

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

**September 26, 2016– 8:00 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 Sean O'Rourke  
Councilmember Kevin Reid

**Absent:** Councilmember Terry Rooney

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

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A regular meeting of the Monroe Town Council was held on Monday, September 26, 2016 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Town Hall.

**AMEND AGENDA**

**Motion: (E. Lipeles)**

To amend the agenda under New Business and add (I) Donation from Sprint of Monroe.

**Second: (K. Kellogg)**

**Motion passed 8-0**

**Motion: (E. Lipeles)**

To include the Town Attorney's Letter of Opinion regarding the Administrators Services Agreement dated September 22, 2016 which was sent to Council via email prior to the meeting to be added under Communications (R).

**Second: (D. Martin)**

**Motion passed 8-0**

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Motion to approve the minutes and voting record of the Town Council Meeting held on September 12, 2016 (Session 2016-15).

Anonymous donation to the Police Department in the amount of \$200.00.

Donations to the Food Pantry from residents in the amount of \$580.00.

Donations to the Friendship Fund from various residents and businesses in the amount of \$500.00

Donation to the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone from a business in the amount of \$1,000.00

Donation to the Volunteer Emergency Medical Service from a resident in the amount of \$1,000.00.

The Consent Calendar was passed unanimously to the September 12, 2016 Town Council Meeting.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Memo from Town Council Liaison – Board of Health to L & A Committee Chair with a copy to Town Council Chair dated August 25, 2016 regarding proposed changes to Chapters 291 & 305 of the Town Code.

Memo from FEHPS Committee Member to L & A Committee Chair with a copy to Town Council Chair dated September 1, 2016 regarding draft proposed revisions to Chapter 470 “Taxation” of the Town Code.

Memo from Town Council Liaison – EMS Commission Liaison to Town Council Chair dated September 1, 2016 regarding the Collections and Write-Off Policy for EMS Billing.

Correspondence from the Director of Community and Social Services to Town Council dated September 8, 2016 regarding donations to the Food Pantry and the Friendship Fund.

Memo from the Police Chief to Town Council dated September 8, 2016 regarding a donation to the Police Department.

Memo from the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone Park Director to the First Selectman dated September 13, 2016 regarding a donation to the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone.

Letter from Commission on Aging Chair to Town Council dated September 19, 2016 regarding the part time position at the Senior Center.

Letter from Commission on Aging Chair to Town Council dated September 19, 2016 regarding Probate Court relocating to Chalk Hill.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 21, 2016 regarding the EMS and Write-Off Policy for EMS Billing.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 21, 2016 regarding an Alternate ZBA Appointment.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 21, 2016 regarding the Administrative Services Agreement.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 22, 2016 regarding an appointment to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 22, 2016 regarding an appointment to the Board of Education.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 22, 2016 regarding an appointment to the Board of Finance.

Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated September 22, 2016 regarding donations to various Town departments and programs.

Correspondence from VEMS to Town Council Chair dated September 21, 2016 regarding a donation to VEMS.

Correspondence from the Director of Community and Social Services to Town Council dated September 22, 2016 regarding donations to the Food Pantry, Project Warmth and the Friendship Fund.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** - None

**APPOINTMENTS**

**Motion: (D. Martin)**

To appoint Andrew Marone (D) of 213E Windgate Circle to the Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate member for a term ending August 22, 2019.

**Second: (N. Kapoor)**

**Discussion:** Andrew Marone is a middle school social studies teacher who recently moved to Monroe. He graduated from UConn with a degree in political science before earning his Master's in Education Curriculum and Instruction from UConn's Neag School of Education. Prior to his career in teaching, Andrew worked as a congressional staffer, based in Connecticut's Fifth Congressional District. He is currently working towards his D-class coaching license with the United States Soccer Federation, and is excited to be a part of the Monroe community. This appointment fills an open vacancy.

**Motion passed 8-0**

**Motion: (S. O'Rourke)**

To appoint Jonathan Stone (R) of 248 Porters Hill Road for a term ending October 21, 2016.

**Second: (E. Lipeles)**

**Discussion:** Jonathan Stone is a local businessman who had previously served on the Parks and Recreation Commission and requested an interest in returning to the commission. This appointment fills the vacancy created by Jaime Cardinale.

