

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2019**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick in the Enfield Room of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Monday, March 4, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 5:44 p.m.

Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Cressotti, Davis, Deni, Kiner, Ludwick, Muller, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Town Attorney, Maria Elsden; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki

MOTION #4918 by Councilor Szewczak, seconded by Councilor Bosco to go into Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation and Real Estate Negotiations.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #4918** adopted 11-0-0 and the meeting stood recessed at 5:45 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Session of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick at 5:46 p.m.

Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Cressotti, Davis, Deni, Kiner, Ludwick, Muller, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Town Attorney, Maria Elsden; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki

Chairman Ludwick recessed the Executive Session at 6:15 p.m., reconvened the Special Meeting at 6:16 p.m. and stated that during Executive Session, Pending Litigation and Real Estate Negotiations were discussed with no action or votes being taken.

The Special Meeting moved to the Council Chambers.

Also present for this portion of the meeting were Director of Social Services, Dawn Homer-Bouthiette and Assistant Director of Social Services, Damian Humphrey

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Survivor Journeys – Dr. Jay Burton

Dr. Burton stated Survivor Journeys is a non-profit organization that began in March 2015, and the goal of this organization is to support people who have been diagnosed with cancer and help those people and their families and caregivers with emotional, social and educational support. He

noted there will be a Cancer Survivorship 101 forum with national leaders from cancer centers on Saturday, June 8, 2019 at the Basketball Hall of Fame. He stated more information can be found on their website, which is www.survivorjourneys.org He noted they partner with many other organizations and businesses.

Mr. Bromson stated the request is for \$5,000 to provide and expand this service in the community.

Chairman Ludwick requested more information about expansion, and he questioned whether this organization would help patients with things such as insurance or whether a second opinion should be sought. Dr. Burton stated this is more of an emotional support type of program. He noted as a side effect of what they do, there's information and education about cancer and available treatments.

Councilor Bosco questioned where meetings are held, and Dr. Burton stated at this time they have a blood cancer support group that's held at the Senior Center. He noted he'd like to increase what's available in Enfield. He stated there is a national Livestrong program that works through the YMCA, and he wonders why they don't have that program at Enfield's YMCA. He explained this is a 12-week physical therapy program for cancer survivors.

Councilor Cressotti stated his belief a support group for young adults is very important.

Enfield People for People – Lorraine Creedon, Treasurer

Enfield Safe Harbor Warming Center – Monica Wright, Director

Ms. Creedon stated the warming center was initiated in the fall of 2015 by the Christians United in Service, which was comprised of five Enfield churches. She noted they also worked with Enfield Social Services, and they were able to open the warming center in 2016. She stated although they have the support of many churches in Enfield, they are not a church-owned organization. She noted Enfield People for People was founded in 1988 and originally chartered to provide housing and affiliated services, and they had two successful affordable housing projects, one in Hazardville and one in Thompsonville. She noted this group was going to dissolve, but they decided to look at other types of projects they could support, i.e., the warming center, and they held fundraisers to support the warming center. She stated in August 2017 the warming center assumed the charter, therefore, the Enfield Safe Harbor Warming Center is a program under the Enfield People for People, and they are in their fourth year.

Ms. Wright stated she is the Director and Operations Manager at the Enfield Safe Harbor Warming Center. She feels they have been very successful in providing a safe, warm space for homeless people in Enfield. She noted they are located at Holy Trinity Church on Hazard Avenue, and they operate from 9:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. She stated hot meals and snacks are donated by area restaurants. She stated they average nine people per night, and their capacity is 13. She noted

since they've been in operation, they have been able to help people find employment, housing and connect to community resources and providers to help find housing.

She stated the grant would help them extend their hours of operation, which would enable them to open for the January 1st winter season, so they can allow people to have a little more time to come in from the cold. She noted they usually open around January 14th, which is the middle of the month. She stated they're also looking for some assistance in offering vouchers for clothing, transportation (bus passes and tokens). She noted Magic Carpet does not run Sundays, and they would like to be able to shuttle people to the warming center, so they don't have to walk on the dark roads from Thompsonville to Hazardville.

Mr. Bromson stated the request is for \$10,000.

Ms. Wright stated they make up their own volunteer packets, and they do a lot of publications in-house, and they're looking to offset that cost.

Councilor Kiner questioned what's their budget now, and where is that money coming from. He also questioned where the \$10,000 is going. Ms. Creedon stated their current budget is \$25,000, and that's primarily spent on salaries for staff because they have one paid person on every night, and in order to expand the timeline by two weeks, a good portion of that money would go towards salaries. She noted their current funding is primarily from donations of individuals and organizations within the community. She stated they had one goods grant, which supplied them with a lot of the goods they need for their guests. She noted goods are not the issue because they have amazingly charitable people in Enfield, and anytime they ask for anything, they get help, but what they do need is financial support in order to be able to pay their staff if they wish to expand the schedule by weeks and hours. She noted there have been days where people couldn't leave because of the storms, which resulted in an additional expense for salary so that they can have paid staff on site.

Councilor Kiner questioned how a person can become a member of their board of directors. Ms. Creedon stated the board is made up of people from the community and churches in Enfield. She noted if anyone is interested in serving on the board, there are vacancies.

Councilor Szewczak questioned whether they work with Enfield Social Services to help guests find a more permanent, positive situation. Ms. Wright stated yes, they do meet and discuss their guests. She noted they also make sure guests are connected to the resources and community providers they need so their situations can be remedied. She stated they also work with Loaves and Fishes, the Enfield Food Shelf, the CHR Housing Program and other needed resources so they can become self-sufficient.

