriades asked what Berlin is paying for the actual field itself? R. Ferrarese said that they don't have that number yet. They are still in the bidding process for the construction. J. Demetriades also asked what the average cost was in other municipalities that have completed these types of projects as to the overall project cost. R. Ferrarese stated that it could be in the range of \$1 million to \$1.3 million for just the turf field. J. Demetriades asked, if as part of the field study, would the field expert do a study of the surrounding fields? Mayor Fortenbach believes that when a consultant is hired to do an assessment of what the needs are there, we include all of the facilities at the high school, including the practice fields, the baseball fields and the softball fields.

Mayor Fortenbach asked for a motion to set the charge for the Athletic Field Committee as read by Rino Ferrarese:

"Improve the natural grass fields to a surface that will continue to allow for year-round, multi-purpose play of various sports and activities; to include a review of all fields within the high school complex."

**MOTION** made by Al Waters, **SECONDED** by Paula Luna.

**In favor:** James Demetriades, Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henahan, Paula Luna, Al Waters, Jay Polke. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Fortenbach asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. **MOTION** made by Jay Polke and **SECONDED** by Jack Henehan. **In favor:** James Demetriades, Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henehan, Paula Luna, Al Waters, Jay Polke. **Motion carried.**

**C. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**1. Personnel Matter**

**a. Town Manager's Yearly Evaluation**

Mayor Fortenbach asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. to invite Town Manager Salvatore. **MOTION** made by Jay Polke and **SECONDED** by Jack Henehan. **In favor:** James Demetriades, Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henehan, Paula Luna, Al Waters, Jay Polke. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Fortenbach asked for a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:25 p.m. **MOTION** made by Jenn Donohue and **SECONDED** by Jack Henehan. **In favor:** James Demetriades, Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henehan, Paula Luna, Al Waters, Jay Polke. **Motion carried.**

Mayor Fortenbach asked for a motion to approve the positive review of Town Manager Salvatore. **MOTION** made by Jack Henehan and **SECONDED** by Paula Luna.

J. Demetriades stated that in light of his feelings that a review would be better suited for after the conclusion of the culture and climate study, he will be voting no on this. **In favor:** Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henehan, Paula Luna, Jay Polke. **Opposed:** James Demetriades, Al Waters. **Motion carried.**

**MOTION** made by Jay Polke and **SECONDED** by Jenn Donohue to grant the Town Manager the same three percent salary increase as the other Town department heads received.

J. Demetriades stated for the same reasons he had stated for the performance review; he believes that the evaluation for a raise should be awaited until the conclusion of the culture and climate study the we've approved, and be retroactive to July 1<sup>st</sup>. For that reason, he will be voting no.

**In favor:** Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henehan, Paula Luna, Jay Polke. **Opposed:** James Demetriades, Al Waters. **Motion carried.**

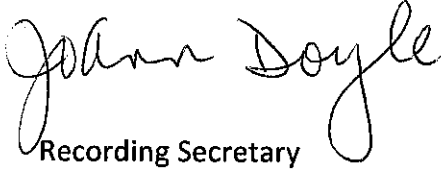
**D. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** made by Jenn Donohue and **SECONDED** by Paula Luna to adjourn the meeting.

**In favor:** James Demetriades, Jenn Donohue, Steve Fortenbach, Jack Henehan, Paula Luna, Al Waters, Jay Polke. **Motion carried.**

The special meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Recording Secretary