**Motion passed 8-0**

**Motion: (S. O'Rourke)**

To appoint Craig Hirsch (R) of 17 Maplewood Drive to the Board of Finance for a term ending November 27, 2017.

**Second: (K. Kellogg)**

**Discussion:** Mr. Hirsch has lived in Monroe for the past 23 years and is married with two children who currently attend Masuk High School. He is active in Newtown's Grace Family Church and serves as a member of Monroe's CERT program. He has been employed by Macy's Department Stores for the past 22 years and currently serves as the Director of Human Resources-Macy's Logistics at their Connecticut online fulfillment facility. Mr. Hirsch brings a background that includes budget planning and human resource development and as such the Monroe Republicans feel his unique skill set will further enhance the strong team on the Board of Finance. This appointment fills the vacancy created by Carl Ferraro.

**Motion passed 8-0**

**Motion: (S. O'Rourke)**

To appoint David H. Ferris Jr. (R) of 32 Blueberry Hill Road to the Board of Education for a term ending November 27, 2017.

**Second: (K. Kellogg)**

**Discussion:** Mr. Ferris is a retired Lieutenant from a local Police Department. At that department, he served many functions including range master, midnight shift commander, dispatcher, bike patrol, detective, and managed the medical unit as an EMT. He also served as a public information officer, Sergeant of the youth division, Sergeant of the training division, and was the special response team leader. He is a certified instructor and continues to teach police officers in several disciplines. Mr. Ferris has a Master's Degree in Public Administration, taught criminal justice courses at the University of New Haven and has been involved in many youth programs and boards. He is currently an account manager for Securitas Inc., managing the security team for a private foundation and continues to work as a consultant to public and private schools crisis advisory boards to assist in the development and training of crisis plans. Mr. Ferris has previously served on the Monroe Youth and EMS Commissions as Chair. With Mr. Ferris' extensive background as an instructor and work with local youth, as well as his crisis planning background, the Monroe Republicans feel he will be an asset to the Board of Education. This appointment fills the vacancy created by Jeff Guttman.

**Motion passed 8-0**

**ACTION ITEMS**

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

Vice-Chairman Lipeles reported she met with Mike Manjos, Board of Finance regarding Chalk Hill and he stated he would like to keep the building through the winter, even though they do not have funding. Mr. Manjos had stated to demolish and clean out Chalk Hill, the cost would be \$1.8 million, and to run it as a viable building, the cost would be \$5 million dollars. Vice-Chairman Lipeles also stated Fred Acker from the ASPCA located on Spring Hill Road has been incarcerated for cruelty to animals. She stated Mike Manjos had questioned what would happen to all the animals at this location and if this would be Monroe's responsibility. Chairman Lipeles also reported the audit is still going on and an RFP is coming out for fire apparatus replacement scheduled in October. Councilmember Kellogg has not met since the last meeting

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

Councilmember Reid reported they met on September 20, 2016 and stated the Economic Development Committee is getting a list of businesses that are vacant and will try to categorize them. He also noted there were some updates on the tennis courts, noting Frank Cooper, Director of Parks and Recreation also gave an update on the Wolfe Park field project noting a delay. He concluded by stating there was an update on the Masuk field and James Agostine will discuss this tonight. Councilmember Kapoor added the Conservation Commission asked and urged for consideration in the Chalk Hill building if it should continue to stay. James Agostine, Superintendent of Schools was present and noted the Masuk field project is near completion and he is very happy with the results. He stated \$119,000 was given in donations and this will be used for the scoreboard. He noted painters are scheduled for track lines and the sound system has not been purchased until they get a better handle on fundraising; meanwhile a portable system is being used. He noted he is hoping for a ribbon cutting ceremony that may take place on October 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters***

Councilmember O'Rourke reported they had a meeting on Monday, September 19, 2016 and reviewed Chapter 305 Health and Sanitation, Chapter 291, Food Handling Establishments, and Chapter 470, Taxation. He stated they also discussed the collections and write-off policy for EMS billing and reviewed MOU for Volunteer Medical Advisor. Councilmember O'Rourke stated the Senior Claims Zoning Administrator Job Description will be discussed at the next meeting.

