

**MONROE TOWN COUNCIL  
Monroe, Connecticut**

**AMENDED FINAL SPECIAL MEETING**

**September 21, 2016– 6:00 PM – Council Chambers**

**Present:** Chairman Frank Lieto  
Vice Chairman Enid Lipeles  
Councilmember Phyllis Kansky  
Councilmember Nicholas Kapoor  
Councilmember Kenneth Kellogg  
Councilmember Dee Dee Martin  
Councilmember Terry Rooney

**Absent:** Councilmember Sean O'Rourke  
Councilmember Kevin Reid

**Also Present:** First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Letter of Opinion from Town Attorney regarding the Agreement by and between the Office of the State Comptroller and the Town of Monroe.

Correspondence from Monroe Town Attorney and Trumbull Town Attorney to Honorable Paul J. Knierim dated September 13, 2016 regarding the Relocation of Trumbull/Monroe/Easton Probate Court, District No. 46.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Vote on the Agreement by and between the Office of the State Comptroller and the Town of Monroe**

**Motion: (E. Lipeles)**

To approve the proposed participation agreement between the Office of the Comptroller for the State of Connecticut, the Town of Monroe, Oxford Health Plans, LLC, Caremark PCS Health, LLC and Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company.

**Second: (T. Rooney)**

**Discussion:** Cathy Lombardi, Director of Human Resources was present and stated this proposed agreement is a significant savings for the town. Councilmember Kansky stated she will vote yes on this agreement but wanted it noted she believes this vote should be done in the hands of

Management and not Town Council. She does not know if anyone was around to vote and have a Selectman Council form town of government to have power placed in that office. She feels if we continue to do this, she believes we should consider a Charter Revision Committee to be established. Chairman Lieto reiterated his opinion made during the last meeting noting the vast majority of towns had discussions regarding the process with contract renewals, and the legislative bodies do consider these types of agreements, along with the Board of Education. Councilmember Kellogg questioned the draft participation agreement dates. Ms. Lombardi stated the plan for state partnership runs from July to July and since the town is on November 1<sup>st</sup> renewal, the Town of Monroe moves to their schedule. Councilmember Kansky stated the state contract is a two year contract, come June 30<sup>th</sup> we can renew or not, bringing it to July 2019 to renew again. Ms. Lombardi also noted this is a draft and not a final agreement. Chairman Lieto also noted the intent of this meeting was to hear the expectations on what Town Council needs to do. Ms. Lombardi noted the purpose of the meeting is to have the endorsement from Town Council with no contract before the Council. Councilmember Kansky stated perhaps the First Selectman may need to sign the contract as amended. Ron Bunovsky, Director of Finance was also present noting upon comparison, this is a \$400,000 savings if the town renews with Cigna.

### **Amend Motion**

#### **Motion: (F.Lieto)**

To approve and authorize the First Selectman to execute this agreement with the amendments as set forth including striking under Article I (Term) the words minimum three-year from the first sentence.

#### **Second: (N. Kapoor)**

**Motion passed 7-0**

#### **Motion as Amended**

**Motion passed 7-0**

### **Chalk Hill Use**

Chairman Lieto noted he received a letter from the First Selectman's office dated September 19, 2016 addressed to Dennis J. Kokenos, Town Attorney for Trumbull and John P. Fracassini, Town Attorney for Monroe from Paul J. Knierim, Probate Court Administrator, and a letter dated September 13, 2016 addressed to Paul J. Knierim, Probate Court Administrator from Dennis J. Kokenos, Town Attorney for Trumbull and John P. Fracassini, Town Attorney for Monroe regarding the relocation of Trumbull/Monroe/Easton Probate Court, District No. 46. Both letters were forwarded to all members of Town Council. Chairman Lieto read one paragraph of the letter dated September 13, 2016 from the (2) Town Attorney's: "The Towns are not seeking consolidation, relocation outside of the district nor are they seeking to be located in another District, therefore it is our position that local legislative approval and/or approval from the General Assembly is not required pursuant to C.G.S §45a-8." Chairman Lieto noted this was a request on behalf of the Town of Monroe and the Town of Trumbull to bypass a legislative approval that would be necessary. He noted he was not aware or received any indication that this was the direction that the Town was going but seemed to be ordered and seemed to occur. He

