

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020**

A Virtual Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick on Monday, August 3, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Councilors Bosco, Hemmeler, Ludwick, Mangini, Muller, Riley, Sferrazza and Szewczak. Councilor Cekala was absent. Councilor Kiner joined the meeting at 5:09 p.m. and Councilor Unghire joined the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki; Town Attorney, James Tallberg; Deputy Director of Economic & Community Development, Nelson Tereso; Director of Public Works, Donald Nunes; Director of Human Resources, Steven Bielenda; Director of Finance, John Wilcox; Chief Technology Officer, Paul Russell; Executive Secretary to the Town Manager, Debra McCarthy

MOTION #5496 by Councilor Sferrazza, seconded by Councilor Muller to go into Executive Session to discuss Real Estate Negotiations: 32 Church Street, 28 South River Street, and 100 High Street.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #5496** adopted 8-0-0, and the meeting stood recessed at 5:03 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick at 5: 04 p.m.

ROLL-CALL - Present were Councilors Bosco, Hemmeler, Kiner, Ludwick, Mangini, Muller, Riley, Sferrazza, and Szewczak. Also present were Town Manager Christopher Bromson, Assistant Town Manager Kasia Purciello, Town Attorney, James Tallberg; Town Clerk Suzanne Olechnicki; Deputy Director of Economic & Community Development, Nelson Tereso; Chief Technology Officer, Paul Russell; Executive Secretary to the Town Manager, Debra McCarthy

Chairman Ludwick adjourned the Executive Session and reconvened the Special Meeting at 5:33 p.m. and stated that during Executive Session 32 Church Street, 28 South River Street, and 100 High Street were discussed with no action or votes being taken.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #5497 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the Town of Enfield to proceed into final design of the Connecticut River Access Project since the preliminary design phase is set to expire on September 1, 2020 based on the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 10-year Preliminary Engineering (PE) Rule; and

WHEREAS, the FHWA may require the repayment of Federal-Aid reimbursements for PE projects when on-site construction or right-of-way acquisition has not started by the end of the 10th fiscal year following the fiscal year when the Federal-aid funds for PE first were authorized; and

WHEREAS, the Town is required to obtain a favorable referendum vote in order to appropriate the necessary funding needed to complete the project; and

WHEREAS, the proposed design improvements enhance the safety for the traveling public in all modes for better access to the Connecticut River; and

WHEREAS, these proposed improvements comply with the Town of Enfield Complete Streets Policy Core Commitment and coordinate with the plans for the South River Street Bridge Replacement Project and the future Thompsonville Transit Station; and

WHEREAS, these proposed improvements will require partial land acquisitions to provide space for a walkway and a footbridge.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town fully supports this project as designed and intends to proceed to final design of the Connecticut River Access Project and to move forward with going to referendum in order to appropriate the necessary funding needed to complete the project.

Mr. Bromson stated this is a federal earmark dating back to 2009 in the amount of \$3,095,000 for the Connecticut River Access Project, which requires a 20% Town match, which amounts to approximately \$773,000 of the total project cost estimated at \$3.8 million dollars. He noted under the rules, these things have a ten-year time frame for the preliminary design, and the Town is at that point. He stated the State is pushing the Town, and they need to know by September 1st if the Town will proceed. He noted the Town Attorney provided a written opinion, and he can answer questions this evening.

Mr. Tereso stated the purpose of this earmark is to provide high-speed rail crossing for bike and pedestrian trails. He noted the original earmark dates back to 2005, and it was for a fishing pier just off the Route 190 bridge area. He stated that was denied by the Town Council in 2009, and the Town worked on a new plan with the FHWA, and in 2016 the Town proceeded with the preliminary design for this Connecticut River Access Project. He explained the project starts at the intersection of North Main, Pearl and Main Streets where there is a passive recreational area with benches, a sitting area, and it extends westerly along the southern end of Main Street across the community garden. He explained it will be a streetscape type of project with a multi-path for bikes and pedestrian traffic. He noted there will be beautification involved. He stated the path continues along just north of Freshwater Brook, and it hits the second passive recreation area once it approaches the proposed steel-trussed pre-fabricated pedestrian bridge, which is going to go over Freshwater Brook onto Asnuntuck Street, where it goes under the underpass of the Amtrak rail line, and that becomes a pedestrian-only access, where it connects to South River Street where it goes north along the newly constructed South River Street bridge and heads back onto Main Street where it heads west to the final passive recreation area, which is going to be a pedestrian overlook at the location of where Main Street meets the Connecticut River. He noted there would be parking in that area. He stated the intent of the repurposing of the funds was to accommodate and go along

