

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, JULY 5, 2022**

A Regular Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Mayor Cressotti on Tuesday, July 5, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm.

**PRAYER**- The prayer was given by Councilor Ludwick.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**- The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL-CALL**- Present were Councilors Cekala, Cressotti, Despard, Finger, Hopkins, Ludwick, Mangini, Pyznar, Santanella and Unghire. Also present were Town Manager, Ellen Zoppo-Sassu; Assistant Town Manager, Steven Bielenda; Town Attorney, James Tallberg; Director of Finance, John Wilcox; and Town Clerk, Sheila Bailey

**FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT**- Mayor Cressotti made the fire evacuation announcement.

**MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS**

**MOTION #6299** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Cekala to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2022, Regular Meeting.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the chair declared **MOTION #6299** adopted 9-0-1 with Councilor Despard abstaining.

**SPECIAL GUESTS** – None.

**PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Jessica Soule, 10 Brook Road

Ms. Soule is a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Prudence Crandall, and she is working there as a summer schoolteacher too thanks to the AC units. Summer lunch bunch provides free breakfasts and lunches to children in the district. ERFC hosts summer camps too. All these programs are at Prudence Crandall. There are about 100 students age kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the building from 7:00am to 6:00pm, which includes the before and after school programs. 11 hours is a long time to be in a building that is not as safe as it should be. She has seen multiple articles in the JI and emails from the superintendent and statements made to her here, in public, in emails and from the council that quote, “everything is being done that can be done to ensure safety and security of the students and staff”. She repeats, it is not enough. She asked for five actions to take place. She asked for classroom doors that lock from the inside, mirrored one-way films on the windows and doors, classroom evacuation windows that open far enough to safely get students out, two-door entry systems, and concrete blockades at the front entrance of the building. She did not expect miracles to happen after she came to the June 20<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. She did expect to hear something at the June 30<sup>th</sup> Joint Facilities Meeting. She said in the last 90 seconds of the meeting Councilor Pyznar asked

if her email had been received with a list of concerns. The reply was we are working on it, it is progress. It was also said David will be finished soon, there is a lot more to it. It is a lot of doors. Ms. Soule said yes, it is a lot of doors with a lot of children behind them. Those doors being locked quickly may be the only way to save their lives in the event of a shooting. She stated that Prudence Crandall is not a safe school. It is not as safe as it is being promised in the news articles. She said she does not sleep well knowing that she can't keep her students safe. She came again to the Council meeting to ask that the five steps be taken this summer.

George Hendrickson, 26 Roy Street

Mr. Hendrickson stated that he is a veteran who spent 29 years, 6 months and 11 days serving in the army. He paid his car taxes July 1, received the bill June 30<sup>th</sup> and late effective August 1<sup>st</sup>. He thought that when he purchased the vehicle that he applied the tax exemption to his vehicle because he is a 100% disabled veteran. When he got down to the tax assessor's office, he found he did not get the tax break and the assessor thought it would be better if he applied it to his house. He has been part of Enfield since 2004 and has always been able to apply the break to his car, not his house. He asked who the assessor was to make that decision for him, and he got the answer that he was the assessor and authorized to make that decision. When he turned in his appeal, he had the pleasure of meeting the town manager and he said it was a pleasant experience. The tax assessor told him he needs to save more money going forward. Ms. Zoppo-Sassu said the BAA is silent on the issue. A veteran should be able to apply it where he or she would like. The tax assessor's decision did not benefit him.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu wanted to clarify that when Mr. Hendrickson said the BAA is silent that it is actually that state statute is silent on the application of a veteran's exemption. In the handbook it says it is customary for assessors to reduce a veteran's real property assessment by the amount of his exemption when legally permissible. Real property assessments are generally higher than those for motor vehicles. The attorney general opinion states that in the statutes providing exemptions to specified veteran's or qualified relatives, there is no distinction made between real or personal property and no right by election of a taxpayer to have exemptions applied to a particular type of property is provided. Thus, it is the assessor who chooses the property on which a veteran's exemption is applied. In discussion with the assessor's office this afternoon moving forward, they are going to honor the request from Mr. Hendrickson that for both vehicles that he has specified, his veteran's exemption is going to be applied. It is the taxpayer that needs to make sure the assessment is applied appropriately and come in and make sure their file is kept up.

Wendy Veilleux, 23 Glen Oak Drive

Ms. Veilleux stated that she agrees with Ms. Soule and that she truly does worry about the safety of her students. She said as a mom she dreads the call that the school that it is in a real lock down which happened to her once when she had two kids at EHS. She said the teachers, staff, and administration did a great job keeping the kids safe. She said that teachers 20 years ago probably never expected to have to keep their kids safe like they have to do today. She asked why the town is not doing their part to make the schools safe. School safety should be a priority now to prevent a tragedy later.