### ***Strategic Planning Committee***

Councilmember Kellogg reported the part time pay plan, proposed fire study, and the potential EMS study were all discussed. He noted they were looking at cost savings and the EMS Commission will provide some input. Councilmember Kellogg also stated Chalk Hill was discussed but they are waiting for finance numbers.

### ***EMS Facility Workgroup***

Councilmember Kellogg reported they did not meet since the last meeting.

### ***First Selectman's Update***

First Selectman Vavrek stated former First Selectman Andrew Nunn is not doing well and he would like everyone to reach out and send cards and well wishes to his home. He noted, as Vice-Chairman Lipeles discussed, the cost analysis is coming on Chalk Hill School. He has not heard from the Trumbull Board regarding the Board of Education's questions and hopes to get this soon and he has also reached out to the Administrator of the Probate Court sending numerous emails. First Selectman Vavrek also reported Fred Acker from the ASPCA on Spring Hill Road has now been incarcerated and stated there are approximately 29 dogs and 50 cats at this shelter and everyone is actively looking to get these animals a home.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Chalk Hill Updates**

Chairman Lieto noted all Councilmembers received a response/letter from the Probate Administrator that was all discussed at the Special Meeting held on September 21, 2016. Chairman Lieto stated the First Selectman is waiting for responses to many questions, and he will send copies to all members of Council when they get answered. Councilmember Kapoor questioned the First Selectman asking if he has viewed any of the plans. Councilmember Martin feels a letter should be drafted to understand the Town Council's position. Councilmember Kapoor also asked the First Selectman several months ago who was in charge of the Chalk Hill project. He wanted to know if the First Selectman had any time line as to what he would like to see happen, noting budget season is just right around the corner and every year we have line items for Chalk Hill. First Selectman Vavrek stated discussions were done with the Board of Finance on many items of interest regarding Chalk Hill, and are being worked on, and all can go to Google docs to view them. Chairman Lieto stated at numerous meetings, Council talked about Chalk Hill even before Sandy Hooky came in, and he would like a cohesive plan on who will occupy Chalk Hill questioning if the public even knows about probate court being there. He

wants an idea of the potential costs such as heating with the school unoccupied. He personally feels he will not make a decision on piece mail and asked the First Selectman to make a cohesive plan and bring it forward to Town Council for discussions.

### **Revision to Code of Ethics**

Chairman Lieto stated the revision to the Code of Ethics was just received tonight and they have been modified. He also commended Councilmember O'Rourke for keeping this on the agenda. He noted if Council approves the Code of Ethics, he wanted to get all ordinances done and call for a public hearing. Chairman Lieto noted there were many drafts, and if Council agrees on the changes, he believes Council should look at them all. He noted when changes are done they will be submitted to the Town Attorney and then have a vote.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Draft proposed revisions to Chapter 470 "Taxation" of the Town Code**

Councilmember Kellogg noted the FEHPS Committee has held numerous discussions and researched various options available to the Town to modify its currently Elderly and Totally Disabled Tax Relief programs. He noted programs were researched that were used in other municipalities, met several times with the Assessor, twice with the Tax Collector, and once with the Board of Finance Chair. In the packets were a summary of findings and recommendations, including draft revisions to Chapter 470, "Taxation" of the Town Code, which are ready for review by the L&A Committee and the Town Attorney. He noted it is their intention that a final ordinance amending Chapter 470 achieve final approval no later than January 1, 2017, which would be effective February 1, 2017, which is the start of the application period for tax relief under these programs.

### **Draft proposed revisions to Chapter 291 "Food Handling Establishments"**

Councilmember Kellogg expressed his thanks to the Board of Health as they have been working diligently to propose certain updates to the Town Code relative to public health matters. He noted he has been working closely with the Board of Health, and have two proposed ordinances that are ready for review by both our Town Attorney and L&A. Councilmembers had draft copies of the proposed changes, noting the proposed repeal and replacement to Chapter 291, currently entitled "Food Handling Establishments" is to be renamed "Food Service Establishments". Councilmember Kellogg requested this item be reviewed by the Town Attorney and added to the L&A agenda for consideration.

### **Draft proposed revisions to Chapter 305 "Health and Sanitation" of the Town Code**

Councilmember Kellogg stated all members have copies of the draft proposed revisions and requested this be reviewed by the Town Attorney and added to the L&A agenda for consideration.