with the proposed transit center at 33 North River Street. He stated right now, they have completed preliminary design and all of the environmental permitting. He noted the State has informed the Town that it needs to make a decision by September 1, 2020 on whether the Town wants to proceed to final design. He explained that means they are committing to constructing the project, and from FHWA's standpoint, the Town is all in. He noted this means that if the Town does decide after committing to going into final design that the Town does not proceed with construction, the Town is liable to pay back the federal match on this project, which is 80% of the cost expended to date. He stated the Town has expended a total of about \$250,000 to date, and about \$50,000 of that is from the Town. He noted if this resolution is not passed this evening, the Town does not owe the federal government any more money, and the Town just loses out on the grant dollars and the \$50,000 spent to date.

Attorney Tallberg referred to Provision 16.5, which states that if the project is not completed, the municipality shall reimburse the DOT for all state and federal funding that was disbursed to the municipality. He noted if the Town isn't able to pass a referendum for additional funding, which would entail acquisition of properties and a variety of other steps, the Town would be on the hook for over \$200,000, above the \$50,000 already spent. He pointed out this is a policy decision by the Council. He stated it's important the Council is aware of the implications involved if they stop now and not proceed further because the Town will lose what it has spent on this project, and if they proceed further, but fail at getting it over the finish line, additional costs will be incurred that have to be paid back to the state and federal government.

Mr. Bromson stated because there are so many moving parts and unknowns, he's not comfortable taking a position or making a strong recommendation.

Councilor Sferrazza stated he's not prepared to ask the people of Enfield to approve another referendum for a bike path during these economic times.

Councilor Riley stated she's not a big fan of the whole design because there's already a sidewalk leading right to the boat launch. She feels the money should have been going toward re-doing the boat launch because everyone goes there. She noted she does not like a path going through the woods in a rougher area of town. She stated she does not want to hold the town hostage to all this money if a referendum doesn't pass. She noted she does not want to spend the Town's money to develop anything right now until they can fix what they currently have. She stated these are tough and lean times with more layoffs coming.

Councilor Mangini stated her belief a referendum for this project is very risky, and if any project should go to referendum, it should be for roofs and roads.

Councilor Kiner stated this project would benefit residents recreationally, and under ordinary times he would support going out to referendum, but this is not an ordinary time. He feels there's too much risk involved. He noted if the Town were to do any referendum, he'd much rather it be for school roofs to provide for the health and safety of the children.

Councilor Szewczak stated she has always supported bike paths, but the only thing she likes about this project is the pedestrian overlook. She noted she will not support the resolution.

Councilor Muller stated he's a "no" vote as well. He feels this would lock a future Council into this project, and \$774,000 is a big amount if the project isn't done within ten years.

Councilor Hemmeler stated she will not be supporting the resolution. She feels the Town needs to cut its losses at this point, and any referendums should really be for roofs and roads. She believes this is too much of a gamble.

Councilor Bosco stated his belief it's a great project, and he wishes the Council knew about the deadline a year before, so they could have at least put this out to the voters. He noted they can't tie the hands of other Councils. He stated no matter how nice this project is, it's not necessary like a roof.

Chairman Ludwick stated this is good project, and even if they don't move forward, the Town will still develop in a different fashion. He noted they may have to be a little more creative and do things more on a project-by-project basis.

Mr. Bromson stated staff worked hard with the federal and state government in the hope that these monies could be used for the platform or something constructive for rail, but they were rebuffed.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5497** defeated 0-9-0.

RESOLUTION #5498 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town Charter, the following transfer is hereby made:

TO:	Public Works – Building & Grounds		
	Machinery	10300340-573100	\$100,000
FROM:	Unallocated Charges		
	Contingency	10800092-584000	\$100,000

CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the above-stated funds are available as of July 23, 2020.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Mr. Bromson stated the 1970 generator at Town Hall has failed, and this generator runs the elevator, lighting and other electrical services in Town Hall. He noted it was necessary to rent a temporary generator for approximately \$4,500 per month. He stated this proposal would purchase a new generator for Town Hall that will run on natural gas. He stated they would also be able to buy at a reduced cost the generator they've been renting and use it for any other Town building that has a failure.

Mr. Nunes stated the new generator will support the elevator and all plug load.

Councilor Riley stated her understanding this generator can be moved to other buildings if needed, and Mr. Nunes stated the temporary generator could be moved to other locations if necessary.

