

Town of Plymouth
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Plymouth Town Council
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Minutes

February 4, 2014

Call to Order: Mayor David V. Merchant called the scheduled February 4, 2014, Plymouth Town Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., in the Community Room, Town Hall.

Roll Call: Present were Town Councilman William Heering, Town Councilwoman Susan Murawski, Town Councilman John Pajeski, Town Councilman Gary Wyszynski, and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski. Also in attendance were Director of Finance David Bertnagel, and Chief of Police Karen Krasicky, Plymouth Police Commission Chairman Chet Scoville, and Assistant Police Chief Robert Wright.

Fire Exits Notification

Mayor Merchant noted the Fire Exits for the record.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Merchant led the Plymouth Town Council and the Public Audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Rules and Procedures

No report.

Minutes

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Pajeski, to approve the Town Council January 15, 2014, minutes as presented.

Discussion:

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that under her Liaison Report, it should read the Fire Department, not the Fire Commission, as typed, and that it was averaging 600 to 700 calls per year, not per month, as typed. Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that Martin Sandshaw was helping to improve energy conservation, not conversation as typed.

Vote: Motion to accept the January 15, 2014, minutes as amended, passed unanimously.

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Mayor's Report

Mayor Merchant stated that the Tax Office had a very busy month, that they had stayed open until noon on Saturday and had done very well for the day.

Mayor Merchant stated that the Tax Collector, Ted Smith, was catching on very fast and was doing very well.

Mayor Merchant stated that he had attended numerous meetings this month with the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA), noting that the Town would be joining the Naugatuck Valley Region. He further stated that there would be two Special Council Meetings to discuss the regionalization move from the Hartford Region to the Naugatuck Valley Region.

Mayor Merchant stated that he had received a lot of positive feedback from the Public regarding the Town Hall staying open at lunchtime and noted that it was also working out well for the Town Hall Employees.

Mayor Merchant stated that he and Town Councilwoman Murawski had met with a local company looking to expand its business, noting that they currently employ 38 people with the majority of their employees being local residents. He further stated that he was hoping to provide this company with grant money to be approved at the upcoming Special Meeting of the Council.

Mayor Merchant stated that he was speaking to several good-sized companies that were interested in moving to the Town of Plymouth.

Mayor Merchant stated that Outlook email addresses had been provided to the Town Council members and that the mailboxes were up and running and ready to be put to good use.

Mayor Merchant stated that he had met today with Michael Santogatta and Martin Sandshaw from the Board of Education and that they had discussed the Solar Panel Project for the High School, noting that there would be a Special Joint Meeting with the Council and the Board of Education to discuss this project further.

Mayor Merchant stated that the Town was currently doing okay with the Snow Budget, noting there could be a little trouble if the storms kept coming.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Mayor Merchant requested that everyone refrain from using personal names in their Public Comment, comments.

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Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items Cont'd.

Rob Wilcox, 155 South Main Street, Terryville, questioned what the Town's position was in regards to the hiring and/or employment of convicted felons.

Mayor Merchant stated that he never had to deal with the hiring of a convicted felon so he could not take a position, and welcomed Mr. Wilcox to come and see him and he would share his personal feelings about it.

Rob Wilcox stated that the Town was in that position now and that it opened the Town up to potential lawsuits, extra scrutiny, and things of that nature, noting this was serious and should be looked into.

Melanie Church, 328 Main Street, Terryville, stated that some manhole covers were covered and some had recently been cleared from snow and they needed to be checked by the Town and maybe go to the Sewer Department. Melanie Church stated that there had been illegal spending by the past and present Administration, noting that an Ad Hoc Committee could not spend money and that was what the Capital Improvements Committee was and it should be the Council that approves the expenditures and briefly explained her issue. Melanie Church stated that if an elected official was elected and was arrested they must resign and questioned what the difference was between that and a Town Employee. Melanie Church questioned how many accidents did the Town have and how many employees had been written up for carelessness since the snow routes went from eleven to ten, noting it was about safety. Melanie Church stated that she didn't mind a new garage being built, but objected to money being thrown away on flat screen tv's, ranges, stoves and refrigerators.

Mayor Merchant stated that the Town of Plymouth's Waterwheel had been featured in a great article in this month's AAA Magazine, noting that Jerry Milne had submitted the article.

Chet Scoville, 24 North Street, Plymouth, Chairman Plymouth Police Commission, stated that the Plymouth Police Commission was looking into Town Employees who were convicted felons, noting that they wanted to make sure the hired workers, Contractors and the Contractor's hired workers were safe, as well as Town Employees.

Appointments/Resignations

To appoint Jeffrey J. Bajek to the Plymouth Police Commission; to re-appoint Mark J. Galvin as a Regular Member to the Water Pollution Control Authority; to re-appoint Louis Santos, as a Regular Member position to the Water Pollution Control Authority

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Appointments/Resignations Cont'd.

