



**TOWN COUNCIL
WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2023
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING – 6:45 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING – 7:00 P.M.**

**MINUTES
WATERTOWN TOWN HALL
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
61 ECHO LAKE RD.
WATERTOWN, CT 06795**

1. Call Meeting to Order.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Roll Call.

PRESENT: Jonathan Ramsay, Chair
Mary Ann Rosa, Vice Chair
Ken Demirs
Robert Desena
Gary Lafferty
Robert Retallick
Denise Russ
Rachael Ryan (phone)

ABSENT: Anthony DiBona

OTHERS PRESENT: Mark Raimo, Town Manager
Susan Zappone, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director

4. Recognitions. – none.

5. Public Comment.

Richard Rozanski, talked about the lost suit from Waterbury for water and sewer and had questions in regards to payment.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay asked Mr. Rozanski for a copy of the questions for Town Council.

Frances Poplowski, 35 Chestnut Avenue asked questions for the Capital Account and sewer bills and an accounting of the water & sewer's monies. She asked questions in regards to special meetings and executive sessions.

Katherine Camara, 31 Cottage Place wanted more information about \$42,000 for the consulting engineer. Ms. Camara asked if the audit was flagged in regards to the water & sewer. She talked and asked questions about the water & sewer bill payment.

6. Minutes.

a. July 17, 2023 - Regular Meeting

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Desena: I move to approve the Regular Meeting minutes dated July 17, 2023 as presented.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

b. August 1, 2023 – Special Meeting

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the Special Meeting minutes dated August 1, 2023 as presented.

Discussion: none.

Aye: 7 Ramsay, Rosa, Desena, Lafferty, Retallick, Russ, Ryan

Nay: 0

Abstain: 1 Demirs

Motion passes

7. Chairman's Report

a. Correspondence.

1. Resignation letter from Michael Garassino as a member of the Water and Sewer Authority, dated August 15, 2023.

2. Chairman Jonathan Ramsay answered a question regarding Executive Session during Public Comment, the rules behind it are set by the state and there is never a vote in Executive Session.

8. Town Manager's Report.

Mark Raimo reported:

1. Board of Education Town Health Fund audit is continuing and is coming to a finish. King and King are working on completing a report for us. I am hoping to have it in September for council's review.
2. We concluded a framework of understanding working with CCM and a person to work through shared services with the BOE. That framework should have gone into your packet for this evening. I am hoping to have that in for the September meeting for your review and comment. Then we can go back and forth with the BOE to decide how to move forward with that.
3. Our ClearGov software is halfway through we have uploaded the last five years into the software. We are working on implementing how to move forward anticipating to begin training with the Department Heads in September, October to keep us ready for this new budget cycle in December.
4. Our bond and band sale went through on July 18th. We bonded 9 million dollars for Board of Education improvements for road improvements and the Fire Truck. We banded 6 million dollars for similar projects. We did pretty well on the interest rate, we are somewhere in the ball park of 3 ½ percent with the premium buy back.
5. I have been meeting with department heads throughout the month. We are sitting down and going over goals for the following year. We are talking about the budget already. Talking through the expansion of the budget over the last two years and how it is important now that we continue to increase our efficiency and work within what we have been give by the tax payers. I anticipate finishing all those meetings up by the end of August and will continue to work on all the goals that the department heads have come up for themselves throughout the next year.
6. As you are aware there is an appeal process between the City of Waterbury and the Town of Watertown. There was a press release that was sent out by myself. As the press release went out there was 7 citizens who did come to me, we sat down and talked over the general points of the lawsuit and not one person walked out the door angry with the position the town has taken. I would extend that offer to the people that are here tonight to sit down and see the position of the Town. I am happy to talk through as far as we can. We are in litigation we are not going to push through a press release with facts that would hurt us in litigation. That is an important point for us to make.
7. Taft has sent their check to the Town for \$195,000 it has been increased and I would like to thank Taft for making that payment to the Town. They have

also included a payment to the Fire Department directly for \$18,500 and the Police Department for \$13,000.

