

MAYOR
JEFFREY A. MACMILLEN

DEPUTY MAYOR
THOMAS ZAMPANO

TOWN MANAGER
MICHAEL P. DOWNES



COUNCIL MEMBERS
BRUCE ABELSON
ROSE MARIE ANGELONI
MARIE E. DIAMOND
WALTER GOAD
VINCENT J. MASE, SR.
NICHOLAS PALLADINO
RONALD PELLICCIA, JR.

TOWN OF NORTH BRANFORD

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MINUTES TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, October 17, 2023

Town Council Chambers
7:00 p.m.

Mayor Macmillen called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Salute to the Flag

1. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Macmillen, Deputy Mayor Zampano, Councilor Abelson, Councilor Angeloni, Councilor Diamond, Councilor Goad, Councilor Mase, Councilor Palladino.

Also Present: Town Manager Downes, Assistant Town Manager Burke, Town Treasurer/ Finance Director Esposito, Public Works Director Merola, Town Attorney LeClerc, Town Engineer Benni, Lisa Valenti, Town Clerk, and Cliff Potter, Resident.

Not Present: Councilor Pelliccia

2. Community Events and Presentations:

a. Recognition of Outgoing Members of the 2021-23 Town Council

Mayor Macmillen wanted to recognize the two folks who are outgoing members of the Town Council Vincent Mase, Sr. and Michael Downes. Thank everyone for being part of the Council. Councilor Mase, we wanted to thank you for bringing your perspective and knowledge to this council. Mr. Downes who is now the Town Manager, did an amazing job as an early member of the council this past term and has done an excellent job as Town Manager thus far. Both gentlemen were presented with plaques and had a photo-op with Mayor Macmillen.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

a. October 3, 2023 – WPCA Town Council Meeting

MOTION: To approve the October 3, 2023 WPCA Town Council Meeting Minutes.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Diamond

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

MOTION: To amend agenda to add item 8 h. Resolution Requesting the Governor and General Assembly to Take Action on Criminal Justice Measures.

MOVED: Councilor Palladino

SECOND: Councilor Mase

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

MOTION: To amend the agenda to add item 7b. Arpa Update.

MOVED: Councilor Diamond

SECOND: Councilor Angeloni

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

4. **Town Manager's Report:**

a. **General Updates**

Halloran Retirement – The Council is aware that our Police Chief Kevin Halloran has announced his intention to retire at the end of his contract term which is in April of 2024. He wanted to extend thanks to Chief Halloran for his five years of outstanding service to the town, and to say that it has personally been an honor and pleasure to work with him over the course of the past year plus. We wish him nothing but the best in his retirement.

Farewell to Vincent Mase, Sr. – Tonight is also the final night of Councilor Vincent Mase, Sr. who we recognized earlier in the evening, as Councilor Mase did not run for re-election to the Council this year. While Councilor Mase and I may not have always seen entirely eye-to-eye on all issues before this Council, I do want to extend my thanks to him as a colleague, resident, and taxpayer for his service to this community, and I wish him the best going forward.

Debbi Altieri starts – I'm pleased to note that our new Account Clerk Debbi Altieri has started this week in our Finance Department, and she looks like she is fitting right in and hitting the ground running.

Halloween Decorating Contest – We will be conducting our Second annual North Branford Town Department Halloween Decorating Contest this year- special thanks to our celebrity judges who are returning to judge the decorations put on display by our town departments, Councilors Rose Angeloni, Marie Diamond, and Mayor Jeff Macmillen. We look forward to you joining us all again this Friday the 27th of October to render your judgements.

Scrap Metal Collection- Residents are reminded that scrap metal collection is taking place the week of October 23rd the day of your normal trash and recycling collection. Items can be placed curbside up to a week in advance. Scrap metal includes air conditioners, dehumidifiers, microwaves, large appliances (refrigerators, with doors removed), metal lawn furniture, hot

water tanks, tools, metal fencing, filing cabinets, furnaces, garbage pails, non-riding lawn mowers with gas removed, outdoor grills, small machines and aluminum siding.

Bulky Waste Collection - We will also have our bulky waste collection the week of November 6th, on the day of your normal collection. Bulky waste includes tree limbs, tree branches, scrap wood, rugs (tree limbs, tree branches, scrap wood, and rugs all need to be less than 4 feet long, no thicker than 4 inches and need to be bundled and tied), couches, mattresses, box springs, picnic tables and wooden furniture. No scrap vehicle parts. No home cleanouts.