Ms. Veilleux stated that she had a child graduate from EHS on June 22. The rain stopped and it was a great night. The speeches by the class president, salutatorian, and valedictorian were amazing. The speeches by the adults were brief and much appreciated by the parents because there is only a short time with the kids after graduation for pictures. She was very disappointed that a member of the

council was upset about how graduation was handled. Graduation should be about the kids earning their first diploma, and maybe their only diploma. They should be the center of attention, not other adults who have had their chance on that stage. These kids have had two very hard years of high school. They have earned this. To imply that these young adults are not capable of making the decisions about the graduation ceremony is insulting to them and their parents. These young men and women are smart, compassionate, they volunteer, they have high GPA's, they study, they babysit, they work, and have activities. They are bright people who are our future. She sent her concerns to every council member, and she only received three replies. She thanked those three for replying. She also mentioned that the Safe-Grad Committee put on a free, fantastic, fun-filled night for the graduates. They spent over a year fundraising and sacrificed their own sleep that night to chaperone.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street

Ms. LaPlante stated that with the WPCA there are three billing options. The first option is a water meter-based billing cycle, sewer use charges shall be computed and billings distributed on a quarterly basis based on water use. The second option is a sewer meter-based billing cycle, sewer use charges shall be computed by multiplying the quarterly volume of sewage from the user with the established sewer rate. The third option is non-meter-based billing cycle, sewer use charges shall be computed by multiplying quarterly average residential or commercial use by the established rate. The rate for water consumption of under 20,000 gallons is \$3.60 per 1,000 gallons and anything over 20,000 gallons is billed at \$5.39 per 1,000 gallons. This is the rate for all water meter-based billings. What if you hit exactly 20,000 gallons, what is the rate?

Ms. LaPlante discussed a new customer setting up meters, etc. She said if that customer was going to get a credit, she wanted to remind the WPCA of all the Hazardville Water customers that came forward because of their 1-inch meter policy when it used to be a 5/8 meter was adequate. The sewer rate for a 5/8 meter is \$39.00 and the rate for a 1 inch meter is \$97.50. Sewer rates are based on meter size.

Donna Corbin Sobinski, Inland Wetland Chair

Ms. Corbin Sobinski stated that Inland Wetlands is involved in a couple lawsuits. She stated that they keep asking to speak with the attorney representing them and they keep getting told no. She believes that this is a violation of their rights. They want to see the attorney.

Liz Davis, 201 North Maple Street

Ms. Davis thanked the town manager in helping a veteran so quickly with his taxes.

Ms. Davis said that the thing that got her involved in politics in town eight years ago was making sure our schools were secure for the children, staff, and teachers. As a prior town councilor, she was told that the schools were all safe. She was told all the hardening was done everywhere. She let the teacher know that she has talked to some of the council members and was given a word of honor that these things would be addressed. If we had a town councilor spending less time on worrying about what we should do at graduation and taking the rights from the children and how they want their graduation and taking the time and energy to make sure the schools were all hardened, that would be more their job.

Ms. Davis also stated that she hopes that when it comes to Inlands Wetlands, she hopes the right thing is done. By Town Charter the attorney is supposed to be there for residents too.

Ray Peabody, 370 Washington Road

Mr. Peabody thanked Councilor Pyznar for her bringing up the issues related to school safety. As a BOE member, just before he left there was a plan to harden our schools. There were costs involved and he got into a heated debate with the former town manager about breaking up the costs of hardening each school so we would have a single contract and expedite the hardening. It did not happen.

Mr. Peabody mentioned that there was a state grant to harden our schools. He thought it was about \$300,000. He would like to know where that money went.

Mr. Peabody said he was very disappointed that a plan by the safety committee did not get executed. A second plan by Joint Facilities to the Town Council did not get executed. We need to get this done.

Rachel Baird, Attorney for the BAA

Ms. Baird stated she was retained by the BAA to answer questions about this independent review. Her office is in Rocky Hill, CT. She stated that she is familiar with both Attorney Tallberg and Ellen Zoppo-Sassu. Ms. Baird brought a federal lawsuit on behalf of a Bristol resident regarding an easement issue. Eventually the firm of Berchem and Moses was hired to defend the city in that lawsuit, which is still ongoing. Regarding the BAA, she has rendered an opinion to them about the retention of an attorney in the independent review. One reason that a municipality chooses an attorney to perform an independent review/investigation is to provide a municipality the option of asserting attorney-client privilege when the public requests information related to the review. She said she heard Attorney Tallberg say that hopefully the report would be made available. She is not sure why the word "hopefully" would be used. The attorney-client privilege gives the town the opportunity to limit what is disclosed to the public through the FOI Act. Enfield's residents should be aware that retention of an attorney to conduct an independent review may result in a lack of transparency process, findings, and conclusion of the review. If an attorney is retained, the town should waive any attorney/client privilege regarding all aspects of the attorney's independent review. The town should find in advance of the review that the public interest in disclosing preliminary drafts or notes related to the review whether conducted by an attorney or not outweighs the public interest in withholding the drafts or notes. With these assurances the town residents will have less reason to question or doubt the fairness, accuracy, findings, and conclusions of the independent review. She said her opinion arises from direct experience dealing with towns who have retained attorneys to do independent reviews.

