

**MONROE TOWN COUNCIL
Monroe, Connecticut
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

April 13, 2015– 8:00 PM – Council Chambers

Present: Chairman Frank Lieto
Vice Chairman Enid Lipeles
Councilmember Deborah Heim
Councilmember Phyllis Kansky
Councilmember Raymond Knapp, Jr.
Councilmember Kevin Reid

Absent: Councilmember Kenneth Kellogg
Councilmember Dee Dee Martin
Councilmember Sean O'Rourke

Also Present: First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek

A regular meeting of the Monroe Town Council was held on Monday, April 13, 2015 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Town Hall.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion to approve the minutes and voting record of the Regular Town Council meeting held on March 23, 2015 (Sessions 2015-06).

Request for Refunds dated April 6, 2015 totaling \$2,843.10.

The Consent Calendar was passed unanimously to the March 23, 2015 Town Council Meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Memo from the First Selectman to Town Council Chairman dated April 6, 2015 regarding 2015 JAG Violence Crime Prevention Program.

Memo from the Tax Collector to Town Council Chairman dated April 6, 2015 regarding Request for Refunds totaling \$2,843.10.

Memo from the First Selectman to Town Council Chairman dated April 7, 2015 regarding Monroe Senior Center Membership Fee.

Memo from the First Selectman to Town Council Chairman dated April 9, 2015 regarding a Bid Waiver for the Independent Financial Advisory Services (2015 Bond Issue).

AMEND AGENDA

Motion: (E. Lipeles)

To add under New Business IX (C) Budget Referendum Hours.

Second: (D. Heim)

Discussion: Chairman Lieto stated for the record, Councilmember Kansky made a notation to extend the hours for the budget referendum and all future referenda.

Motion passed: 6-0

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lee Hossler, 272 Stanley Road stated he received a letter from Hartford in regards to a Senate Bill, section 51-55 which concerns him regarding a property tax base. The letter stated it requires a 40% increase on commercial and industrial property based on population. He noted we have enough trouble getting businesses to establish themselves in Monroe and he feels if we increase property tax by 40%, no one will come. Mr. Hossler had deep concerns with hopes that someone will do something about this.

APPOINTMENTS - None

ACTION ITEMS

Town Council Committee on Finance, Education, Health & Public Safety Matters

Councilmember Heim reported the Board of Finance discussed interviews for new auditors and a decision will be made shortly. She noted a discussion with the Board of Education was done on the budget, and the Police Department noted Brian McCauley has retired. Councilmember Heim also reported the Commission on Aging did not meet but there is a committee looking at the needs for the Senior Center. The next scheduled meeting will be April 22, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Town Council Committee on Planning & Zoning, Public Works and Parks & Recreation Matters

Councilmember O'Rourke was not present. Councilmember Reid reported he met with Mr. Nowacki, Public Works, Mr. Krize, and the Fire Department on the roofing. He noted Mr. Nowacki is working with the First Selectman's office to figure the best way to go. Councilmember Reid also stated they met with the Board of Education along with Jack Zmary, from the IT Department, and they will have a follow-up discussion on Wi-Fi depending how the budget goes. He noted there was a change made by Parks and Recreation in the senior picnic area but he will have more discussion with the Director, Frank Cooper. Councilmember Kansky did not have public hearings on the Inland/Wetlands. She noted a regular hearing for an application on the installation of a fire drive hydrant, 3 Sweet Briar Lane is still pending with activities associated with the disturbance of the wetland areas.

Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters

Chairman Lieto stated they did not meet and anticipate meeting on Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

Trumbull/Monroe Health District

Councilmember Knapp reported they met and the majority of the meeting was a discussion on the staff and who belongs to which town. He noted another Sanitarian has been lost and are down to 1½ Sanitarians. Councilmember Knapp also reported it's tick season and the Trumbull Monroe Health District encourages residents to be on the alert for ticks as peak season is from April to September. The Trumbull Monroe Health District will be giving away tweezers with a magnifying glass to help make a personal tick check and tick removal easier. They also have veterinarian approved tweezers to help with tick removal on your pet (s). Supplies are limited. Visit Trumbull Monroe Health District during the month of April (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, to pick up your tweezers and other tick prevention materials while supplies last. The Public Health Nurse presented a Glo-Germ demonstration at the Monroe Board of Education. It is a good educational tool for both children and adults to show proper hand washing. Councilmember Knapp concluded by stating the food establishments have been relicensed.