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Murawski, to appoint Jeffrey J. Bajak to the Plymouth Police Commission as a Regular Member. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Murawski, to re-appoint Mark J. Galvin as a Regular Member to the Water Pollution Control Authority. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to re-appoint Louis Santos, as a Regular Member position to the Water Pollution Control Authority. This motion was approved unanimously.

**Discuss and take Action, as may be Necessary, to refund the following Property Taxes:
Cab East, LLC \$305.37; Linda Hotchkiss \$288.99**

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Heering, to refund the following Property Taxes: Cab East, LLC \$305.37; Linda Hotchkiss \$288.99
This motion was approved unanimously.

To discuss and take action on a request from the Town Clerk to charge fees for Notary Services

When questioned by Town Councilman Wyszynski, and referencing correspondence from Barbara Rockwell, Mayor Merchant stated that the current \$5.00 Notary fee goes back to the General Fund, not to the Town Clerk's Office; a brief discussion followed.

Town Councilman Zagurski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Pajeski, to charge \$5.00 for Notary Services.

Discussion:

When questioned by Town Councilman Wyszynski, Mayor Merchant stated that the Town pays for the Town Notary's certification.

When questioned by Town Councilman Heering, Mayor Merchant stated that there was a one-time fee to become a Notary and then an additional fee every five years, noting the cost and revenue was minimal.

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To discuss and take action on a request from the Town Clerk to charge fees for Notary Services Cont'd.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that it was a small service the Town could do for the residents and taxpayers, noting that the taxpayers pay for the Town Clerk's salary. She further stated that it did not take a lot of time and it was something that the Town should do without charging.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he tended to agree with Town Councilwoman Murawski and questioned if the Town was getting more Notary requests because it doesn't charge.

Town Councilman Heering questioned if the Town could charge for non-residents.

Mayor Merchant stated that the revenue was so small the Council should decide one way or the other.

Vote:

Town Councilman Heering/no, Town Councilman Pajeski/yes; Town Councilman Zagurski/no, Town Councilwoman Murawski/no, Town Councilman Wyszynski/no. Motion failed.

To discuss and take action on a Resolution to approve \$4,500,000 for Refunding General Obligation Bonds of the Town

Town Councilwoman Murawski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to approve the Resolution with respect to the authorization, issuance and sale of not exceeding \$4,500,000 Town of Plymouth General Obligation Refunding Bonds. Town Councilwoman Murawski read the sections of the Resolution out loud for the Council Members and the Public audience.

David Bertnagel stated that periodically the Town looks for a better interest rate on previous debt (Town's General Obligation Bonds), which had been issued in the past, noting that currently the Town had \$23,850,000 in General Obligation Bonds of the Town. He further stated that currently the Town was eligible to refinance \$4,500,000 of past debt, which would lower the Town's interest payments on the debt, thus reducing the expenses that the Town has to make. David Bertnagel stated that this was a win-win for the Town and that the Town was not issuing new debt.

When questioned by Town Councilman Zagurski, David Bertnagel stated that the Town was looking at 2016 to 2023 for the years that would be refinanced, noting that the Town was paying the interest no matter what.

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To discuss and take action on a Resolution to approve \$4,500,000 for Refunding General Obligation Bonds of the Town Cont'd.

Melanie Church stated if the Town were almost paying something off, like a house, the Town would be paying more towards the principal, not the interest so if the Town refinanced, the Town would be paying more interest than principal and the Town would not be saving anything and that it was a shell game.

David Bernagel stated that Melanie Church's statement was incorrect and that if the refinancing was approved it would lower future interest payments down, and there was no shell game.

When questioned by Town Councilman Wyszynski, David Bernagel stated that the projected savings through refinancing at a lower interest rate would be several hundreds of thousands of dollars over the period from 2015 through 2026. He further stated that more monies might come up during those years whereby the Town could take advantage again.

Pattie DeHuff, 20 Lynn Avenue, Terryville, stated she was trying to understand whether the Town was actually saving money by doing this and questioned what David Bernagel meant by saying "he didn't want to let the cat out of the bag."

David Bernagel stated that the Town had an offer to lower the Town's debt payments by roughly \$300,000 and that was a huge savings for the Town.

Vote:

This motion was approved unanimously.

To enter in Executive Session to discuss the Contract for the Assistant Chief of Police

Town Councilman Wyszynski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilwoman Murawski, to move into Executive Session at 7:42 p.m., to discuss the Contract for the Assistant Chief of Police.

Present for the Executive Session were Director of Finance David Bernagel, Town Councilman Heering, Police Chief Krasicky, Mayor David Merchant, Town Councilwoman Susan Murawski, Town Councilman John Pajeski, Plymouth Police Chairman Chet Scoville, Assistant Police Chief Robert Wright, Town Councilman Wyszynski, and Town Councilman Tom Zagurski.

Mayor Merchant called the Plymouth Town Council back into the Regular Session at 9:17 p.m.

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To take action, as may be necessary, from the Executive Session on the Assistant Chief of Police Contract

Town Councilman Wyszynski made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Zagurski, to table this Agenda item until the bugs were worked out of the Contract and rewritten for the February 18th Town Council Special Meeting. This motion was approved unanimously.