Councilor Muller questioned if there's still an underground storage tank for the old generator. Mr. Nunes responded no.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5498** adopted 9-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5499 by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Muller.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town Charter, the following transfer is hereby made:

TO:	Public Works – Buildings and Grounds		
	Rental – Land/Buildings	10300340-544100	\$31,500
	Rental-Land/Buildings		
FROM:	Unallocated Charges		
	Contingency	10800092-584000	\$31,500

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that the above-stated funds are available as of July 23, 2020.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Mr. Bromson stated the Enfield Express was a success with the first day servicing 500 individuals, who used this opportunity to pay taxes, and 140 dog licenses were issued.

Ms. Olechnicki expressed appreciation for Town staff that made this happen. She noted people were very happy to be able to drive up, take care of business and leave.

Councilor Unghire joined the meeting at this point.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5499** adopted 10-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5500 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town charter the following transfer is hereby made:

GENERAL FUND

FROM:		TO:	
10040000-499000	\$88,263	10800092-593010	\$88,263
General Fund Revenue-Appropriated Fund Balance		General Fund – Unallocated Transfers	
		Transfers to Capital	

GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS

FROM:		TO:	
31104000-460984	\$213,077	31108745-545000	\$301,340
Revenue Grant Funded Projects-		Grant-Barnard-School Roof-	
Barnard School Roof		Construction Services	
31104000-488001	\$88,263		
Revenue Grant Funded Projects - General Fund Transfers In			

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that the above-stated funds are available as of July 24, 2020.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Councilor Szewczak stated this is the final phase of the original building. She noted it does not include the addition. She stated all the older parts of the roof will be done. She pointed out this includes the repointing and repairs of the chimney that needs to be done, which includes an extension of the stack sleeve so that moisture does not do what it has been doing to the chimney. She stated this will go out to the state bidders, and it appears to be a two-week job, and it's hoped to be done before school starts.

Councilor Mangini stated she will support this, however, she would have liked to see a roof referendum. She noted she's not in favor of the piecemeal projects.

Councilor Szewczak explained that because schools fall under the state's jurisdiction, roof replacements get a 70% reimbursement by grant, and that's based on demographics. She noted when they do windows, that's also a grant with the state purchasing the windows, and the Town does the installation.

Chairman Ludwick thanked Councilor Szewczak for all her hard work on this.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5500** adopted 10-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5501 by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Muller.

WHEREAS, the Town is required to submit regular compliance reports for the Water Pollution Control Facility to the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP); and

WHEREAS, the DEEP has established the netDMR system to facilitate electronic filing of such compliance reports; and

WHEREAS, use of this system requires the Town Manager to complete a signatory authorization form and designate a subscriber to submit and electronically sign reports,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Enfield Town Council authorizes the Town Manager to sign the DEEP signatory authorization form and to designate Water Pollution Control Facility Superintendent, Todd Matthewson, as the authorized subscriber.

Mr. Bromson stated these will be done electronically monthly. He noted the new Superintendent, Todd Matthewson, has impressed everyone with his intelligence, professionalism and knowledge.

Mr. Nunes stated it has been a pleasure working with Todd Matthewson.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5501** adopted 10-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5502 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

RESOLVED, that Christopher W. Bromson, Town Manager, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of this municipality an application for a Targeted Grant for FY2021 and a contract with the Preservation Connecticut for a Vibrant Communities Initiative Grant subject to review and approval of the Town Attorney.

Councilor Szewczak stated she will recuse herself from this item because she is the direct abutter.

Mr. Bromson stated there has been work done previously, but parking is a challenge. He commended Mr. Tereso on his vigilance and resourcefulness.

Mr. Tereso stated this is a small grant opportunity. He noted Preservation Connecticut is a non-profit, and they receive state funds from the State Historic Preservation Office through the Community Investment Act. He stated this is for an historic community action plan. He noted this is not a grant opportunity to do any capital improvements to the Hazardville Institute. He stated they're moving forward with the final phase on the building itself, which is electrical, plumbing, HVAC and ADA compliant bathrooms. He noted the Hazardville Institute Conservancy recently received a \$100,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to aid in the final phase of these improvements. He stated they're proceeding with the Town funds to complete this final phase. He noted the big issue is parking. He stated there are two town-owned parcels in the back that total about a half-acre, and that can possibly be utilized as a parking area to support the Hazardville Institute. He stated with this grant they need to take into account all the stakeholders and abutters on the properties, therefore, they would need to bring in the business-owners and project stakeholders to determine what is needed. He noted they would have to do a parking assessment, and he would like a final design for the parking lot. He stated there would be community involvement in that the community and abutting property would be well aware that a parking plan was in place and all their comments and concerns were assessed as part of this plan. He requested permission to make the grant application for up to \$25,000 to support this task.