Robert Nelson, 24 South Maple Street

Mr. Nelson stated that his goal is to have the town work with DEEP to enforce the rules that are in place but are not being followed down at the Scantic River, by the Powder Hollow entrance. At the Scantic River on the weekends there is a large number of visitors mostly from Western MA. They come and party at the river. He has concerns for the local citizens, local police, the visitors themselves and the effects of the environment. The park has seven parking spots. There are parking signs placed around the neighborhood, but people find ways around it. He said yesterday at the baseball field at the end of Dust House Rd. there were 35 to 40 cars parked where there are signs that say parking is for baseball events and all others will be towed. There was not one person playing in

the field. The cars are filled with their days' worth of food and drink, cooking supplies, and giant speakers which are paraded down the road. At other parks where water is involved, parks are closed when they reach capacity. Not one person has been turned away. He counted over 125 at the site yesterday which is a common occurrence. There are signs that clearly say no swimming, no alcohol, no fires; none of these are being followed. There is no lifeguard on duty. Alcohol is being consumed and he constantly finds glass bottles everywhere. He went to the river today and found seven areas where ground fires with coals had been put out. He is concerned for the local businesses and neighbors who are nearby. There is constant traffic on the weekends. He is concerned because there is only one police officer in charge of monitoring and managing the large group. The litter and debris are damaging the beautiful Scantic River. He has two requests, turn people away when park is at capacity and have a gate to the baseball field that can be shut when no events are going on. He would also like to see the rules enforced of no swimming, alcohol, and fires. It is not an amusement park.

Ellen Martin, 6 Patricia Circle

Ms. Martin stated that she was not paying attention when her house revaluation came in because the mill rate was not established at the time, so she could not tell how the increase in value was going to affect the bill. She said when the tax bills for her motor vehicles arrived, she was shocked. She had no notification of the assessment change, whereas with the house at least she was notified. She has a 1982 registered homemade trailer that she uses a few times a year. Since 2011 the trailer has been assessed at \$100. She has done nothing to the trailer to increase its value and it is now assessed at \$350. She has a 1998 Beetle with 195,000 miles on it, that went from \$890 to \$1450. It bothered her that this was done without notification. This is not the way government should treat its residents. Make things more transparent, not on a bill to show increase.

Dave Turner, 60 Post Office Road

Mr. Turner received his motor vehicle taxes. He has a 1948 farm truck assessed at \$1800. The new assessment is \$17,800. Another vehicle he has, a 1997 Dodge pickup, two years ago was valued at \$3500, last year valued at \$5600 but he did not say anything. This year valued at \$5400 when the book value is \$3500. He also has two old trailers that used to be valued at \$100. Now, one is valued at \$810 and the other \$350.

Mr. Turner stated that back in the winter he was also taxed on a neighbor's barn. He called the assessor's office and the assessor laughed at him and told him to prove that it is not on his property.

Francis Berry, 50 Long Hollow Road

Ms. Berry received her motor vehicle tax bill, property tax bill, and a third tax bill that she has no idea what it is for. She called the clerk who put her through to the tax people, but no one answered. Today she paid all her taxes that were due July 1<sup>st</sup>.

George Hendrickson, 26 Roy Street

Mr. Hendrickson stated that his issue is not paying taxes. His problem was the customer service he received from the assessor while he was paying his taxes.

Ray Peabody, 370 Washington Road

Mr. Peabody thanked Ms. Soule for coming up and sharing her concerns. He said it is very difficult for teachers to come forward and speak in front of the BOE or Town Council. There are armed police

in the school now, and armed guards before. An armed guard does not necessarily stop an active shooter. In Columbine, the first casualty was the armed guard.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street

Ms. LaPlante stated that she too is concerned about Scantic River Park. She said there are 3 signs that can be flipped to park closed. She asked whose job it is to put that sign down when the park reaches capacity. She has talked with police, DEEP, and state reps trying to come up with a plan. She thought there was a plan, but it does not seem as if it is being followed. Enfield taxpayers are paying for the officer posted there. If they are not there to enforce the rules, why are they there? One officer for many people. Are the signs in Spanish also? Do the park goers understand? Why are cars not being towed that are at the ballfield. On Monday there were 46 cars at the field, 8 CT plates, 32 MA plates, and 6 other states. The park is for fishing and hiking, it is not a Rocky Neck or Hammonasset Beach. On Monday, the park had 7 cars which is capacity, at 7:00am.

Chairman Cressotti declared Public Communications closed.

### **COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS**

Councilor Mangini thanked Master Sergeant George Hendrickson for his service to our country. She apologized to him for not being treated with respect. She thanked all the other veteran's present for their service as well.

Councilor Mangini had the honor of attending the Vietnam Veteran's Awards presented by the Lieutenant Governor. She was there with the mayor and a couple other council members. It was a 2-day event, and it was done professionally and beautifully.

Councilor Mangini said she also had the honor of attending the American Legion 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary banquet. She was honored that they invited council liaisons to attend.

Councilor Mangini thanked our teachers and the tremendous job they have caring for our children. With regards to school safety, she asked through the mayor to the town manager if there could be an update as to when the next public safety meeting would be. She thanked Ms. Soule and all the other teachers for dedicating themselves to our children.

Councilor Pyznar mentioned that George is her neighbor, and she is glad he came down and they are making it right for him.

Councilor Pyznar thanked Ms. Soule and promised to keep her posted. She too thinks the schools need to be safe.

Councilor Pyznar mentioned that she too attended the Vietnam Veteran's event, and it was wonderful.

Councilor Pyznar stated that she had the pleasure in taking part in the Allied Resources Family Day and she finished a 5K. She strongly urged people to support Allied's store near DMV. It has the best bargains.