Councilor Cressotti stated his belief this service is needed. He questioned how many people repeatedly come back every year. Ms. Wright stated there are three guests who have been returning since the beginning. She added they also see people who are employed but cannot afford housing.

Chairman Ludwick questioned how they find housing for people. Ms. Wright referred to a situation where they had a homeless family of seven. She noted she immediately arranged for housing in Hartford for them for three months until a housing voucher became available. She noted a homeless shelter is not an appropriate place for children.

Councilor Unghire expressed her appreciation for all the work they do and for all the churches coming together to make this possible. She questioned whether there's any provision for sheltering in the summer. Ms. Wright stated they do not have provision in the summer. She noted they usually start in the middle of January. She stated they are working toward a start date of the first of the year, which provides a solid three months of sheltering. She noted most shelters start in December or January and run to April 1st. She stated Enfield shelter ends March 30th.

Educational Resources for Children (ERFC) – Chuck Horner, Business Manager & David Meizels, Director of Operations

Mr. Horner stated they've been in town since 1994, and they operate the before and after school centers in all elementary and middle schools – kindergarten through 8th grade. He noted this evening they are before the Council regarding their summer camp. He explained they offer a day camp for seven weeks, starting July 1st and running until August 16th. He stated they offer subsidies to parents and families who are unable to afford summer camp. He noted they have about 125 children a week for seven weeks. He stated about 55% to 60% of the children are subsidized in this program. He noted they provide a full day of activities, serve breakfast and lunch and provide an extended day for working parents and are open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. He stated for those wishing to participate in just the camp, those hours are just 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Meizels stated they work directly with Enfield Public Schools to help identify students for enrollment, and they take referrals from teachers, counselors or principals. He noted one of their major goals is to help prevent summer learning loss, and they have a certified science teacher providing science activities, and they run a digital media program featuring podcasts, stop-motion animation and for older students some exposure to coding. He stated they will run literacy programs, and in addition to the educational piece, they mix in recreation, i.e., sports, arts & crafts programming, performing arts, beach trips, skating rink, special guests, museums, etc.

He stated for high school students, they run a counselor-in-training leadership program to train them in working with young children in a structured, educational and recreational setting.

Mr. Horner stated this funding is strictly for subsidizing the children who need it. He noted they are asking for \$15,000, which will subsidize up to 152 children and depending on how many weeks they participate in the camp, that number can vary a little.

Mr. Meizels stated their goal is that all Enfield families should be able to participate, and all families that need the subsidies can receive the subsidies and be included in the summer program.

Asnuntuck Community College – Sherry Paquette, Director of Student Activities

Ms. Paquette stated she is present this evening to discuss Asnuntuck's food pantry. She noted about a year and a half ago, she and a student co-founded the food pantry on Asnuntuck's campus. She stated food insecurity among Enfield's community college students is a real and true hardship. She stated those people involved in the food pantry became members of the Enfield Hunger Action Team, and they host the meetings at Asnuntuck. She noted 36% of Enfield residents earn less than the basic cost of living for the area. She stated when Enfield students graduate high school, and they decide to attend a community college as opposed to a four-year university, they don't have a meal plan included in a financial package. She noted often students are dealing with food insecurity as well as other things that university students don't have to deal with, i.e., transportation, housing, daycare, employment and lack of health insurance. She stated Enfield students from low-income families, who had free or reduced meals all through their public school are at the highest risk for food insecurity. She noted if students are fed, this helps them stay in school and graduate, and earning an Associates Degree promotes self-sufficiency and family stability.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether the students who volunteer for the food pantry get credit. Ms. Paquette stated one of the ways that they get the most students to volunteer is through community service hours. She noted the Self & Others courses require 20 hours of community service per semester, and a lot of their Human Services courses require internships or volunteer hours. She noted she connects with those professors at the beginning of each semester, and that's how she builds an apparatus of students volunteering two hours per week throughout the semester. She stated there are other students who volunteer just because they want to.

Councilor Szewczak questioned the amount of money being requested, and Ms. Paquette responded \$15,000.

Councilor Kiner questioned the guidelines for eligibility, and Ms. Paquette stated there's only one guideline, and the only thing they ask is for them to show their student I.D., and she verifies that they are a student of the college. She stated the majority of students are from Enfield, and she knows every single student being served by the pantry, and they're from low-income situations.

Councilor Kiner questioned where the money comes from to help feed these students. Ms. Paquette stated currently their Student Government Association has committed to \$3,000 per semester. She explained that when students sign up for college, they pay a student activity fee, and that fee goes into an account, and the Student Government Association has dedicated \$3,000 every semester to a line item through the foundation for the pantry to start off that sustainability. She noted they also work through grants, and they get food 17 cents on the pound through Food Share. She stated ShopRite has been a huge support system, and they donate thousands of dollars to this pantry. She added there are also donations from faculty, staff and students.

Mr. Bromson stated other applicants reapplying include KITE, Network Against Domestic Abuse, Enfield Loaves & Fishes, Enfield Food Shelf, Community Health Resources, North Central Regional Mental Health Board and the Community Health Center. He noted all of their applications have been submitted. He stated if the Council wishes, other applicants can be invited to a future Council meeting.

Mr. Bromson stated last year the Council allocated \$116,000 among these groups, except for the new ones. He noted this year, with new requests and last year's renewals, that request is for \$157,000.

Councilor Szewczak suggested including literature on these organizations on the Town's website, which would be a great advertisement and helpful to people looking to make donations to in-town charitable organizations.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION #4919 by Councilor Muller, seconded by Councilor Deni to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #4919** adopted 11-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 7:10 p.m.