8. I would like to take a moment to say thank you to the Highway Department, probably the people have seen all the work that is happening down in the area of Riverside and Route 73. They have done a lot of work down into the Steele Brook River. They mitigated quite a bit of flooding in that last storm we had by clearing that out. They took 140 truckloads of sediment which allowed the water to rush through without backing up and flooding that area. While they rented out that 60-foot boom construction equipment they have been out working in other detention basins cleaning those out in hopes of mitigating storm water.

9. With them doing all that work, Mr. Lukowski and I talked today with them doing all that work we have kind of stepped away a little bit in doing some of the maintenance work around the stop signs. The town is aware of that and they are out there looking for overgrown stop signs, potholes and they are going to get back to that work this week. I would like to say thank you for all the hard work to the Highway Department.

9. Subcommittee Reports – none.

10. New Business.

- a. Consider the adoption of a resolution in support of grant-in-aid application under the Small-Town Economic Assistance Program for the renovation of the Watertown Highway Garage.

RESOLUTION

In support of an application under the Small-Town Economic Assistance Program in the amount of \$500,000 for the renovation of the Watertown Highway Garage

WHEREAS, the existing Watertown Highway Garage located at 91 Burton St, Watertown, was built in 1954 before code requirements, and:

WHEREAS, it is necessary to upgrade the current Highway Department facility to improve the quality of the working environment to support a safe and efficient highway operation, and;

WHEREAS the Town of Watertown is eligible under C.G.S. §4-66g SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (STEAP) to apply for grants-in-aid to fund economic development, community conservation and quality of life capital projects.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council supports an application in the amount of \$500,000 under the STEAP Program to provide for funding for the following improvements to the Watertown Highway Garage:

Roof repair or replace, windows, fire alarm system with carbon monoxide alarm, interior painting, HVAC, office expansion and conference room, fencing, entrance gate, code upgrade to electrical system, exterior block and brick repair and safety line strips.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town of Watertown commits to funding \$100,000 for a total project cost of \$600,000.

Dated at Watertown, Connecticut this 21st day of August, 2023.

Jonathan Ramsay, Chairman

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Denise Russ I move to adopt a resolution in support of a grant-in-aid application under the Small-Town Economic Assistance Program for the renovation of the Watertown Highway Garage.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent stated we are going to apply for a STEAP 2023 grant for the highway garage. It was built in 1954, it is 69 years of age. Basically, it is going to do a new roof, new windows, it is going to do an office extension, gates and fence to the front, electrical work and a fire and carbon monoxide alarms, new air condition for 3 offices that are in the garage. A couple of things that we did not have the funds to do was a new boiler, to raise the roof, and a fire suppression system because the limit of the grant is \$500,000 plus a 20% match of for the Town which is \$100,000 for a total of \$600,000. This will buy us another five to ten years, until we try to acquire property and build a new highway garage for the town.

Motion passed unanimously

- b. Consider authorizing the expenditure of \$100,000 of the previously allocated funds from ARPA for the Main Street Improvement Project for a deposit for the purchase and development of 666-686.

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Desena: I move to authorize the expenditure of \$100,000 of the previously allocated funds from ARPA for the Main Street Improvement Project for a deposit for the purchase and development of 666-686 Main Street.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay stated this is not an additional \$100,000, it is just a deposit related to that project.

Denise Russ stated for clarification for the people, this \$100,000 is the money that we already set aside for this project.

Chairman Jonathan Ramsay answered no additional, it is just a deposit.

Motion passed unanimously

- c. Consider a resolution authorizing the transfer of funds between line items for close out adjustments for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, expenses in the 2022-23 fiscal year require the transfer of funds:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by vote of the Watertown Town Council, that the following actions are taken relative to the transfer of funds.

