

DRAFT ~ SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2020**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick in the Council Chambers of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Tuesday, January 21, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m.

**ROLL-CALL** – Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Hemmeler, Kiner, Ludwick, Mangini, Muller, Riley, Sferrazza, Szewczak and Unghire. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Town Clerk, Suzanne Olechnicki; Town Attorney James Tallberg; Director of Human Resources, Steve Bielenda

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR PRESENTATION**

Steve Bielenda, Director of Human Resources, introduced Todd Berch, the Director of Apprenticeship Programs for the Connecticut Department of Labor.

Mr. Berch stated manufacturing has become more technologically advanced over the last 25 years at any time in history. He noted Connecticut manufactures jet engines, helicopters, and submarines, and this requires a lot of workers. He stated career tech education has a resurgence, and there are great opportunities. He spoke about the Employer Resource card and left some samples with the Council. He explained an apprenticeship is an employer's voluntary training program.

He stated he would like to see career tech education start at the middle school level. He noted STEM education does not have an occupational focus. He spoke about the need to focus on students, who aren't quite sure what they want to do after graduation. He noted his job is to bring together employers and the people of academia.

Mr. Berch spoke about the Manufacturing Innovation Fund, which the Department of Labor oversees, and one component involves the Incumbent Worker Training Program, which can help manufacturers upscale their employees to the next level. He noted a lot of the program and funding opportunities can be found on the Employer Resource card. He stated at this point in time, funding has served over 200 employers and almost 800 apprentices.

He spoke about the need to make employers aware of these programs and opportunities.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether the school system has this information. Mr. Berch stated no one knows about these opportunities.

Chairman Ludwick stated he would like to see a way to connect everyone together. Mr. Berch stated that is why he is here in order to ask for a partnership.

Mr. Berch stated although he's a proponent of a higher education, he believes that the days of saying everyone must attend college are over. He noted for every job that requires a PhD or higher, there are two jobs requiring a bachelor's or higher and seven jobs that only require certificates. He noted he's addressing those seven jobs. He noted this route results in very low school debt, and individuals can do very well for themselves.

Mr. Bromson stated they've been working closely with the Board of Education regarding a multi-media approach, and they will do some podcasts, which will include this presentation. He noted they will make it a priority to share this information with Enfield High School students. He stated it is exciting to know an individual can have a career path without becoming indebted for life. He noted in this region and in Enfield there are great manufacturers with a lot of jobs, plus Asnuntuck Community College's program is a jewel in the State of Connecticut's educational system.

Councilor Bosco stated they should be pushing all trades. He noted he can't find an autobody man, a mechanic or driver. He stated the average autobody man is 57 years old, and no one new is coming in. He stated he's very happy to see what's being done regarding manufacturing, but they also must target the other trades. He noted they should sell this at a school assembly to let students know about these opportunities. He pointed out he's a high school graduate and doing well for himself. He noted people need to realize that college isn't for everyone. He stated a lot of students he went to school with were able to get jobs through their metal shop teacher at Hamilton Standard and Pratt & Whitney, and they're all doing very well. He pointed out the sooner students know about this opportunity the better. Mr. Berch agreed with Councilor Bosco and noted he is a licensed steamfitter, plumber, and he holds four or five State of Connecticut licenses. He noted he's from the trades.

Councilor Cekala stated her hope this presentation can be made before the Board of Education. She noted perhaps this presentation could be made at an assembly at the same time there's college representation.

Chairman Ludwick stated the insurance industry is also losing people and that industry is concerned about available workforce.

Mr. Berch stated he's amenable to meeting with Boards of Education, Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce and employers. He noted at this time he's partnered with the Department of Education, Board of Regents, and CBIA.

Chairman Ludwick stated the Chamber of Commerce reached out to him, and they are excited about this program.

Mr. Bielenda stated he will have all this information on hand if anyone needs it. He noted people can contact the Town Manager or Director of Human Resources for the Town of Enfield for more information.

Mr. Bromson stated this information will be sent out to all Enfield businesses, and they'll be sure to have this information on the Town's website.

Councilor Bosco requested an email contact, and Mr. Berch responded ctapprenticeship.com

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION #5307** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Muller to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the Chair declared **MOTION #5307** adopted 11-0-0, and the meeting stood adjourned at 6:50 p.m.