

**BOROUGH OF NEWTOWN  
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

Minutes of the special meeting of the property owners and/or electors of the Borough of Newtown on **Thursday, June 6, 2019** in the Gymnasium at Edmond Town Hall, Newtown, CT.  
Warden Maher called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m.

**Present:** Warden Jay Maher, Second Senior Burgess Betsy Kenyon, Burgess Bill Lucas, Burgess Chris Gardner, Burgess Bill Eder, Burgess James Gaston, Tax Collector Jodie Enriquez, Treasurer Paula Brinkman, Clerk Ann Scaia, Auditor Glenn Nanavaty and Legal Counsel Monte Frank

**Absent:** Burgess Anthony Baiad and Tree Warden Rob McCulloch

**Also Present:** LeReinne Frampton, Registrar of Voters and 112 members of the public.

Warden Maher thanked everyone for attending the meeting and copies of the 2019-2020 proposed budget were distributed.

**Burgess Gaston made a motion to approve the Borough's 2019-2020 budget,** seconded by Burgess Gardner.

Revenues Anticipated from Prior Year are \$50,000.00; Building Revenues Anticipated are \$20,000.00; and Interest is \$1,000.00 making total revenues other than taxes equal to \$71,000.00. The Tax Collection Rate is 98.5%. The Proposed Mill Rate for 2019-2020 is 0.67%.

Warden Maher opened the floor for discussion to the revised 2019-2020 proposed budget.

Paul Fadus, of 5 Sunset Hill Road, is concerned over the belief borough residents may not have a voice in how the reserve is spent. He suggested \$200,000 of the reserve be spent towards the 2019-2020 Borough budget before he would support the passing of the budget.

Robert Hall, of 5 Nettleton Avenue, though he supports the need of reserve funds, he expressed opposition to the budget for two reasons. First he does not support the possibility of a sidewalk on Rt. 302 on a road with no pedestrians unlike a need for a sidewalk on Elm Drive. The second reason relates not seeing any measures taken in the budget to hire a planner to protect the integrity of the borough.

Dennis O'Connor, of 12 Grand Place, stated he and his wife acquired over 300 signatures supporting the desire for a sidewalk on Rt. 302. He wanted borough residents to be aware of the support exhibited in the creation of the sidewalk from both borough and non-borough residents. He conveyed how dangerous it currently is to walk along Rt. 302 and the proposed sidewalk would offer a safe means to walk along Rt. 302.

Darlene Spencer, of 24 Sugar Lane, expressed support of the proposed sidewalk on Rt. 302 and also agreed it is a dangerous road to walk compared to Elm Drive.

Herb Rosenthal, of 70 Main Street, inquired as to the timing of the expenditure of the proposed sidewalk on Rt. 302. Warden Maher conveyed conversations have been ongoing for the past 2 years, however, no expenditures have occurred at this time. He stated conversations with Land Use have occurred and they support the proposed sidewalk but it is not a part of their master plan. Warden Maher believed the proposed Rt. 302 sidewalk would be a complement to the soon to be realized sidewalk on the southeast side on South Main Street. Warden Maher further assured everyone the Board of Burgesses would not pursue a capital expenditure without public approval of the borough residents.

Lyndon Thomas, of 22 Juniper Road, requested the capital expenditure of the proposed sidewalk be included in the budget and could continue to be a line item in the budget until its completion.

Kathy Geckle, of 35 Queen Street, on behalf of her husband, Rober Geckle, conveyed his concerns regarding the budget. To begin, she outlined the line items of legal fees (\$20,000), Sidewalks (\$10,000) and a salary increase of approximately 33% should be paid with the reserve funds, lowering the overall budget to approximately \$193,000 and leaving approximately \$500,000 in the reserve. The second concern is transparency of the use of reserve funds and belief monies would be spent at the discretion of the Board of Burgesses without borough resident's knowledge. Lastly there was confusion over whether the borough residents are being asked to approve the proposed sidewalk in tonight's meeting given the project will occur over several years.

Ted Welsh, of 4 King Street, asked if the budget is voted down what would be the next steps. Warden Maher stated the Board of Burgesses would reconvene and submit a new budget for review. He also stated the new proposed budget would be published in The Bee for two consecutive weeks prior to the Borough Budget meeting.