First Selectman's Update

First Selectman Vavrek noted the Charter Required Meeting was held last week and he would like everyone's input, especially for the ones that were not there. He has been working with the Finance Department and would like to get everything finalized by Wednesday. He also noted the televised meeting did not include video and audio for the Finance Department. First Selectman Vavrek noted the Finance Department will gather for their meeting to explain the mil rate situation since it was mainly based on what the Board of Finance had to say. First Selectman Vavrek also noted the Senate bill is a highly debatable topic right now with Hartford.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Monroe Local Health

First Selectman Vavrek met with Chairman's on both Town Committees to ask for names and he is hoping by next week to get all names in place to set up a strong Board. He noted he has met with legal teams and there are many issues on how to split up the paperwork and different options.

NEW BUSINESS

Monroe Senior Center Membership Fee

Motion: (E. Lipeles)

To approve, adopt and authorize the First Selectman to execute on behalf of the Town of Monroe the changes in the Monroe Senior Center Membership Fees.

Second: (D. Heim)

Discussion: Barbara Yeager was present and handed out a letter from Helma Chartier, Chairperson, Jason Mauer, Vice Chairperson, Kathy Quinn, Secretary, and Beverly Zwierlein dated April 10, 2015 to all Council members. Chairman Lieto read the letter which stated: "The Commission on Aging strongly supports Director Yeager's proposal to increase dues. The Senior Center is in a period of transition between old practices and new. Now one can join the Center at age 55. This means that a wider variety of programs are needed to service our younger

as well as our more elderly residents. More specialized instructors are needed. For this, additional funds are needed and we realize that we cannot expect all of these funds to come from the town which is already on a tight budget. We would expect the increased dues would fund any additional programming and that these funds be kept in the Center's budget. Further, the dues at this point are purely nominal. At an annual rate of only \$3.00, and given the increasing cost of programming and day to day costs, the Center can simply no longer function efficiently, yet to its upmost potential, without a proper and appropriate dues increase. One of the immediate goals of the Center is to provide a more social atmosphere. While activities and speakers are important, the Center should also be a place where Seniors can gather and meet other Seniors. Converting the library to a "Cafe" would allow socialization after attending an activity. We also realize that if we expect increased membership, there is a need for additional parking. We have met with the Strategic Planning Committee and discussed how this might be accomplished. We have had lengthy discussions with Director Yeager and the Strategic Planning committee regarding the increase and the various ramifications to Seniors. The rates suggested seem fair and doable for most Seniors and scholarship funding is available for Monroe Seniors. We hope you will give careful consideration to this proposal."

Barbara Yeager noted they want to start a life-long learning program and in order to provide relevant programming for the betterment of our aging population, it is necessary to increase the dues. She stated currently, Monroe residents pay \$3.00 and members from out of town pay \$5.00 per year. The proposed increase would be \$15.00 for Monroe residents and \$20.00 for non-residents per year. She noted scholarship funding is available for Monroe seniors and the revenue generated from these fees would be used by the Senior Center for programming and associated costs. Councilmember Heim wanted to make sure the Board of Finance is allocating the special funds and going to the Senior Center. Councilmember Kansky felt the \$3.00 membership fee is very low, but feels jumping to \$15.00 is a little too high. She would like to see it set at \$10.00. First Selectman Vavrek wanted to thank the Commission on Aging, and Ms. Yeager and commends them for all their ideas, stating the plans are well worth it.

Motion passed 5-1 (oppose P. Kansky)

2015 JAG Violence Crime Prevention Program

Motion: (E. Lipeles)

To adopt the following resolution as written and incorporate it into the body of the resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED that Stephen J. Vavrek, First Selectman is hereby authorized to execute the grant award on behalf of the Town of Monroe with the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management for the 2015 JAG Violence Crime Prevention Program in the amount of \$12,000.

Second: (D. Heim)

Discussion: No discussion, self-explanatory.

Motion passed 6-0

Budget Referendum Hours

Motion: (E. Lipeles)

To establish voting hours for the budget referendum and any subsequent referendums, the hours to be from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at all polling places.

Second: (K. Reid)

Discussion: Chairman Lieto noted this was to extend the hours for the budget referendum and all future referenda, and felt it was safe to vote on again.

Motion passed 6-0

Chairman Lieto wanted it noted he had asked Town Clerk, Marsha Beno for all last month's minutes and has received them. His intention is to copy them for each Town Council member to keep abreast of what is going on.

2ND PARTICIPATION

Steve Kirsch, 35 Applegate Lane commented on the new 55-60 age group for the Senior Center. He noted he did not know this existed and he feels it should be advertised in some manner. He also noted he does not understand why the Senior Center's computers are not included in the technology refresh for the town. He thought the Board of Finance had indicated this was a reasonable idea and they would look into it. He would like to see some follow-up on this matter.

Next Town Council Meeting will be scheduled on April 27, 2015

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: (E. Lipeles)

To adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Second: (R. Knapp)

Motion passed 6-0

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Cerreta
Town Council Clerk