Elections -And our Town Clerk's Office and Registrars have been hard at work to prepare for the upcoming municipal election November 7th, so I thought I would bring Town Clerk Lisa Valenti up to give you a brief report on what their offices have been busy on to make the election go off smoothly.

Lisa Valenti- Registrar of Voters and Town Clerks off work hand in hand to run the elections. Each year the Registrar of Voters conducts a canvas and everything that is done is for State/ Federal laws. There is no town jurisdiction on how elections are run. They assign polling places, moderators returns, and tabulators and system checks annually and all of the cards are coded and sent back for tabulators. Registrar of voters for voter registration, hiring the workers, and ordering the election supplies- ballots, sample ballots and anything else that goes up for the election. Clerk office is in charge of endorsements, absentee ballots.

For a Municipal election year, the absentee ballots and election day registration ballots are counted at the polls. There are typically two counts as there are fewer ballots to be counted during a municipal election. Next year for the Presidential election, it will be a much larger undertaking. For elections this also includes the budget referendum, primaries and November elections.

Deputy Mayor Zampano asked about redistricting; there are three districts and three polling places. Ms. Valenti shared that there is one ballot still, and 3three polling locations. District 2 and 3 are still at STWCC, in separate rooms and District 1 is at Jerome Harrison

Veterans Day Breakfast - On Friday, November 10th Jerome Harrison School will be honoring our Veterans with a breakfast and assembly. If you are a Veteran or active service member of any branch of the military, please consider joining us.

The breakfast is at 8:30 am and the assembly is at 9:30. RSVP is required by Friday October 27th. Email Ali Voelker - avoelker@northbranfordschools.org. Please indicate if you will be attending the breakfast and/or assembly. Due to the number of attendees expected this event is for Veterans only.

b. Permanent Project Building Committee

NBPD- At the North Branford Police Department /EOC building the framing continues, roofing is underway, and exterior walls are in process. They are currently working toward making the building watertight. If you have driven by it recently you can really see it beginning to take shape, and the project remains on schedule.

NBHS – Work through the punch list continues, footing and foundation for Phase II have been set, and the setting of the steel continues. The dewatering of the old basement is complete, decking is set, and underground plumbing and electrical connections are being completed.

NBIS – The brick repointing is ongoing, with only quiet work being done during the school day.

c. COVID- Updates

There is not much new to report in this area. The Council has this evening a copy of the October 10th Epi Report from the East Shore District Health Department. As was reported at our last meeting the State Department of health has stopped tracking town-by-town confirmed positives for COVID-19, leaving us to view hospitalization data to see trends in increased spread. As of this week New Haven County has 120 confirmed hospitalized cases which is down 8.4% over the prior week. This reflects a slowing of hospitalizations, but moderate community transmission is implied by these numbers.

There is a COVID vaccination clinic provided by East Shore District Health on Friday, October 27th – 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM at Stanley T Williams 1332 Middletown Avenue, Northford for *walk-ins*.

For other times and locations of nearby clinics provided by East Shore you can visit our website; northbranfordct.gov

5. Citizens' Statements and Petitions and Correspondence: None

6. Resignations and Appointments: None

7. Unfinished Business: Discussion and Action:

a. Creation of Veteran Service Commission

Town Manager Downes shared that this item was tabled at your last meeting, and the version that is now in your packets this evening reflects changes made in accordance with the Council's wishes. He sought feedback on this proposal from our designated veterans liaison Kathy Poston, who expressed support for the creation of this commission and offered the following notes:

1. I would hope appointees would have the desire and time to network for information and opportunities for our town veterans and their families.
2. A mix of enlisted and officer candidates on the commission as there are such different experiences (the families as well).
3. That a process for receiving nomination or applying to be on it is made clear.

MOTION: To approve the Ordinance 6-23 establishing Veterans Service Commission.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Diamond

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

Mr. Potter feels if you put a letter together it's going to overwhelm the staff. Kathy Poston is running the luncheon. If there is a letter it could be passed out. There will a letter going out to the Veterans and then have a meet & Greet with the mayor and say thank you to the veterans.

b. Arpa Update

Councilor Diamond shared that during the Arpa workshop it was discussed about possibly increasing security. Councilor Diamond and Councilor Goad met with both the Police Chief and Deputy Police Chief, there are some needs that could be addressed. Councilor Goad also reached out to Public Works and the Police Department; both will put together more detailed numbers for an upcoming executive session.