Councilor Pyznar mentioned she had the pleasure of sitting down with the new director of ERFC, the before and after school program. She said it is not too early to start thinking about this for the fall as space is already filling up.

Councilor Pyznar thanked Karen for coming up for the WPCA about the pipe.

Councilor Pyznar thanked everyone who came out to speak at the meeting.

Councilor Ludwick was under the impression that there was a commander for the Scantic River who is responsible. We should have all this in writing as to how all this works. Maybe we could talk to that individual to answer some of the questions.

Councilor Ludwick wanted to know where the town was at regarding the discussion on speed bumps/traffic calming, especially in the area of Abbey Road.

Councilor Ludwick brought up Rails to Trails and asked where the application is and why it is getting held up. It has been a year since we voted on it so an update would be appreciated.

Councilor Ludwick also mentioned the human trafficking presentation and asked for an update on the very important matter.

Councilor Ludwick commented on Mr. Hendrickson and was glad someone stepped up to help him. He said yes, the tax burden is on him to say where he wants his tax benefit, but the fact that we are making the assumption upfront and putting him in that position should not be the case. He apologized for that happening and stated that this is not how we should be doing business with the taxpayers. This must be resolved.

Councilor Despard thanked Ms. Soule for continuing to push the issue. He said the town is very lucky to have teachers like her and her kids are lucky to have her. He thinks they need a briefing on the issue, and he believes there is a committee that is looking at the issues. He thinks she deserves a timeline. He understands that broadcasting things is a security issue, but he doesn't see why teachers should not be in the loop.

Councilor Finger agrees with Councilor Despard. He also stated that instead of putting money into a new splash pad, they should put the money into the school. Security is very serious today. It does not take much to put pillars in and change the door handles. He apologized for not responding to Ms. Soule, but he does agree that it needs to be done right away.

Councilor Finger stated regarding the Scantic River, he remembers it was supposed to be an unarmed DEEP officer there. They were supposed to also have somebody there to handle the traffic and the signs. It is a state park, and they are supposed to be picking up the trash and the town guys are still doing it.

Councilor Hopkins agreed with everyone and their concerns regarding school safety. Unfortunately, the country continues to suffer an epidemic of gun violence. He thanked Ms. Soule, Ms. Veilleux, and Mr. Peabody for coming out and speaking.

Councilor Hopkins asked the town attorney through the mayor if there was anything prepared about Ms. Corbin Sobinski's question.

Attorney Tallberg stated that he would like to know who the request was sent to, because it was not him. He prides himself in responding to all requests within 24 hours whether email or call. He does not wish for the public to think that the land use boards, or wetlands commission are without guidance. He is happy to go out in the hallway and provide any guidance needed.

Councilor Unghire thanked Ms. Soule and Ms. Veilleux for their comments regarding school safety. She supports all of this as her son is a teacher in Enfield Public Schools. Even if he wasn't, it is still an important issue to her. She spoke with a safety officer out of Windsor, and she read him the five suggestions and he thought they were great and wanted to add to the list, but she will not share that publicly.

Councilor Unghire stated that Ms. Davis and Ms. Veilleux brought up an issue about graduation. Two events that she loves every year are the high school graduation and the Adult Ed. Graduation. She hasn't missed one in 10 years. She said this one was great; the kids and speeches were wonderful. She said that before and after residents made comments to her. At graduation she noticed that three BOE members were excluded from the platform, one democrat and two republicans. She said she merely called the chairperson to ask why they were excluded. They put in hard work and countless hours, and this is the one time to just enjoy the faces of the kids and celebrate. She didn't really get an answer. She talked to the deputy superintendent, and he said it was a leadership decision. She said her husband is involved in leadership and he was not consulted on that decision. She did call the chairperson and she told her that it was Enfield High's decision. She said she was told to calm down, which is nonsense. She said that she was concerned that she was being misunderstood. Then all of a sudden there was a blow up on social media saying that she said graduation was terrible. She said she has the highest respect for the education, and she sat on the BOE once. She then went to the principal and was told by her that it was not her responsibility. She then went back to the superintendent, and she is still waiting for a call back. She just wanted to know why only three people were excluded and it has now morphed into this big thing. She just asked a question that was asked of her, and she did not have the answer.

Chairman Cressotti said that the two-day event honoring the Vietnam Veteran's at Enfield High honored over 150 veterans. He thanked all the veterans watching for their service and resilience. There were a lot of emails from veterans thanking us for the event. He thanked the councilors who attended as well. He thanked John Kissell, Carol Hall, and Tom Arnone for attending as well.

Chairman Cressotti mentioned the Allied Fundraiser and stated that the event will keep getting bigger and better. He mentioned that ERFC and the Network as sponsors and he thanked everyone that donated to the cause. He did mention that he and Councilor Pyznar sweat together on the 110-degree track and finished the 5K.

Chairman Cressotti attended a CRCOG meeting this week which dealt with waste management. Waste disposal is getting more expensive as time goes on. The Hartford plant is going to be closing. The seminar talked about ways of reducing solid waste disposal and improving recycling efforts. We

need to be transparent with the public to make sure we are improving our recycling efforts. We need to be proactive in our recycling.

Chairman Cressotti mentioned that on Monday, July 11, 2022 we are all invited to People Empowering People project and graduation ceremony at Higgins Park at 5:30pm. This group has donated quite a few dogwood trees that are out front by the walking path. He thanks Lorena Cisneros and her group and all their efforts.