Town Council Liaison Reports

Town Councilman Wyszynski stated that the Public Works Commission was working on their budget. He further stated that they were also busy with the Seymour Road Project and that the Department would be working on paving for Allentown/Fall Mountain Lake Road. Town Councilman Wyszynski stated that the North Main Street Bridge Project was ongoing, that the Department had been busy with snowstorms (hauling and salting the roads). He further stated that they had metal reimbursements from JW Green in the amount of \$1,389.00, as well as 23 permits. Town Councilman Wyszynski stated that a truck was brought down from International to look at to replace truck number 12, however no decisions had been made as yet.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that Planning & Zoning had cancelled their meeting due to the lack of a quorum and had rescheduled their meeting to this coming Thursday.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that the Pump Station No. 6 on Driftwood Road needed a new pump and that they were using an emergency pump at this time.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that DEEP was investigating a spill that occurred recently at the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) plant when a pump was left running and a holding tank overflowed. She further stated that WPCA was looking at putting timers on the pumps so that they could only run for a certain amount of time.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that an outside manhole repair company was scheduled to do a week of repairs (approximately 35 manholes), which cost up to \$3,000.00 to repair.

Town Councilwoman Murawski stated that WPCA had reviewed a list of people who were delinquent on their sewer fees, noting that delinquents that were late three years and over were turned over to a collection agency.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he had nothing to report at this time.

Town Councilman Pajeski stated that Gosinski Park/Human Services were trying to get clarification about members on the Human Services Board who were elected officials of the Town, as well.

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Town Council Liaison Reports Cont'd.

Town Councilman Heering stated that the Inland Wetlands Commission had approved a permit modification for Terryville Chevrolet for a single bay addition with a stipulation that they do the expansion on the retention pond early in the renovations.

Town Councilman Heering stated there was a continuing issue with the old OZ Gedney property owned by Peter Worhunsky. He further stated that the problem was called infrasound and this happens when water goes over the dam and creates an inaudible disturbance that rattles windows in people's houses on Allen Street. He further stated that Peter Worhunsky showed up and that they would be working on a solution this coming summer when the water level goes down.

Council Comments

Town Councilman Wyszynski stated that if something were to come about to charge non-residents for a Notary stamp he would be fine with it, however he doesn't see why the Town would charge residents.

Town Councilman Wyszynski questioned if Melanie Church was referring to the Capital Improvements Committee members and that he didn't understand what she was talking about.

Melanie Church stated that the Capital Improvements Commission was put together by the Council and an Ad Hoc Committee cannot spend money and the Public was reassured when there was a Referendum that the Council would oversee the spending. She further stated that the only thing the Capital Improvements Committee brought to the Council was the hiring of Engineers.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that he wasn't sure if Capital Improvements was an Ad Hoc Committee, but it was definitely not a Chartered Committee of the Town and further, that he felt it was a Standing Committee who did not have the right to spend money, noting this was his opinion.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that four volunteer Plymouth Police Officers, who belong to a group called "Cops in the Middle", had held a food drive at the Adam's IGA this past weekend, noting that the Plymouth Food Pantry was very low on food and funds.

Town Councilman Zagurski stated that this group had also held a huge Toy Drive at Christmastime and had filled an SUV with toys for Town residents, noting that he felt it was a wonderful volunteer thing that they were doing.

Town Councilman Heering thanked the Mayor for obtaining the Town Council member email addresses/mailboxes, noting it was a great way to keep in touch with the Public.

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Council Comments Cont'd.

Town Councilman Heering stated that he was looking to hold a Town Meeting once a month in the Town Hall Community Room (if available) that would entail a recap of what had happened and what was coming up with all the Boards and Commissions over the previous month, as well as items for future Town Council Meetings. He further stated that he was looking for representatives from each Board and Commission to attend.

Mayor Merchant recommended calling the meetings something other than a Town Meeting, i.e. Meet Your Town Councilman Night, Talk With Your Councilman, etc.

Town Councilman Heering stated that he had attended the annual Super Bole with Jerry Milne this past weekend, noting that it was a lot of fun. He further stated that they had toured the Baptist Church on North Street, the Burying Grounds behind the church, they were able to view the Pin Oak and they were able to go into the Congregational Church and view the wooden clockworks made by Eli Terry that currently runs the clock on the church. He further stated that he placed pictures of the clockworks on this Councilman's Facebook page.

Town Councilman Heering stated that he was struck by an article in the January edition of the Plymouth Connection, which had stated that the Plymouth Food Pantry had provided presents to 80 children in 2012 and that the number had rose to 148 in 2013. He further stated that was astonishing and that said a lot about where the Town was at. Town Councilman Heering stated that made the Council's job more important with what they do and approve for spending.

Adjournment

There being no further business of the Plymouth Town, Town Councilman Heering made a motion, seconded by Town Councilman Wyszynski, to adjourn at 9:29 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Recording Secretary