Chairman Ludwick commended Mr. Tereso for doing a great job.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5502** adopted 9-0-0.

RESOLUTION #5503 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini.

RESOLVED, that the Enfield Town Council does hereby approve the three (3) year collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Enfield and the Enfield Police Employee's Association dated July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2022.

AMENDMENT #1 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Mangini to amend the resolution as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Enfield Town Council does hereby approve the four (4) year collective bargaining agreement between the Town of Enfield and the Enfield Police Employee's Association dated July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2022.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **AMENDMENT #1** adopted 10-0-0.

Mr. Bromson commended Chief Fox, Mr. Bielenda, Officer Eric Horan and the union leadership for everyone's diligence, good faith and hard work to arrive at an agreement that's fair to all parties.

Mr. Bielenda stated the Town has been involved in police contract arbitration for almost a year. He noted the police officers have not had a raise since July 1, 2017, and during negotiations, they have been consummate professionals every time they met. He noted there was no picketing, no vote of no confidence, no sickouts, and they rose to the occasion during the COVID-19 pandemic when called upon. He stated they had the largest unscheduled march down Elm Street in a generation, and they rose to the occasion, and they peacefully handled that issue.

He thanked the Town Manager and Officer Eric Horan in working together to help settle this agreement. He noted if the Council votes favorably tonight, tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees will be saved.

He noted this agreement puts the police union in line with every other union and non-union in town. He stated they initially wanted two pension enhancements included in the negotiation process, and they were told that's one of the reasons they entered arbitration. He noted the police withdrew one of the enhancements, and they then compromised on the second enhancement, and the police were willing to pay two-thirds of that pension enhancement. He stated Mr. Bromson re-negotiated with a vendor that produced savings to the town, therefore, he was able to find money to help with this agreement.

Mr. Bielenda stated they had to tweak some language on operational issues, which were things the Chief of Police needed, and there was an agreement in this area. He noted they made some changes on retired health insurance, so they changed the formula, but it's still cost neutral today for the Town.

He stated they had to give a bump up for detectives, sergeants, and lieutenants. He noted even the Town's own attorneys were saying Enfield was far below the whole Hartford county.

Mr. Bielenda stated they tweaked the physical fitness program, so it's going to be more productive. He stated he's proud of this contract because arbitration always means one party is embittered on an issue, but a collaborative settlement is always the best outcome for both parties. He noted it was very gratifying coming to this conclusion today.

Mr. Bielenda thanked Chief Fox and Captain Golden for standing by him as they were in the trenches in arbitration and getting cross examined.

Chief Fox stated Mr. Bielenda, Captain Golden, Officer Horan, and in particular Mr. Bromson, really allowed them to get this before the Council today with at least a preliminary belief that it would be supported. He noted during this arbitration process, everyone maintained their cool and posture, and they began and ended every session on a handshake. He stated at the end of the day, they have a package that offers a fair rate of compensation, salary and benefits, and he feels they were able to address several important language issues, which he believes were appropriate in order to allow them to operate as efficiently as possible. He stated he supports this agreement, and he appreciates the Town's support thus far.

Mr. Bromson stated his belief the Town Council does support the Enfield Police Department, which is the finest police department in the State of Connecticut. He noted it's CALEA certified, and they were recertified, which is a badge of honor to this department. He estimated there's only about 14 other departments in the State with this certification, but it's soon to be followed by everybody needing to be CALEA certified because the State of Connecticut in this most recent police legislation has seen the wisdom of that requirement. He noted Enfield has been ahead of the curve for 25 years, and in part thanks to the leadership of Chief Sferrazza when he was in the department. He stated he could not be more proud of everybody in the Police Department, Chief Fox, the Town Council and Steve Bielenda. He feels it's a remarkable accomplishment for everybody to have worked this well together under such stress in these most recent times and to be able to come out the other end as a team, working together for the resident of Enfield.

Chief Sferrazza extended his congratulations to Chief Fox and the members of the Police Department for being reaccredited with the CALEA accreditation. He stated his belief there are 19 police departments in the State of Connecticut that hold that designation and just a few hundred nationwide. He stated in light of what's been going on in the country, there will be a mandate that everyone is going to have to do what Enfield started back in 1996.

