

**Town of New Canaan  
Town Council**

**Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, February 24, 2016  
7:30 P.M. - Town Hall**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Kenneth Campbell  
John Engel  
Sven Englund  
Stephen Karl  
Christa Kenin  
Kevin Moynihan  
Joe Paladino  
Cristina Ross  
William Walbert  
Penny Young

**Member Absent:**

Kathleen Corbet  
Jim Kucharczyk

**Others Present:**

Steve Benko, Recreation Director  
Jay Egan, Athletic Director  
Scott Hobbs, Chairman of New Canaan Housing Authority  
Michael Nowacki, Resident  
Tom Stadler, Administrative Officer  
Rich Vachula, Resident  
Members of the press

**Roll Call and Call to Order** - Ms. Young called the roll noting the absence of Ms. Corbet and Mr. Kucharczyk. Mr. Walbert then called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

**Minutes** - Mr. Walbert presented a request to approve the minutes for the regular meeting held on January 20, 2016 and the special and regular meetings held on February 2, 2016. The minutes for all three meetings were then approved by unanimous consent.

**Public Comments** - Mr. Walbert invited members of the public to speak to the Town Council on agenda topics scheduled for review and/or vote.

Mr. Vachula asked a rhetorical question concerning the consequences of lying concerning moving the fifth grade from the Saxe Middle School back to the Elementary Schools.

Mr. Nowacki distributed an envelope of documents to each Council member. He then offered comments concerning the Town audit and financial processes.

**Housing Authority** - Mr. Hobbs presented a brief update of the Millport Affordable Housing Project. He then presented a request from the New Canaan Housing Authority to authorize additional funds for the Project. Appropriations for the Project would come from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (Fund), created under Section 7.6A of the Town's Zoning Regulations to be used for constructing, rehabilitating or repairing housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income. He noted that the Housing Authority is requesting approval for an additional \$200,000 at this time. After some questions and discussion, Ms. Young made the motion, seconded by Mr.

Campbell, to approve the request as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Dunning Stadium** - Mr. Egan presented a request to approve a project for the replacement of the artificial turf at Dunning Stadium. He referred to the promises made when Dunning Stadium was built in 1997 concerning operating and capital costs. He presented the overall vision and background information on the Rams Spirit Fund, the Fund that will provide all of the funding for the project, as well as the need for the replacement turf, and the reasons, safety and other, that certain types of new turf are being considered. Mr. Egan mentioned that Mr. Dunning has offered a significant donation to kick-off the fundraising effort. After many questions and considerable discussion, Mr. Karl made the motion, seconded by Mr. Paladino, to approve the request as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Softball Canopies** - Mr. Benko presented a request to approve a project to install dugout shade canopies on the girls' softball field in Waveny Park. The canopies are estimated to cost \$14,000 including installation. He noted that the cost of the canopies, like the cost of the canopies previously installed on three baseball fields, will be funded by New Canaan Baseball/Softball, Inc. (NCBBSB). Mr. Walbert expressed the Council's gratitude for the many projects that NCBBSB has funded over the years for the local baseball and softball players. After some questions and discussion, Mr. Paladino made the motion, seconded by Mr. Karl, to approve the request as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Waveny Swimming Pool** - Mr. Benko presented a request from the Park and Recreation Commission to approve a project to install pool heaters at the Waveny Swimming Pools at an estimated cost of \$131,500; including a contingency amount of \$17,000. He noted that the heaters will greatly enhance the usability of the pool, especially early in the swim season. He added that the funds are available in the Waveny Pool Fund. After some questions and discussion, Ms. Kenin made the motion, seconded by Ms. Ross, to approve the request as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Town Audit** - Mr. Walbert presented an item to be read into the minutes as follows: "The Town Council accepts the recommendation of the Audit Committee regarding the Town audit per Ordinance (62-5) and accepts the presentation of the audit by the outside auditing firm per Charter (C5-27)."

Mr. Engel requested that a vote for this item be added to the agenda in a symbolic gesture to express his strong feelings on this issue via a vote as opposed to just open commentary. Mr. Engel then made the motion, seconded by Ms. Ross, to add a vote to this item as follows: Approval of the following: "The Town Council accepts the recommendation of the Audit Committee regarding the Town audit per Ordinance (62-5) and accepts the presentation of the audit by the outside auditing firm per Charter (C5-27)." The motion was approved with nine votes in favor (Campbell, Engel, Englund, Karl, Kenin, Moynihan, Ross, Walbert and Young) and one abstention (Paladino).

Mr. Walbert noted that it had been a disappointing year for financial processes. Discussion followed about either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the audit, financial statements, financial processes, accuracy of the financial statements, lack of transparency, message from the top, pace of progress concerning the nine points of the Audit Committee, hiring of a new comptroller, and hiring of an internal auditor. Overall there was considerable dissatisfaction among the Council Members concerning the Town's financial processes.

After the discussion, Mr. Karl made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moynihan, to amend the current motion as follows: Approval of the following: "The Town Council accepts the recommendation (to accept the financial statements dated June 30, 2015) of the Audit Committee regarding the Town audited financial statements per Ordinance (62-5) and accepts the presentation of the audit by the outside auditing firm per Charter (C5-27)." The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Karl then made a motion, seconded by Mr. Campbell, to approve the amended motion as presented. The motion was approved with six votes in favor (Campbell, Englund, Karl, Paladino, Walbert and Young) and four votes against (Engel, Kenin, Moynihan and Ross).

**Town Budget** - Mr. Walbert gave a brief update on a few budget items, as well as the budget status, process and schedule.

**Committee Reports** - Updates from the Town Council Committees:

**Bylaws & Ordinances** - Mr. Moynihan and Mr. Karl presented a brief update of activities concerning the formation of an Ethics Board, the Utilities Commission activities including cell phone service, and meetings held concerning leg-hold trapping of animals.

**Education** - Ms. Kenin noted nothing additional other than what has been covered in the budget discussions.

**Finance & Government** - Mr. Moynihan reported on the recent health insurance review meeting.

**Health & Human Services** - Ms. Young reported on a recent very successful League of Women Voters' heroin epidemic community forum held in Wilton which mirrored the recent forum held in New Canaan.

**Infrastructure & Utilities** - Mr. Englund reported on natural gas, solar and utility issues.

**Land Use & Recreation** - Mr. Paladino briefly mentioned the Waveny swimming pool projects. Mr. Engel questioned the reasonableness of the five-year capital plan for turf fields. He suggested a meeting in June to review the reasonableness and accuracy of all five-year capital plans.

**Public Safety** - Mr. Englund reported on recent activities for Fire, Police and Emergency Services, including issues related to propane tanks and radio communications.

**Charter Revision** - Ms. Young presented a brief update on the activities of the Charter Revision Commission. She asked for comments and a sense of consensus concerning changes to the Charter regarding adding template for Commissions in the Charter augmented by more detailed and specific information included in the Ordinances, similar to the recently added Ordinance for the Audit Committee.

**Adjournment** - There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 P.M. by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Young,  
Councilman and Secretary