

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 3 PRIMROSE STREET, NEWTOWN, CT  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2021**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** Alison Plante, Chris Smith, Phil Carroll, Ryan Knapp, Judit DeStefano, Paul Lundquist, Chris Eide, Cathy Reiss, Andy Clure, Dan Honan

**ABSENT:** Jordana Bloom

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Town Clerk Debbie Aurelia Halstead, Matthew Mihalcik, 0 public, 0 press

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Lundquist called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:34 pm.

**VOTER COMMENT:** None

**MINUTES:** Mr. Honan moved to accept the minutes of the July 21, 2021 Legislative Council Regular Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Carroll. Mr. Mihalcik abstained. Motion passes (10-1).

**COMMUNICATIONS:** The Council received invitations to attend a celebration in honor of Dan and Anna Wiedemann on September 1<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 pm at Dickinson Park, as well as, the annual Back-to-School Convocation on Wednesday August 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Ordinance Committee – Mr. Knapp reported that the committee is continuing to do research in smaller groups and will regroup once everyone is completed.

**FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT:** First Selectman Dan Rosenthal began his report by congratulating Mr. Mihalcik on joining the Council. He reported on the most recent BOS meeting and that they have begun the year-end transfer process. It was a good budget year. They concluded on a couple of designations which included supporting the Lion's Club project at Dickinson Park to purchase new adaptive playground equipment for children with disabilities. The other designation was for repairing some lighting on the Fairfield Hills campus which was damaged by a recent lightening strike. These totaled about \$110,000. We put \$800,000 in capital and non-recurring on an undesignated basis. We also have about \$1.4 over the 12% guideline. We are well positioned going into the next budget cycle. We moved the appropriations around for Hawley and the Capital Roads projects. We initiated the process, pursuant with 8-10 in the Charter, of proceeding to sell 3 Main Street which will go to the Council next. Assuming the Council agrees to this, he can then move forward to start marketing the property. He recommends that we deed-restrict the property which would express what the property can be used for instead of telling someone what it can't be used for. He feels we should proceed with bringing more attention to it. The BOS also moved to sell the 6 Commerce Road property. They moved 27 acres into conservation and the balance of 14 acres was approved in a contract to sell it to Teton Capital. They are the same developer who did Church Hill Village. The intended purchase price agreed to is \$3.1 million. This property was given to the state with intentions of the town to develop it, however it just sat. If this moves forward, there is still a process contingent on P&Z. First Selectman Rosenthal also reported on the rise of Covid cases across the state. The Governor has authorized local bodies to issue local mandates around mask wearing if needed. The Governor is not interested in issuing another state-wide mandated executive order on masks. The First Selectman is in contact with our Health Director daily, and in conjunction, they believe that, currently, Newtown is on the positive side. The cases in town are mostly skewed by people traveling, and so far the cases are traceable. From a hospital standpoint, 85% of those are unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. The balance of cases are those vaccinated with co-morbidities. We really need the guidance from DPH – this is something that we'll have to

navigate more than once. It is complicated and has caused some confusion among people and he is staying on top of it. If it does come to the fact that we do have to make a mandate, the First Selectman only has the authority, by Charter, to make a mandate for 5 days. It would then have to go to the Council to extend the mandate. He wants to make sure that he has hard evidence before he makes a decision like that. He has seen plenty of mask wearing in public places. He encourages vaccinations. Since the news about the variant came out, vaccinations have gone up by 30% state-wide. Ms. Reiss thanked the First Selectman for really looking at the data, listening to the experts, and leaving it up to the individual to make the decision on vaccinating. Ms. DeStefano asked the First Selectman if he's been in communication with businesses in town and how do they feel about the possibility of having a mask mandate put in place again. The First Selectman received some feedback, but it's been mostly from restaurant owners who would be against it. So far, he has had one business owner ask to have a mandate put in place. He's all for regionalism, but did not agree with putting a mandate in place only for the reason of being in close proximity to Danbury. Mr. Eide expressed concern that we should be careful with making claims about vaccinated versus non-vaccinated. He feels we should be more mindful of those that do not have a choice and rely solely on mask wearing and social distance protocols. Mr. Lundquist is comfortable with the First Selectman's stance on this and appreciates the path he has taken. First Selectman Rosenthal thanked Donna Culbert greatly – she's done a great job so far and he trusts her opinion. The First Selectman concluded his report by mentioning that Anna Wiedemann had been working on the Suicide Prevention Initiative and on September 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm, a dedication ceremony will be held for the tree that was planted adjacent to the Community Center in memory of lost loved ones.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### *Discussion and Possible Action*

- District 2 Councilman Appointment

In order to replace the vacant seat left by Dan Wiedemann, Mr. Lundquist explained that per Charter 231 Section A-1, the seat can be filled for the remainder of the term within 30 days of a vacancy by a majority vote of the Council members from the same political party as the former member.

Mr. Knapp moved that Matthew Mihalcik be appointed to fill the District 2 vacancy on the Legislative Council. Seconded by Ms. Reiss. Motion passes unanimously among the Republicans present.

Town Clerk Debbie Aurelia Halstead officially swore in Mr. Mihalcik to the Legislative Council.

Mr. Lundquist welcomed Mr. Mihalcik to the Council. He explained that should any meetings be called for the Municipal Operations Committee or the Education Committee, Mr. Mihalcik would take the seats left vacant by Mr. Wiedemann on those as well. As Vice-Chair to both committees, Mr. Clure would be responsible for calling meetings and a new Chair could then be voted on.

**VOTER COMMENT:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, Mr. Honan moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm. Seconded by Ms. Reiss. All in favor.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Rina Quijano, Clerk*

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
AT THE NEXT MEETING.**