noted, in addition, a letter was also forwarded to Council that was received on September 21, 2016, from James Agostine, Superintendent of Schools stating his concerns and specific questions the Board of Education need answers. Following is a list of his questions: What is the traffic count we can expect by having the Probate Court in Chalk Hill? Will the Court or the Town of Monroe be supplying security personnel? Does the Court currently use security personnel? Have the Police or Security Personnel ever been called to the Court to control a dispute or any disruptive behaviors? If so, how often have they been called in the course of a typical year? How many staff members are employed by the Court, and how many parking spaces are allotted for them? What are the hours of operation for the Court? Do you anticipate any conflicts arising out of the fact that Jockey Hollow currently uses the sports field during the day for Physical Education classes and after school field use by the Town and the School athletic programs? What types of signage would be required to inform people unfamiliar with the site of the Court's location? Has any consideration been given to school drop off and pick up times? Parents often use the parking space at Chalk Hill for Jockey Hollow student pick up. Has any consideration been given to moving probate into Town Hall and moving a Town Department to Chalk Hill? Town Hall previously included a court, and a relocated department could benefit from additional space available at Chalk Hill. This solution would also resolve security questions/concerns with the schools.

Councilmember Kansky felt this was important for Town Council to be involved in. Councilmember Kapoor questioned if Easton's First Selectman has been notified. First Selectman Vavrek sent letters back regarding everyone's concerns, and noted the only way he can give final sanction by stating the Probate Court cannot come to the town of Monroe or Chalk Hill unless voted by the elected bodies. First Selectman Vavrek noted a meeting with Chairman Lieto was declined to have discussions on the Probate Court matter. Chairman Lieto firmly denied this accusation, but he then noted he wanted to proceed very cautiously with this matter. Councilmember Kapoor questioned if the Easton's First Selectman, Alan Dunsby agrees or disagrees with the letter sent from Paul Knierim, Probate Court Administrator. Councilmember Kapoor would like to see questions from James Agostine, Superintendent of Schools be laid out for the First Selectman so he could respond. He feels we were just looking at the financials of Chalk Hill and he is disturbed by the fact the Town Attorney of Monroe signed this, and represents our town, plus all the work of our volunteers by pushing things forward for this town, and when something like this comes before Council, he feels it is upsetting. Chairman Lieto is very concerned since we just received this information. He stated it was very disingenuous with respect to the Town's position with regards to the Probate Court. Councilmember Kansky felt Sandy Hook was in the building for so long and nothing has been done during their stay until now and all the questions should have been answered at that time. Councilmember Kellogg felt a public hearing on a matter such as this needs to have the parents of Fawn Hollow and Jockey Hollow be heard. Chairman Lieto also noted it is important to have the public involvement on an issue such as this. He also felt if there is a good valid use for Chalk Hill and beneficial use for the Town, Council would love to hear it. Councilmember Kansky felt although we are not against this, Council needs to know the course of action for everyone in that building. Councilmember Kapoor also felt the First Selectman could have given the Town Attorney some guidance in composing the letter regarding the Probate Court. In conclusion, Chairman Lieto stated on Monday, September 26, 2016 Town Council Meeting, the First Selectman should have

the Judge's response to the request and address it appropriately and see what the next course of action will be. Councilmember Martin would like the First Selectman to compose a letter to address all concerns and seriously consider a letter from our own legislative body.

**2<sup>ND</sup> PARTICIPATION** - None

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: (E. Lipeles)**

To adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

**Second: (K. Kellogg)**

**Motion passed 7-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Cerreta  
Town Council Clerk