## **TOWN MANAGER REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Town Manager, Ellen Zoppo-Sassu mentioned that if you follow the social media page, there are some interior pictures of the Strand up. She said we are waiting until July 12<sup>th</sup> to get the bids back on the remediation work that needs to be done pre-demolition. We are currently working with Opera House Players and the Enfield Historical Society to salvage some of the pieces inside. There are concerns on how to do it safely, how do we extricate it, clean it, store it, and what kind of change order will be required for the project. It will be nice to carry on some history from that building into existing buildings.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu sent an email earlier with a synopsis of where we stand with some of the ARPA funds and CIP projects as it relates to parking lots and school roofs. She said Councilor Pyznar asked for clarification on funding sources. In terms of parking lots, Lorena Cisneros just informed us of bond authorization grant that is available to alliance districts that we are going to apply for which is due by July 15<sup>th</sup>. This could bring additional reimbursements for the parking lots at Hazardville and Enfield Street Schools. If this grant happens, we will have to come back to council for additional transfers, but we would be returning ARPA money back to the pool. So, there is potentially ARPA money that could be reallocated.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu mentioned that they are working with a couple departments to try to bolster and lay the groundwork for some of the town's marketing efforts. They are going to be looking for additional ideas in terms of newsletters and other digital promotions to get the word out about what Enfield has to offer.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu mentioned that they are looking to schedule a leisure services subcommittee meeting that will entail disk golf at Higgins Park, a grant opportunity identified through the recreation division, and updates regarding pickleball that need council attention.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu asked for a public safety meeting. She said the public safety joint committee had an executive session a couple weeks ago but there is also a subgroup of this town council. She just needs to know which group the safety issues should be pointed to.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu also mentioned having another public works committee meeting that will start dealing with the water pollution control authority issue.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated that she would like to talk further with Mr. Nelson and other neighbors of the Scantic River area. She would like to schedule something and have DEEP involved.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu mentioned that the human trafficking presentation was scheduled for June 20, 2022 but the parameters developed for the program were over an hour. She was asked to tailor the presentation into a timeframe the council could accommodate.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated that traffic calming would go to public safety.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated that regarding the independent review, there have been many public concerns and affected parties. She thinks it is time to move on this and there should be transparency. There are a lot of layers, and we need to move forward with this before September hearings.

Councilor Finger asked if the ARPA funds that we may end up getting back can be used for school safety.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu replied, yes it would be an eligible expense. Other ARPA-funded projects are being monitored because some of the bids may have come in lower than expected. As of right now there is \$519,000 that still needs to be allocated. The Economic Development Committee is having meetings to create parameters for the small business assistance program.

Councilor Ludwick mentioned making sure barriers are set up at Enfield Street School if the parking lot is not accessible because that is the area where the parade starts.

Councilor Ludwick shared a pamphlet he received in his tax bill. He asked when funding was approved for it and for future, he would like to see specs.

Councilor Ludwick mentioned Mr. Riley and the Strand, and he hopes we work with him. The demolition is taxpayer money, and we are right on his property line.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated that the brochure to the taxpayers was funded by marketing community promotions line within the town manager's office.

Mr. Tallberg stated that Mr. Riley did retain legal counsel, he did speak with him, and it was very productive. The ball is in his court, and he is going to present a written proposal that will be brought back.

Councilor Ludwick brought up that there is a lot of risk for the Town of Enfield.

Mr. Tallberg stated that there is dialogue between counsel, and it is under control.

Councilor Mangini asked Ms. Zoppo-Sassu for clarification on what she was looking for when she asked councilors to send her their availability for upcoming committee meetings.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu responded that it would be helpful to know the general availability of the council members. This is to try and avoid not having a quorum.

## **REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Councilor Mangini reported that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee is wrapping up to have a dynamic celebration. We have not had the event for two years because of COVID so this year is going to outdo everything. She thanked the committee for their hard work.

Councilor Hopkins mentioned that he met with Councilor Finger and Councilor Ludwick for a DPW meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of last month. Some issues relating to the WPCA were discussed. Some issues were brought up regarding miscellaneous pipe issues. Hopefully, this committee will be created before the end of the summer. They will monitor the financial health of our water pollution control system.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**MOTION #6300** by Councilor Cekala, seconded by Councilor Mangini to remove from the table Discussion/Resolution: Request for a Bid Waiver to Retain an Independent Review of Revaluation Issues Tabled on 6/20/22.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the chair declared **MOTION #6300** adopted 10-0-0.

**RESOLUTION #6301** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Cekala.

WHEREAS, the Town Council wishes to have an independent review conducted regarding various issues concerning the Town's recent revaluation process; and

WHEREAS, that the Town Council wants the review to commence without delay; and

WHEREAS, that the Town desires to retain the law firm of Berchem Moses PC to conduct this review.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in accordance with Chapter V, Section 8, Paragraph (d) of the Enfield Town Charter, the Enfield Town Council does hereby determine that it is not in the best interest of the Town to require competitive bidding and authorizes the Town Manager or her designee to sign a retainer agreement with Berchem Moses PC.

Councilor Despard reiterated that he thinks that if the resolution is approved, he still thinks it is important to have a written MOU defining the scope.

