

**BOROUGH OF NEWTOWN
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

Minutes of the special meeting of the property owners and/or electors of the Borough of Newtown on **Thursday, May 31, 2018** in the Borough Office at Edmond Town Hall, Newtown, CT. Warden Gaston called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Present: Warden James Gaston, Senior Burgess Jay Maher, Second Senior Burgess Betsy Kenyon, Burgess Anthony Baiad, Burgess Bill Lucas, Burgess Chris Gardner, Burgess Bill Eder, Tax Collector Jodie Enriquez, Treasurer Paula Brinkman, Clerk Ann Scaia

Absent: Tree Warden Rob McCulloch

Also Present: LeReine Frampton, Registrar of Voters and 114 members of the public.

Warden Gaston thanked everyone for attending the meeting and copies of the 2018-2019 proposed budget were distributed. He noted he wrote a letter to the Editor that was published in The Bee that gave an explanation of the budget. Warden Gaston gave a brief overview of the role of the Borough which is a preservation tool and proceeded to offer examples of how the Borough has successfully preserved its integrity while working with businesses, state agencies and townspeople. He also explained the proposed new Mill Rate has increased to 1.49 and reminded everyone that during his tenure of 10 years, he has been able to hold the Mill Rate at .85.

Whereas in prior years the Mill Rate tended to average at 1.2-1.5.

He stated we currently have an issue with respect to the preservation of Main Street and the Board of Burgesses is asking for a special assessment which would provide the necessary tools to proceed.

Patricia Eder, of 58 Mt. Pleasant Road, made a motion to approve the Borough's 2018-2019 budget, seconded by Bruce Walczak, of 12 Glover Avenue.

Warden Gaston proceeded to outline and explain the reasoning for the line items that were increased. They are Advertising, Auxiliary Help, Consulting, Historic District and Legal Fees.

Once again, the Borough will be supporting Newtown Hook & Ladder with their Annual Firehouse Ride Fundraiser. There will be monies required for the line item of Election since there will be an election next year. The special assessment of \$100,000 is to address the Main Street issue and to provide a tool for one of two routes. The first route is to be prepared to defend the case which could result in costs of \$300,000 or more in legal fees. The second route is possibly the Borough or a Borough with a non-profit would purchase the property for a short term or if it's self-funded for the long term. It would need to be purchased at a reasonable price and the special assessment of \$100,000 would help in the negotiation of the property. The property has been evaluated at \$1,000,000 and there was a notation that the owner wanted \$1,800,000. The negotiations are still active and whether or not the owner will negotiate an amount anywhere near what is viewed as a fair rate is unknown. Warden Gaston learned from area real estate agents and from his own research that restaurateurs have expressed interest in the property. Warden Gaston further added that over the years the Borough has put aside monies in

anticipation of situations such as this resulting in \$450,000 per the approval of the Borough's auditor, Glenn Nanavaty. A borough resident asked why this asset is not listed on the Borough budget. Warden Gaston explained all assets/liabilities are outlined in the Borough's annual audit which is of public record.

Robert Hall, of 5 Nettleton Avenue, moved to amend the Borough's 2018-2019 by reducing the legal fees to \$25,000 and removing the special assessment of \$100,000, with the reasoning that extra monies should be addressed once action has occurred in regards to the property at 19 Main Street.

Warden Gaston responded by stating the situation at 19 Main Street is a reality and happening now. He also stated the sellers believe if density housing were proposed it would not have to adhere to the Historic District policies, which is not accurate since the Historic District is not a zoning body. Warden Gaston went on to saying if we were to proceed with defending a case we would most likely succeed, but wouldn't it be better to pursue a resolution which would be less costly and would preserve Main Street.

Robert Geckle, of 35 Queen Street, believes this issue is a town issue not a Borough issue and the cost should not reside just with the property owners in the Borough. Warden Gaston stated the Borough historically has taken the lead in historic preservation and felt confident the town would support the Borough financially.

John Vouros, of 29 Main Street, conveyed that he has met with Rob Ryder, the owner of 19 Main Street, for over a year regarding the property. Mr. Vouros said he was speaking on behalf of Rob Ryder stated Mr. Ryder will not be pursuing affordable housing. Mr. Vouros has put Mr. Ryder in touch with architects, Phil Hubbard and Peter Paulos who will guide Mr. Ryder in the design of possible luxury condominiums. Mr. Vouros finished by stating, Mr. Ryder will work with the residents of the Borough for their feedback as he designs the possible luxury condominiums.

A motion to call to question was made to support to remove the special assessment of \$100,000 and lessen the legal fees to \$25,000. The motion was defeated 70 opposed and 33 for.

Douglas Nelson, of 17 The Boulevard, stated the Borough has a reserve fund, so it does not need additional money in the 2018-19 budget. Also, the Borough collects fees from builders for planned new construction. He believes the Borough should wait until further action occurs with 19 Main Street.

Mary Wilson, of 6 Overlook Drive, expressed a concern that by fighting affordable housing we as a town are controlling what type of people can live in our town. Warden Gaston clarified by stating the Borough is not blocking people from living on Main Street, but the issue is preserving the historic look of Main Street.

Laura Lerman, of 55 Main Street, expressed her concern that people are not opposed to affordable housing but to high density housing and its scale in the historic district.

Chris Fadus, of 5 Sunset Hill Road, moved the question to support removing the special assessment of \$100,000 and reducing the legal fees to \$25,000. The motion passed 112 for, 1 opposed and 1 abstained.

The motion of Robert Hall, of 5 Nettleton Avenue, to amend the Borough's 2018-2019 budget by removing the special assessment of \$100,000 and reducing the legal fees to \$25,000 was approved with 75 yes, 25 opposed and 1 abstained.

Michael Floros, of 32 Queen Street, made a motion to move to question to vote on the remaining portion of the proposed Borough's 2018-2019 budget as presented. The motion was approved with 92 yes votes.

The motion made by Patricia Eder, of 58 Mt. Pleasant Road, to approve the Borough's 2018-2019 budget, seconded by Bruce Walczak, of 12 Glover Avenue, was voted on:

The Mill Rate for 2018-2019 – 0.96
The Borough's 2018-2019 Budget as presented, except the amendments that were previously passed = total \$229,330 budget.

The motion passed with 84 yes votes.

Kenneth Lerman, of 55 Main Street, made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15p.m.,
Burgess Eder seconded the motion and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Scaia
Borough Clerk