**WAGE & SALARY ADJUSTMENTS
 FOR FY 2022-2023 TO CLOSE OUT THE FISCAL YEAR**

GENERAL FUND

NO: 1

To:

010.50110.004.0037.9010	Fin - Bookkeeper II	14,473
010.50110.006.0015.9010	Tax Collector	17,937
010.50125.006.0000.9010	Tax - Temporary Salaries	17,448
010.50120.017.2617.9010	Emergency Manger Dir	7,164
010.50110.020.0057.9010	Patrol Officers	90,588
010.50130.020.0000.9010	Police Overtime	49,337
010.50146.020.0000.9010	Police Uniform Allow	6,271
010.50125.029.3104.9010	Social Services Clerk	15,490
010.50110.031.0046.9010	Highway Personnel	124,353
010.50110.031.0049.9010	Working Foremen	29,256
010.50130.031.0000.9010	Highway - Overtime	9,952
010.50120.033.2091.9010	Transfer Station Attend.	1,096
010.50110.036.0050.9010	Parks – Laborer	6,172
010.50110.036.0128.9010	Park Maintainer I	8,186
010.50125.039.0000.9010	Rec. Temporary Salaries	16,018
010.50160.043.0000.9010	Police Sp. Duty Nontown	<u>66,939</u>
		480,680

From:

010.50110.005.0017.9010	Treasurer	14,500
010.50110.006,0021,9010	Asst. Tax Collector	18,000
010.50110.006.0038.9010	Bookkeeper I - Tax	17,400
010.50120.017.0069.9010	Volunteer Fire	7,200
010.50155.020.0000.9010	Police – Holiday	31,400
010.50110.020.1822.9010	Lieutenant	13,600
010.50110.020.0056.9010	Detectives	13,000
010.50110.019.0176.9010	Deputy Chief	17,800
010.50110.045.0091.9010	Wage Benefit Adjustment	109,500
010.50125.029.0000.9010	Temporary Salaries - SS	29,600
010.50110.031.3076.9010	Highway General Foreman	78,400
010.50125.036.0000.9010	Temporary Salaries - Parks	25,800
010.50125.039.0000.9010	Sr. Center/Operator	22,000
010.50161.043.0000.9010	Police Special Duty Town	25,000

010.50225.042.0000.9010	Severance – Sick/Vacation	15,000
010.50130.032.0000.9010	Snow Overtime	<u>42,480</u>
		480,680

FY 2021-2022 TO CLOSE OUT THE FISCAL YEAR

GENERAL FUND

NO:2

To:

010.50325.014.0000.9010	Utilities – Fuel Oil & Gas	14,682
010.50333.040.0000.9010	Medical Services	10,277
010.50334.041.0000.9010	Legal & Fiscal Services	<u>13,085</u>
		38,044

From:

010.50323.014.0000.9010	Utilities - Electric	25,300
010.50720.043.0535.9010	Town Clerk to State	<u>12,744</u>
		38,044

Dated at Watertown, Connecticut this 21st day of August, 2023.

Jonathan Ramsay, Chairman
Watertown Town Council

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the resolution authorizing the transfer of funds between line items for close out adjustments for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

- d. Consider a resolution authorizing the transfer of funds between line items for close out adjustments for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for the Special Account.

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, expenses in the 2022-23 fiscal year require the transfer of funds:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by vote of the Watertown Town Council, that the following actions are taken relative to the transfer of funds.

**LINE-ITEM ADJUSTMENTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOUNT
FOR FY 2022-2023 TO CLOSE OUT THE FISCAL YEAR**

SPECIAL FUND

NO: 1

To:

015.50110.074.00914.9015	Wage & Benefit Sewer	21,727
015.50110.074.0259.9015	Utility Maintainer-Sewer	18,375
015.50130.074.0000.9015	Overtime – Sewer	5,785
015.50334.074.0158.9015	Legal Services - Sewer	33,270