Councilor Hopkins stated that the majority of the council is looking for an independent investigation and moving forward today it will be a review not an investigation. That will result in the questions out there not being answered.

Councilor Ludwick stated that if we vote this down, we don't have a meeting until August. If we go to bid in August, we are into the next hearings in September and the next appeals process. Car taxes need to be paid upfront before you appeal. If everyone wants an RFP and MOU, he feels we can't just vote this down tonight. He thinks if we wait until August, we are doing the taxpayers a disservice. He feels we will have no credibility if we don't do something tonight.

Mr. Tallberg stated that with hiring a lawyer, the client defines the parameters. It would not technically be an MOU. That is a term you see in union issues. It would be part of the retention agreement. If the council votes to approve the bid waiver to authorize the retention of a lawyer, we would fold into the retention agreement the scope of the assignment. He sent everyone a scope of what he thought the appropriate scope was, but it had wiggle room to add other matters. He mentioned to Councilor Hopkins that he has not seen his memo and questions but stated that council is the client, and they get to decide.

Councilor Finger wanted to make sure the questions that the council has brought forward don't get lost.

Mr. Tallberg stated that the attorney wants to keep a client happy. The end goal will be a report published on the town website with the findings of fact and law. It should include recommendations on how to avoid this going forward and how to improve our processes.

Councilor Despard did agree that something needs to be done tonight and that is why there needed to be a special meeting last week. He stated 6 council members wanted a special meeting and they were denied. He is all for a special meeting for some coordination.

Mr. Tallberg stated that he can take whatever questions are available or it can be done through the liaisons or through each councilor as the client.

Councilor Hopkins stated that everyone needs to be comfortable that the questions will be answered. If it is a group effort and we only communicate through liaisons, he has concerns about that. He thinks that this stuff should all be in writing before moving forward so there is no confusion. He would like to see a special meeting set for next week. He feels that if this goes forward tonight that they are leaving a lot of things to chance.

Councilor Mangini said that with all due respect to her fellow council members, she will not be coming to a special meeting for the issue. She doesn't see any reason why language can't be put into the resolution stating that council members have the opportunity to question the attorney. She said we need to move forward now and feels as though it has been beat to death. She feels that we have a competent town attorney who has gone to great lengths to prepare and research this.

Councilor Finger stated for the record that he gave the Town Clerk the questions to be on file.

Councilor Pyznar stated that the thing that is not sitting well with her is the fact that they were left out of the loop other than being able to interview one attorney. It was never brought to leadership or her that attorneys were being vetted. She also remembers the attorney saying in the interview that it would be 30-60 days because he has a vacation and staff out as well. She feels unsettled doing a bid waiver for an attorney and she would like to go out for RFP and that the council be part of the process.

Councilor Santanella stated that everyone has forgotten the people who sent them here. He feels that there is ego driving this discussion. He said everyone knows everything they need to know right now. The vote is now. People need to stop thinking about someone not telling you something a month or week ago. People were adamant that this review be done so people went out and did their jobs and

are now being crucified for doing so. They are all there representing people who need them to make a decision.

Chairman Cressotti said that everyone has stated their opinion at this point and that they need to vote.

Councilor Unghire stated that she will stick to her original opinion that an RFP is needed and more than one attorney to pick from and she will agree to a special meeting.

Councilor Hopkins is boggled because the concerns were raised back in February, and they have yet to be briefed on it. The council's role in this is to investigate and provide oversight to departments with concerns that the public has. They are here for the people 100% and to vote this through tonight would be a disservice. He thinks there should have been a special meeting to discuss everything beforehand. To simply amend the resolution is a little ugly. To him, it sounds like there are six people who want an independent investigation done and real questions asked, not a superficial independent review. He requests that if this is voted down, there be a special meeting in the nearest possible time.

Councilor Ludwick stated that he is willing to compromise. The resolution can be amended to say the town desires to send out an RFP as soon as possible and set a special meeting for July. If this gets voted down, it stays until August. He respects Attorney Tallberg's recommendation. He said that they keep having the same conversations it looks like their stalling when they are not.

Councilor Santanella suggested saying, people who have questions to submit or input have to do so by a set date instead of having another meeting.

Mr. Tallberg stated that when a client hires a lawyer, there is not a need upon retention to have a very specific MOU. We have provided this lawyer with a substantial number of documents, 50 to 60 pages. Council input is welcomed. There is no need to amend the resolution or anything. Councilor questions can go right to the lawyer, they do not need to be filtered through Attorney Tallberg.

Chairman Cressotti stated that he thinks they should have the vote.

**AMENDMENT #1** by Councilor Ludwick, seconded by Councilor Pyznar to amend the resolution to read, *"the town desires to go out to bid for legal services to conduct the review and set a special meeting on 7/11/22 at 6:00pm in council chambers"*.

Councilor Cekala thinks the amendments need to be separate, one for an RFP and one for the special meeting.

Councilor Ludwick rescinded his motion and Council Pyznar rescinded her second.

**AMENDMENT #2** by Councilor Ludwick, seconded by Councilor Pyznar to amend the resolution to read, *"the town desires to go out to bid for legal services to conduct the review"*.