Council members along with Mayor Macmillen and Deputy Mayor Zampano agree that there should be an Executive Session scheduled for the second meeting in November.

8. New Business: Discussion and Action:

a. PropertyCheck by Cott Systems Service Agreement

Town Manager Downes shared there was a presentation property check system to assist residents against property fraud- they can help insulate residents if any transaction is put in about their property.

Lisa Valenti, Town Clerk shared more information. Propertycheck from Cott Systems helps protect constituents from potential property fraud. This is a free of charge subscription-based feature that enables constituents to be automatically notified of any recorded document that affects their property. the property owner would simply enroll in the service via web-based application from the County's website. In light of potential fraud becoming an issue, it would alert property owners to any documents recorded in the Town Clerk;s office in real time, thus helping them to address any issues quickly.

MOTION: To approve the Town Manager to sign a contract with Cott systems for Propertycheck system, for 2023-24 fiscal year.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Abelson

Discussion: Councilor Abelson asked if there is any cost to the town. Ms. Valenti stated that no, the cost for this service will be covered within her budget. Councilor Abelson asked if it could be done by address and not by name. Ms. Valenti responded that in the Town Clerk's office it is filed by name and not address. Councilor Abelson asked how members of the community would be informed of this service. Town Manager Downes said they could alert the media outlets- Totoket times, the Sound, etc about this.

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

b. Review and approval of specifications for RFP #924006 – Revaluation 2024

Town Manager Downes shared The Town is seeking proposals for a Property Revaluation per State Statute. Our Purchasing Agent Mike Fumiatti and I don't think it's necessary and we haven't done it in our prior experiences, as we can withhold 10% of the contract until all appeals are completed by the Board of Assessment Appeals.

MOTION: To approve RFP # 924006- Revaluation 2024.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Diamond

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

c. Review and approval of specifications for RFP #924007 – Design Services DPW Renovation

Town Manager Downes shared that the Town is seeking proposals to provide Design Services for the proposed Renovation of the Forest Road Facility Administrative Office and Employee Area. The object of this will be for the Director of Public Works Merola and the Department of Public Works team to prepare a budget for the actual renovation.

MOTION: To approve RFP # 924007- Design Services DPW Renovation.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Diamond

Discussion: Councilor Angeloni asked if we have money in the budget to do renovation in the budget or is this just to get the design and specs? Town Manager Downes said it's just to get design specs. Director of Public Works Merola verified this is one of the line item transfers that was done for the design and specs of the project.

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

d. Approval of the 2023-24 through 2028-29 Capital Improvements Plan

Finance Director Esposito shared that at the September 19, 2023 Town Council meeting, a motion was passed to forward the 2023-24 through 2028-29 Capital Improvements Plan to the Planning & Zoning Commission for review pursuant to Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General statutes. The item was discussed at the PZC meeting on October 5, 2023. Attached is the memorandum from David Perkins, Town Planner wherein he references that the PZC rendered a favorable decision on the CIP.

MOTION: BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the North Branford Town Council adopts the 2023-24 through 2028-29 Capital Improvements Plan pursuant to the favorable review by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Goad

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

e. Financial Report for the Month Ended September 30, 2023

Treasurer/Finance Director Esposito shared the Financial Report as of September 30, 2023. The report continues to be positive, overall revenue 44.6% compared to 43.4% from this time last year. Revenue is trending ahead. Expenditures are at 25.4 %, compared to 27.2% expended last year. There are no red flags. Things are trending favorably.

f. Appropriation Transfers

Treasurer/Finance Director Esposito shared information on the Appropriation Transfers. A new sheet was provided to the Council as one of the wage accounts for Public Works was added in error.

MOTION: BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the North Branford Town Council hereby approves the following appropriation transfers, as amended by the Treasurer/Finance Director.

MOVED: Councilor Angeloni

SECOND: Councilor Diamond

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

g. Approval of Tax Refunds

MOTION: BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the North Branford Town Council approves the tax refunds as recommended by the Town Manager and the Treasurer/Finance Director.

MOVED: Councilor Diamond

SECOND: Councilor Angeloni

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

h. Resolution Requesting the Governor and General Assembly to Take Action on Criminal Justice Measures

Town Manager Downes shared the resolution before you tonight is the product of my discussions with State Representative Vincent Candelora over what are some of the most impactful issues relative to Criminal Justice that we are feeling right here at home.