017.50110.075.0091.9010	Wage & Benefit - Water	21,727
017.50110.075.0259.9017	Utility Maintainer	18,374
017.50130.075.0000.9017	Overtime - Water	9,125
017.50230.075.0000.9017	Medical Insurance	25,000
017.50334.075.0158.9017	Legal Services - Water	33,270

074.50125.123.0082.9074	Crestbrook Temp. Salaries	30,930
074.50130.123.0000.9074	Crestbrook - Overtime	10,029
074.50310.123.0080.9074	Golf Pro	10,625
074.50317.123.1913.9074	Crestbrook Rest Maint	<u>4,916</u>
		243,153

From:

015.50110.074.0258.9015	Utility Mant/Meter Reader	18,000
015.50110.074.1784.9015	Supt/Engineer	23,500
015.50110.074.1702.9015	Asst Superintendent	30,500
015.50310.074.0470.9015	Consultant Town Engineer	7,157

017.50110.075.0258.9017	Utility Maint/Meter Reader	18,000
017.50110.075.1702.9017	Asst. Superintendent	34,300
017.50110.075.1784.9017	Supt/Engineer	25,100
017.50220.075.0000.9017	Employee’s Retirement	8,800
017.50323.075.0000.9017	Utilities – Electric	21,296

074.50110.123.0050.9074	Crestbrook – Laborer	23,700
074.50317.123.1606.9074	Maint Land & Building	24,300
074.50110.123.0049.9074	Working Foremen	2,400
074.50110.123.0071.9074	Mechanic	1,800
074.50720.123.2405.9074	Credit Card Fees	<u>4,300</u>
		243,153

Dated at Watertown, Connecticut this 21st day of August, 2023.

Jonathan Ramsay, Chairman
Watertown Town Council

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the resolution authorizing the transfer of funds between line items for close out adjustments for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for the Special Account.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

- e. Consider an appropriation from the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 General Fund to the Police overtime account in the amount of \$2,965. Funds received for Watertown Police Department participation in the Statewide Violent Crime Task Force.

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Desena: I move to approve the appropriation from the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 General Fund to the Police overtime account in the amount of \$2,965. Funds received for Watertown Police Department participation in the Statewide Violent Crime Task Force.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

- f. Consider an appropriation from the Water Capital Fund in the amount of \$21,100 and the Sewer Capital Fund in the amount of \$21,100 to the Consulting Engineer line item for funds needed to cover the cost of the NewGen Strategies & Solutions Water & Sewer Rate Study.

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Ken Demirs: I move to authorize an appropriation from the Water Capital Fund in the amount of \$21,100 and the Sewer Capital Fund in the amount of \$21,100 to the Consulting Engineer line item for funds needed to cover the cost of the NewGen Strategies & Solutions Water & Sewer Rate Study.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent stated New Gen Strategies and Solutions New Gen Strategies and Solutions is the company that did our last rate study and that is who we are going for with this rate study. To look at all the different parameters for the operation and capital costs for water & sewer as well as the legal dispute that we lost but that is under appeal right now. Dave and I have been working a lot of numbers we are pretty good at it but you need something better than good at the numbers that we are looking at for our future rate increase. To look at the 18.8 million as well as the current operational and capital costs.

Denise Russ asked when was the last time they came and did a rate study?

David McMahon, Assistant Superintendent answered 2015.

Denise Russ asked they don't do a five-year plan or a 10-year plan when they do this study so you know if you have to increase the rates or you can hold off.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered being 2015 that was 8 years ago so they do look at the projections for that 5 to 10 years but now it is a critical time for them to look at the numbers that we have facing us.

Denise Russ asked if they do this study, they will give us five years or 10 years so we don't have to do a study down the road sooner.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered correct for those 5 to 10 years, this was also voted on by the Water & Sewer Authority at the last meeting a week or two ago. Correct, we don't want to do a rate study every year or every two or three years we want something for 5 to 10 years.