Councilor Mangini stated that she appreciated the effort of a friendly amendment, but she doesn't consider it friendly at all. She considers it a slap in the face to our town attorney, town staff, and

certain members of the council and she will vote against the amendment. She is there to serve the public and stated that what is going on right now is self-serving.

Councilor Cekala is not in favor of an RFP.

Chairman Cressotti is not in favor of an RFP and stated they should vote on the proposed amendment.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, **AMENDMENT #2** passes 6-4-0 with Councilors Cekala, Cressotti, Mangini and Santanella voting against.

**AMENDMENT #3** by Councilor Ludwick, seconded by Councilor Pyznar to set a special meeting on July 11, 2022 at 6:00pm in council chambers.

Councilor Cekala stated that she does not think they should be setting a date unless they know town staff is available. Also, if this is going out to RFP, there is no need for a special meeting because it is going to be another month before this is back. We can have the meeting at 5:30 or 6:00 before the next meeting.

Councilor Ludwick withdrew the second amendment. Councilor Pyznar withdrew her second.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the chair declared **RESOLUTION #6301** adopted as amended 6-4-0 with Councilors Cekala, Cressotti, Mangini and Santanella voting against.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilor Santanella requested Item 1 be removed from the consent agenda. Item 1 has been removed from the Consent Agenda.

**RESOLUTION #6302** by Councilor Cekala, seconded by Councilor Santanella.

**AMENDMENT #1** by Councilor Santanella

There was a typo in the resolution. It says “*Be it resolved that the Council does hereby amend Town Code §86 204*” and he believes it should read, “*Sewer Use Adjustment Policy*”. This would be a friendly amendment. Seconded by Councilor Cekala.

Councilor Ludwick stated he is not against this but wanted to know why it is not under the WPCA. He stated that if you have to make an amendment, it should not be on consent agenda. It should be a discussion item where we can discuss what the amendment is going to do and have questions from councilors to understand the scope. He will abstain. He asked about item 2 as well as to what the scope of that is going to be. He will abstain for this as well.

Upon a **SHOW-OF HANDS** vote being taken, the chair declared the amendment passed 6-3-0 with Councilors Ludwick, Pyznar and Unghire voting against. Councilor Mangini had left the room.

Councilor Pyznar had questions on the WPCA. She said Karen clarified a lot of them. She thinks that this is going to open a Pandora's box of people asking for the same consideration. She loves the idea he is re-doing the firehouse and trying to renovate Thompsonville. She would like more clarification on it, is he living there, there are ways he can put in two meters. There might be other businesses that want the same consideration as well. She will abstain from the vote.

Councilor Hopkins stated that he thinks that the WPCA committee that is being formed is a great way to handle these things in the future. He does not like the little carve outs, but he is okay with this one as it reverts when it becomes a business again.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of Enfield does hereby amend the Sewer Usage Adjustment Policy and add a new Section D. Change in use. If a property is converted from a non-residential use to a primarily single-family residential use, the base quarterly change may be adjusted to reflect the residential use.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the chair declared **MOTION #6302** adopted as amended 7-3-0 with Councilors Ludwick, Pyznar and Unghire voting against.

**MOTION # 6303** by Councilor Cekala, seconded by Councilor Santanella to approve the Consent Agenda.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Enfield Town Council hereby appoints Michael Arnone, Jr. (U), David Goyette (D), Marlene Hoginski (R), Kathleen Tallarita (D), and Robert W. Tkacz (R) as members of the Senior Tax Relief Committee for a 1-year term.

Councilor Pyznar asked if there would be a liaison for the Senior Tax Relief Committee.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu responded that it is appropriate if someone is interested in doing that.

Chairman Cressotti stated that once the committee is formed it would be a great idea to have a liaison.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the chair declared **MOTION #6303** adopted 10-0-0.

Chairman Cressotti presented Mr. Tkacz with a certificate and pin from the Vietnam Veteran's Event.

**APPOINTMENTS/TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTED** – None.

**APPOINTMENTS/TOWN MANAGER APPOINTED/COUNCIL APPROVED** – None.

**APPOINTMENTS/P&Z COMMISSION APPOINTED/COUNCIL APPROVED** – None.

**RESOLUTION #6304** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Cekala.

BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town Charter, the following transfer is hereby made.

FROM:

Municipal Facilities	Furniture and Fixtures	\$7,000
DPW Truck Wash	Construction Services	\$16,000

TO:

Tennis Courts	Construction Services	\$23,000
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**CERTIFICATION:** I hereby certify that the above-stated funds are available as of June 28, 2022.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Councilor Ludwick wanted to be clear on the process for this. He wanted to know what the project is, he assumed the school reconstruct and redo it. If the project is going to overlay, why another \$23,000.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated that this is to maintain the charter. The \$600,00 that the school is doing is effective July 1, 2022. We are putting in the \$23,000 so it does not exceed the cap.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the chair declared **RESOLUTION #6304** adopted 10-0-0.

**RESOLUTION #6305** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Santanella.

BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town Charter, the following transfer is hereby made.

FROM:	Grant Funded Projects	
Revenue	Miscellaneous Revenue	\$72,450

TO: Grant Funded Projects

Eli Whitney Roof	Construction Services	\$72,450
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**CERTIFICATION:** I hereby certify that the above-stated funds are available as of June 28, 2022.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Councilor Mangini asked for clarification on this.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu stated that the \$72,450 represents the BOE contribution toward the project. We received a state grant of \$134,550 and the original allocation was \$689,000.