Our Chief of Police Kevin Halloran has indicated his support for this resolution, and Councilor Pelliccia, who unfortunately can't be with us this evening, also asked that I convey his support for this resolution this evening as well.

Councilor Palladino shared the following memorandum: In consideration of escalating activity in North Branford as well as across the state, the attached resolution requesting action on various criminal justice measures by the Connecticut General Assembly and the Governor is included for the Town Council to add to this evening's agenda.

Whereas, Residents in communities throughout Connecticut, including North Branford, are seeing and experiencing an escalation in the seriousness of crime, including motor vehicle theft, car-jackings, robbery, home invasion, targeted shootings, and indiscriminate gunfire.

WHEREAS, Residents in communities throughout Connecticut, including North Branford, are understandably frustrated by a wave of property crime that includes home and motor vehicle break-ins that have caused victims financial hardship while leaving them feeling violated.

WHEREAS, the Connecticut General Assembly has failed to adopt substantial measures to deter crime.

WHEREAS, the Connecticut General Assembly, backed by the Governor, has focused efforts on closing prisons, making the jobs of police officers more difficult, eroding our state's cash bail system, pursuing jail diversion programs for criminal offenders, and erasing criminal records.

WHEREAS, the Connecticut General Assembly has put forth an inadequate effort to respond to the needs and concerns of crime victims.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the North Branford Town Council urges the Connecticut General Assembly to take the following legislative action to deter crime in the state while also holding perpetrators of crime more accountable for their illegal actions:

1. Increase the mandatory minimum sentence for a crime of robbery involving an occupied motor vehicle that involves a firearm or deadly weapon and increase the penalties for crimes committed using a stolen motor vehicle or stolen firearm.
2. Require crimes involving violence, theft of a motor vehicle, sexual offenses and offenses involving the use of a firearm to be adjudicated in the geographical area where the offense occurred, not where the perpetrator resides.
3. Designate offenses for which a promise to appear in court cannot be granted, such as criminal possession of a firearm and criminal violation of a protective order.
4. Expand the list of offenses that are ineligible for automatic erasure of a criminal record, including, but not limited to, intentional possession of a weapon on school grounds, obstructing and threatening police officers, and hate crimes.
5. Increase the penalty from a misdemeanor to a felony for enticing a juvenile to commit a criminal act, also lowering the age that an adult may be charged with that from 23 to 18;
6. Prohibit the award of risk reduction credits, also known as “good time credits,” to any inmate convicted of a crime involving a firearm.
7. Repeal aspects of the so-called police accountability legislation, which exposes municipalities and officers to frivolous lawsuits while also negatively affecting the ability of cities and towns to recruit and retain law enforcement professionals.
8. Support municipalities by providing adequate funding for compliance with new state mandates on police departments, while incentivizing the enhancement of pension benefits to attract people into attract new people into the career of law enforcement.
9. Expand the circumstances in which a juvenile is automatically transferred to the regular criminal docket, including commission of a serious juvenile offense such as carrying of a pistol or revolver without a permit, robbery, or sexual assault.

10. Add murder committed during an incident of domestic violence as a qualifying crime for murder with special circumstances.

IF PASSED AND ADOPTED, by the Town Council of North Branford in Connecticut on **October 17, 2023**. Upon passage by the Town Council, the Town Manager is directed to furnish a copy of this Resolution to the Governor, the Speaker of the State House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate, the majority and minority leaders of both chambers, and to the members of the State House and Senate representing the Town of North Branford.

Councilor Mase asked if there was a way to publicize this letter. Mayor Macmillen asked for Town Manager Downes to look into having it publicized, whether it be as an editorial in the Totoket Times or something like that.

MOTION: Be it Hereby resolved that the North Branford Town Council instructs the Town Manager to furnish a copy of this Resolution to the Governor, the Speaker of the State House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the State Senate, the majority and minority leaders of both chambers, and to the members of the State House and Senate representing the Town of North Branford.

MOVED: Councilor Palladino

SECOND: Councilor Angeloni

Discussion: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

9. Citizens' statements and petitions

Cliff Potter, Northford. He stated has a plan to get Christine Cohen to appear at a Town Council meeting to answer questions. It's interesting how she doesn't get involved unless it seems to involve her. Duff was on the news 30 stating that crime was down. When crime is not down, and it is only going to increase if something isn't done.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:16 p.m.

MOVED: Councilor Abelson

SECOND: Councilor Goad

DISCUSSION: None

With all in favor, the motion is passed.

Kathleen Daly