He congratulated Steve Bielenda and Officer Eric Horan from the union for negotiating in good faith. He noted they were in arbitration, which is very expensive, but Mr. Bromson saw that there was an equitable way to bring this to a conclusion without paying tens of thousands of dollars to attorneys. He stated Mr. Bromson was the impetus to get this done, and he got this done at a time when they're going to be losing police officers in light of what happened in Connecticut. He stated some of the changes in that Bill are deal breakers for a lot of police officers. He noted at a time when they're supposed to back the Blue, which they always have, this agreement is not any type of "extra", but rather it's just an equitable, fair agreement where they need to be. He stated the police officers do their job, they're professional, and he speaks from experience when he says they're compassionate and very good human beings. He noted he will certainly support this.

Councilor Riley thanked everyone for their hard work and coming together for a resolution. She noted she will definitely support this. She congratulated the Police Department on the CALEA recertification.

Councilor Mangini thanked everyone for their hard work. She noted the Enfield Police Department is stellar, and she feels very fortunate and proud to be a resident in Enfield. She noted this is long overdue, but she's glad they finally came to this resolution. She stated the police officers should know they're behind them and appreciate all the hard work they do for the town.

Councilor Kiner thanked everyone involved and stated he's proud of this wonderful Police Department. He noted he will certainly support this.

Councilor Muller thanked everyone for their hard work, and he will be supporting this.

Councilor Unghire thanked Mr. Bromson, Chief Fox, Mr. Bielenda and everyone who worked together. She noted it's nice to see all the cooperation.

Councilor Hemmeler thanked everyone involved with the agreement. She congratulated the Police Department on its CALEA reaccreditation. She gave a heartfelt thanks for all the officers keeping Enfield safe.

Chairman Ludwick stated it's important for people to understand what they're trying to build here, which is a professional organization. He noted there will be times when they don't agree on everything. He stated every single union and non-union gave a zero. He commended Chief Fox, Officer Horan and his union, and Mr. Bielenda for their work. He noted it's amazing what can be achieved when they just keep talking with each other and don't make it personal. He stated partnerships are formed in this way. He thanked the Town Council for their work as well.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the Chair declared **RESOLUTION #5503** adopted 10-0-0.

DISCUSSION: BOND REFUNDING

Mr. Bromson stated several weeks ago, the Town's financial advisors were watching the Town's portfolio, and with the ever-changing economic events, the Town's long-term bonds remain at AA and the short-term bonds have the highest rating.

He spoke about savings. He explained when the Town changed insurance carriers, they saved \$300,000 on the premium, and they may save several hundred thousand dollars more because it's a guaranteed quote, so if they have losses during the year, the Town doesn't have to pay anything out.

Mr. Wilcox explained how much the Town is saving over the next ten years by going out and doing refinancing. He noted the Town did very well on the bond issue. He explained they sell new bonds at a lower interest rate than the bonds that they're paying off. He noted they put that money into an escrow account, and they pay off bonds from the escrow account, and they continue forward paying the new lower interest rate on those bonds. He stated the total savings in interest

was \$1,307,000. He noted they ended up having to pay an underwriter's discount of about \$46,000 and another \$20,000 to \$30,000 in other fees for Bond Counsel, so the Town ended up netting over a \$1.2 million dollars in these bonds over the remaining years. He stated this results in real savings coming in over the remaining terms of those bonds.

Councilor Sferrazza stated this is fantastic news. He questioned whether this was something the Town was scheduled to do or did the Town Manager direct they look into what could be done to improve the rate. Mr. Wilcox stated this is kind of a freak occurrence because according to federal law, they cannot issue tax exempt bonds before the bonds become callable. He explained they have to issue taxable bonds, which doesn't do anything different, except that the buyer of a taxable bond usually wants a higher interest rate because they have to pay income tax on it. He noted because of the economic conditions around the country right now, they were able to issue taxable bonds at enough of a rate where they could save over \$1.3 million on the interest.

Mr. Bromson stated he asked Mr. Wilcox if they could go back before Standard & Poor's in an attempt to get the Town's rating increased. He noted this was a confluence of events that brought this about.

Councilor Sferrazza thanked the Town Manager for finding savings in insurance and bonds.

Councilors expressed their appreciation for finding these savings.

Chairman Ludwick stated the Town is always looking for savings. He noted Enfield's stability is helping with the bond rating and finances, which has allowed the Town to get through some very rough waters. He attributed this to Mr. Bromson, Mr. Wilcox and his entire staff.

Mr. Bromson stated this is attributable to the Town Council and all the department heads. He expressed his appreciation for the Council's support.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #5504 by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Unghire to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #5504** adopted 10-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at