Councilor Ludwick reminded folks that we apply for stated grants where the state will reimburse some of the money that flows back into that fund.

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the chair declared **RESOLUTION #6305** adopted 10-0-0.

**RESOLUTION #6306** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Santanella.

BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town Charter, the following transfer is hereby made.

FROM:	Grant Funded Projects	
Revenue	Miscellaneous Revenue	\$71,260
TO:	Grant Funded Projects	
	Hazardville Memorial Roof Construction Services	\$71,260

**CERTIFICATION:** I hereby certify that the above stated funds are available as of June 28, 2022.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Upon a **ROLL-CALL** vote being taken, the chair declared **RESOLUTION #6306** adopted 10-0-0.

**RESOLUTION #6307** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Cekala.

BE IT RESOLVED, that in accordance with Chapter VI, Section 8(f) of the Town Charter, the following transfer is hereby made.

FROM:		
CIP Fund Revenue FY20-21	Miscellaneous Revenue	\$600,000
TO:		
School Paving	Construction Services	\$600,000

**CERTIFICATION:** I hereby certify that the above-stated funds are available as of June 28, 2022.

/s/ John Wilcox, Director of Finance

Councilor Ludwick asked why it is coming from the CIP Fund instead of the Revenue Fund.

Ms. Zoppo-Sassu believes it is education related but Mr. Wilcox is not in today so she will find out.



Ms. Corbin Sobinski stated that she had a conversation with Mr. Tallberg in the hallway and stated that there is a roadblock in the staff. In their June 21, 2022 minutes, they asked to have the attorney. He did not know anything about it. Information is not getting to him.

Bob Tkacz, 850 Woodgate Circle  
Mr. Tkacz thanked everyone for the applause.

Mr. Tkacz stated that every year he goes to the reassessment on his automobile in September on a mystery date because they never know when it is. You can go to the library and give them the make and model and milage and they give you the value of the car. You can use that at the reassessment hearing. He loses about \$7,000 because of high milage. It is up to the owner to do the work to get the value of the car, not the assessor's office.

Karen LaPlante, 166 North Maple Street  
Ms. LaPlante stated that there are two definitions in customer type in regulations. Residential and small non-residential users, sewer users including single-family and multi-family dwellings and commercial and industrial users which introduce no more than the equivalent of 25,000 gallons per day of domestic sanitary to the treatment works. He is not in a commercial zone; he will be the same qualifications. He would have to be over 25,000 gallons per day.

The chair declared Public Communications closed.

**COUNCILOR COMMUNICATIONS** – None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION #6310** by Councilor Mangini, seconded by Councilor Santanella to adjourn.

Upon a **SHOW-OF-HANDS** vote being taken, the chair declared **MOTION #6310** adopted 10-0-0 and the meeting stood adjourned at 9:38pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheila M. Bailey  
Clerk of the Council  
Town Clerk

Tina Demers  
Secretary to the Council

## **Draft Memorandum of Understanding Items for Tax Assessment Investigation**

### **Scope of Investigation:**

2021-22 Tax Assessment Practices

Content of 2021-22 P.A. 490 Exemption Determinations

Content of 2021-22 Tax Assessment Appeals

### **Questions:**

1. What are the best practices for valuation of real and personal property, respectively?
2. What valuation methods were applied in the 2021-22 tax assessments?
3. What are the best practices for creating and maintaining a depreciation schedule?
4. What depreciation schedule does the tax assessor's office use for assessments?
5. Does this depreciation schedule meet best practices standards?
6. Is it abnormal for real property to improve in assessed condition over time without physical improvements being made to this property?
7. Has any real property improved in assessed condition over time without physical improvements being made to this property in any 2021-22 tax assessments?
8. What are the best practices for maintaining records of assessed property?
9. What are the best practices for editing records of assessed property?
10. Is it legally permissible to alter property "field cards" used to make assessments without noting such alterations?
11. Is it legally permissible to remove information on property "field cards" from prior assessment years, such as "effective year built," without noting such alterations?
12. Have any such unrecorded alterations occurred in any 2021-22 tax assessments?
13. What is the definition of excessive, or improper, taxation under Connecticut law?
14. Could any assessments of real or personal property from 2021-22 be considered excessive taxation under Connecticut law?
15. What are the rules for removing a property's P.A. 490 exemption (of each type)?
16. For properties whose P.A. 490 exemptions were removed between 2021-22, were those exemptions properly removed?
17. For properties whose P.A. 490 exemptions were removed and then reinstated between 2021-22, were those exemptions properly removed?
18. Could any properties whose P.A. 490 exemptions were removed be considered to have been excessively taxed under Connecticut law?
19. What are best practices for a municipal tax assessor to obtain information from taxpayers?
20. Is it legally permissible for a municipal tax assessor to enter private property for the purpose of assessment without permission?
21. Is it legally permissible for a municipal tax assessor to state to an assessee that they cannot appeal their assessment?
22. Have you observed any violations of law and/or best practices other than those already inquired about here?

### **Expectations**

Monthly progress updates with all town council members who wish to be present via video call, or in person.

A comprehensive, written report answering the above questions to be emailed to the town council at the conclusion of the independent investigation.