Shushil Gupta, of 7 Lincoln Road, asked how the reserve is being utilized and couldn't it be used to lower the yearly borough taxes. Warden Maher stated only six years ago the borough only had approximately \$240,000 in the reserve. In the past six years there have tremendous rollouts totaling roughly \$249,000 in building fees. In the proposed 2019-2020 budget it proposes utilizing \$50,000 from the reserve to reduce the budget total. This results in Mill Rate of .67 which is a 30% decrease in resident's tax bill. Burgess Gaston reminded the borough residents the borough cannot bond. He further stated upon recommendation of the borough's auditor a reserve of approximately two times what the budget is would be prudent to afford unanticipated expenditures. He further conveyed the year end pending expenses and the proposed sidewalk expense would leave the approximately \$400,000 in the reserve as recommended by the borough auditor.

Margaret Hull Thompson, 6 Old Castle Drive, asked historically over the past 15 years what has the borough had in reserve. Warden Maher stated there has been approximately \$225,000 which is roughly one year's reserve. He stated the borough auditor advised the borough have approximately two year's reserve.

Ana Carvalho, of 5 Sunset Hill Road, requested clarity on a statement Warden Maher made in his opening remarks, the status of the borough reserve and its use and need for transparency in the borough's financial dealings. Warden Maher encouraged borough residents to attend the monthly borough meetings held the second Tuesday of every month at Edmond Town Hall. He also stated the borough has consistently remained transparent in its financial affairs which is outlined monthly in the borough minutes. Burgess Gaston clarified the Borough would legally defend its zoning commission as per the charter and that it is legally obligated to defend its Zoning Commissions and Historic District Commission. He further outlined a variety of past and present legal activities. He reiterated the need for a reserve in anticipation of possible future legal fees.

David Francis, of 25 Schoolhouse Hill Road, asked what would occur if legal fees exceeded the budgeted \$20,000. Burgess Gaston stated a special appropriations public meeting would occur to vote on additional spending.

Douglas Nelson, 14 The Boulevard, asked if the borough residents were going to vote on the proposed sidewalk project since it is listed on the proposed budget. Burgess Gaston stated we would not be voting on the sidewalk tonight and the mention of the sidewalk was simply there for explanation of a possible future expenditure. Mr. Nelson also confirmed with Warden Maher's agreement that a public hearing would occur to discuss the proposed sidewalk before any spending would occur.

Lisa Floros, 32 Queen Street, asked why it appears the cost of the proposed sidewalk would be the sole burden of the borough. Burgess Gaston stated it is the role of the Board of Burgesses to protect the borough and maintain its integrity.

Chris Fallon, 6 Hall Lane, suggested a possible sidewalk from Hall Lane to Main Street. He also expressed a desire to list the reserve fund on the budget.

Mel Pfeiffer, of 24 The Boulevard, expressed concern over the changes and building projects in the borough. He would like to see a budget that supports the protection of the integrity of the borough.

Dan Shea, 44 Queen Street, expressed how much the Borough and Queen Street, in particular, has changed tremendously over the years. His desire is to see borough funds utilized to solve problems we have in the borough. He also expressed his support of the efforts of the Board of Burgesses.

Mark Poirier, of 53 Main Street, agrees funds are needed to fight possible legal allegations and supports the Board of Burgesses.

Tim Cunningham, 9 Old Castle Drive, asked for clarification of the timing of spending monies towards the proposed sidewalk. Warden Maher stated future conversations will be occurring in the coming 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Bruce Walczak, of 12 Glover Avenue, believes the Board of Burgesses has created a prudent budget and supports maintaining a proper reserve for future expenditures.

David Freedman, of 4 Laurel Road, asked for clarification on what the \$150,000 covers on the proposed sidewalk project. Warden Maher stated the \$150,000 is an estimated amount that would be further investigated as the project is further pursued.

**Bruce Walczak, of 12 Glover Avenue, made a motion to call to question to vote on the proposed Borough's 2019-2020 budget as presented.** The motion was seconded by Patricia Eder, of 58 Mt. Pleasant Road. The motion carried with 81 yes votes.

**Herb Rosenthal, of 70 Main Street, made the motion to vote by paper ballot.** The motion was seconded by Robert Hall, of 5 Nettleton Avenue. The motion was defeated.

**Burgess Gaston made a motion to approve the Borough's 2019-2020 budget,** seconded by Burgess Gardner. The motion passed with 63 yes votes to 54 no votes.

**Burgess Gaston made a motion to set the Borough's mill rate at 0.67%,** seconded by Burgess Gardner and unanimously approved.

**Burgess Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56p.m.,** Burgess Eder seconded and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Scaia  
Borough Clerk