Rachel Ryan asked I am curious the timing of this and how this might impact the lawsuit. Are we hoping that this might help us in the appeal process or is this just something as Denise alluded to that we just need to do on a regular basis.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered I think it is a combination of the both. I think we were talking about this even before we got the tough news in July. Because you have to look at the numbers to see if we are charging the right amount of funds to the customers. I don't know if I answered it correctly, I think it is also driving us to do the rate study.

Rachael Ryan asked the money would be coming from the Water & Sewer Fund, correct?

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered correct, the reserve that we have. They are going to give us many scenarios on where we want to go with the future rates.

Rachael Ryan asked is this the best company to use or the only company. Why did we choose to go with this company?

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered predominately because we used them in the past and they were good for us. A gentleman by Mike Maker they do this for a living for the rate studies and plus also the timing that we need it now, we don't want to wait for the future.

Vice Chair Mary Ann Rosa asked how long is the study going to take.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered we sat down with them twice but we are waiting to get the purchase order in place and then to have the timeline. We hope that it will take 90 days to have more accurate numbers on where we have to go.

Vice Chair Mary Ann Rosa asked and you are going to bring that information to us once it's done.

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered yes, we have to go to two boards Water & Sewer Authority and the Town Council.

Robert Retallick asked was it a unanimous vote by the Water & Sewer Authority?

Jerry Lukowski, Director of Public Works/Water & Sewer Superintendent answered yes.

Robert Desena stated with Jerry's intake for the vision with the future and with the upcoming rates changing without a doubt, I think it is a very good amount to be wisely spent.

Aye: 7 Ramsay, Rosa, Demirs, Desena, Lafferty, Retallick, Russ
Nay: 0
Abstain: 1 Ryan

Motion passes

- g. Consider a resolution authorizing tax refunds.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Taxpayers have made application for the property tax refunds in accordance with C.G.S. Section 12-129 *Refund of Excess Payment*:

WHEREAS, the Tax Collector recommends that the refunds be made in accordance with the provisions of Section 12-1298;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Town Council approves the attached listing of tax refunds:

Dated at Watertown, Connecticut this 21st day of August, 2023.

Jonathan Ramsay, Chairman
Watertown Town Council

See attached

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to approve the resolution authorizing tax refunds.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

11. Executive Session. Time in 7:29 p.m.

- a. Discussion regarding settlement of the following tax appeals
1. Laurel Mountain Realty, LLC v. Town of Watertown
 2. The Siemon Company v. Town of Watertown
 3. MRCO Industrial, LLC v. Town of Watertown
 4. 1128 Main ST LLC v. Town of Watertown
 5. 14000 Avalon, LLC v. Town of Watertown
 6. Click Bond Inc. v. Town of Watertown

7.1142-1156 Main ST LLC v. Town of Watertown

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Retallick: I move to enter into executive session with the Town Council Members present, the Town Attorney, the Assessor Faith Richmond, Finance Director Sue Zappone and Town Manager, Mark A. Raimo to discuss agenda items listed under executive session concerning tax appeals.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

Time out of Executive Session is 7:42 p.m.

12. New Business Continued:

- a. Consider settlement of the following tax appeals
 1. Laurel Mountain Realty, LLC v. Town of Watertown
 2. The Siemon Company v. Town of Watertown
 3. MRCO Industrial, LLC v. Town of Watertown
 4. 1128 Main ST LLC v. Town of Watertown
 5. 14000 Avalon, LLC v. Town of Watertown
 6. Click Bond Inc. v. Town of Watertown
 7. 1142-1156 Main ST LLC v. Town of Watertown

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Ken Demirs: I move to authorize the settlement of the tax appeals as noted on the Agenda for the Town Council meeting on August 21, 2023. Refunds due to the tax appeal will appear as credits on the referenced accounts.

Discussion: none.

Motion passed unanimously

11. Adjournment.

Motion: Mary Ann Rosa seconded by Robert Retallick: to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Ramsay, Chair
Watertown Town Council

Approved: _____
Susan King, Clerk