### **Collections and Write-Off Policy for EMS Billing**

**Motion: (K. Kellogg)**

To adopt the Collections and Write-Off Policy for EMS Billing as presented.

**Second: (D. Martin)**

**Discussion:** Councilmember Kellogg stated the EMS Commission has been working diligently to achieve a formal policy on the process of both collections and write-off policy for EMS billings. He noted after feedback from L&A, the EMS Commission, and our contracted billing agency (EMMS), the First Selectman, Community and Social Services Director, and Finance Department, they pursued further revisions. He noted all appropriate changes to this policy were done.

**Motion passed 7-0** (*E. Lipeles not present*)

### **ICMA-RC Contract Amendment – Administrative Services Agreement**

**Motion: (K. Reid)**

To approve and authorize the First Selectman to execute the ICMA-RC Contract Amendment – Administrative Services Agreement on behalf of the Town of Monroe.

**Second: (D. Martin)**

**Discussion:** Chairman Lieto noted Council had the agreement and opinion letter from Attorney Fracassini.

**Motion passed 7-0** (*E. Lipeles not present*)

### **Teacher Union Contract**

James Agostine was present to briefly discuss the Teacher Union Contract noting it is a 30 day window by the time contract is executed and signed by both parties. He stated the negotiation process is always complicated, governed by many state statutes. A copy of the Economic Analysis of Monroe BOE/Teacher Settlement 2016 was given to all Councilmembers. Also given to Councilmembers was a summary of the collective bargaining agreement with the MEA including wages, longevity, extra duty stipends, insurance, and language/operational changes.

### **MOU Medical Advisor**

Chairman Lieto noted Council had an agreement and it's in L&A waiting for the provision of an opinion letter which they may or may not get until next meeting.

### **Donation to Project Warmth & Food Pantry from Local Business**

**Motion: (K. Reid)**

To approve and accept the donations as presented from Project Warmth and Food Pantry.

**Second: (D. Martin)**

**Discussion:** Chairman Lieto stated all Councilmembers have a print out of all donations from people that have donated so generously to the town.

**Motion passed 7-0** (*E. Lipeles not present*)

### **Sprint for Monroe**

**Motion: (E. Lipeles)**

To approve the donation of \$18,800 Sprint for Monroe.

**Second: (K. Reid)**

**Discussion:** The Sprint for Monroe Race Committee was present and stated they raised \$18,800 this year. They also included a list where funds will be disbursed such as the Monroe Food Pantry, Monroe Project Warmth, Masuk Track Team, Masuk Color Guard Team, Masuk Swim

Team, Monroe Volunteer EMS, Monroe Parks and Recreation, Colonial Sanitation, Monroe Friendship Fund, Stepney Volunteer Fire Department, Monroe Youth Commission, Alcohol, Drug, Awareness of Monroe, Swim Across the Sound, and the Chase Michale Anthony Kowalski Sandy Hook Memorial Foundation. All committee members thanked Town Council and the Parks and Recreation Department for their continued support. Amy Primorac stated they will begin planning next year's Silver Anniversary 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Sprint for Monroe this coming winter and hopes to see everyone there on June 4, 2017.

All Councilmembers were very grateful for their outstanding efforts and their help with the community.

**Motion passed 8-0**

## **2<sup>ND</sup> PARTICIPATION**

*Steve Kirsch, 38 Applegate Lane* wanted to address the Chalk Hill School issue as the town has been dealing with this for the last six (6) years and he is very confused by the First Selectman's comments regarding the letter he received from the Probate Court signed by the Probate Administrator who received a drawing. He wanted to know who in the town has received this drawing referencing the size to be 2,300 square feet. Mr. Kirsch cannot understand the town has no basic plan or taking on any responsibility. He concluded by stating he also has concerns with the Food Pantry that seems to have some issues, but this topic has not been discussed knowing this is a great service to the Town.

*Next Town Council Meeting will be scheduled on October 11, 2016*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: (K. Kellogg)**

To adjourn the meeting at 10:22 p.m.

**Second: (P. Kansky)**

**Motion passed 7-0** (*E. Lipeles not present*)

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Cerreta  
Town Council Clerk