

**DRAFT**  
**MONROE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Monroe, Connecticut**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**June 27, 2011 8:00 P.M.**  
**Council Chambers**

A regular meeting of the Monroe Town Council was held on Monday, June 27, 2011 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Town Hall.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Enid Lipeles  
Vice-Chairman Tony Unger  
Councilmember Chris Catropa  
Councilmember Jeffrey Guttman  
Councilmember David Halliwell  
Councilmember Deborah Heim  
Councilmember DeeDee Martin  
Councilmember Michele Mount  
Councilmember J.P. Sredzinski

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek

The Monroe Town Council held a Regular Meeting on Monday, June 27, 2011 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Monroe Town Hall.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. Motion to approve the minutes and voting record of the Regular Meeting held on June 13, 2011 (Session 2011-11).

**Motion:** (M. Mount)

To remove the statement on the consent calendar of the Town Council Regular Meeting of June 13, 2011, containing the phrase *“These comments and comments made during Public Participation have not been substantiated.”*

**Second:** (D. Halliwell)

**Discussion:** *Councilmember Halliwell* said he thought this comment would go at the end of the minutes and not at the end of *Councilmember Mount’s* statement and didn’t think it was current protocol. *Vice-Chairman Unger* said he felt, at the time this was decided, that it would go at the end of *Councilmember Mount’s* statement. *Chairman Lipeles* agreed. *Councilmember Mount* asked if all future comments made during public participation will have this statement written after them and asked if we changed our procedure. Discussion ensued regarding changing a procedure and *Vice-Chairman Unger* suggested the L & A Committee look into this and perhaps amend the Rules of Procedure and/or the Rules that cover Public Participation. *Chairman Lipeles* said she would forward this to the L & A Committee.

**Motion failed 6 to 3. (Opposed: D. Halliwell, D. Martin, M. Mount)**

*The Consent Calendar was not approved.*

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion:** (T. Unger)

For Town Council to go into Executive Session and asked First Selectman Vavrek, Ms. Lombardi, Director of Personnel, Attorney Ryan, Police Chief John Salvatore and Carl Tomchik, Director of Finance to remain for the Executive Discussion on Heart and Hypertension and Worker's Compensation.

**Second:** (J.Guttman)

**Motion passed 9 to 0.**

The Executive Session adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

**Heart and Hypertension**

**Motion:** (T. Unger)

For Town Council to agree to the stipulation in the Worker's Compensation claim of Joseph Peabody, based on the information in the referendum dated June 27, 2011.

**Second:** (D. Halliwell)

**Discussion:** There was no further discussion.

**Motion passed 9 to 0.**

**WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

*Vice-Chairman Unger* said this issue is being deferred to a future meeting.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Memo from the Acting Clerk of the Planning & Zoning Commission to the First Selectman and Town Council Chairman dated June 10, 2011 regarding a Municipal Referral for the Police Department Renovations at 7 Fan Hill Road.
- B. Memo from First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated June 23, 2011 regarding an appointment to the Board of Ethics.
- C. Memo from First Selectman to the Town Council chair dated June 23, 2011 regarding an appointment to the Board of Ethics.
- D. Memo from First Selectman to the Town Council chair dated June 23, 2011 regarding an appointment to the Economic Development Commission.
- E. Memo from First Selectman to the Town Council chair dated June 23, 2011 regarding an appointment to the Economic Development Commission.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Lee Hossler, 272 Stanley Road* gave an update regarding the Fairfield County Commercial Brokers Meeting and Tour and said the event was very successful. Many of the brokers that attended had never been to Monroe and were quite pleasantly surprised. Mr. Hossler said hopefully Monroe will benefit from this event.

*Steve Schapiro, 42 Harvester Road (member of EDC)* provided feedback from the meeting at Masuk High School regarding the future of Chalk Hill School, saying the meeting was very good and commented that when someone asked a question, it was

answered. He said this is unlike public participation at Town Council, and other different meetings where people just express their concerns and no response is given. He said if someone asks a question, there should be some way that person can receive an answer.

Mr. Shapiro also commented that he has been attending Town Council Meetings for the past few months and noticed different committees have Town Council Liaisons that give a report on their meetings, and said there should be one for the EDC.

Lastly, Mr. Shapiro commented on the procedure for appointments to Boards and Commissions. He said somewhere in the codes or the Charter it says that replacements on committees go to the First Selectman and he forwards his suggestion for replacement to the Town Council for their approval. He felt this is doing an injustice to some of the Town's committees. He said we're not always getting the best viable candidate, who had even spoken to the committee and we don't even know when a person resigns from a committee. He said this is wrong and felt there may be very capable people for various committees who may be interested in serving Monroe, but the knowledge of there even being a vacancy is non-existent. He said, "I think we can improve on a lot of things in this Town, if people would just talk to people. I think we are running, rather than planning."

*Chairman Lipeles* addressed the issues with Mr. Shapiro and said some issues that are brought forward to Town Council undergo litigation and they are not allowed to comment on them. Other issues brought forward are addressed, not necessarily at the time they are presented because they require investigation, and have closure. She also said the vacancy committee for both parties has a list of Boards' and Commissions' vacancies. Mr. Shapiro commented that this process bypasses the Department Head and the political party needed for the vacancy bypasses a potentially capable and enthusiastic person who would like to fill the vacancy. *First Selectman Vavrek* said he spoke with Mr. Hossler and Mr. Shapiro earlier in the day about this and addressed Mrs. Koneff, who was in attendance, regarding the party lists of vacancies and suggested the line of communication be opened, talk with Mrs. Ulatowski about this and then talk to the different chairman to address their purposes and needs.

*Vice-Chairman Unger* volunteered to be the Town Council Liaison to the Economic Development Commission (EDC).

*Don Koneff, 7 Georges Lane* said he is concerned and dismayed regarding the vote taken earlier in this meeting regarding amending the minutes to remove a statement and the need to have a clarifying statement regarding the validity of a comment. He said everyone should feel free to speak their piece and say what has to be said, without having the fear that their remarks will somehow be amended, qualified, colored, parked away in a corner somewhere – never to be heard again. He then said, "What kind of people are we? What kind of people are you?" He said, "This is wrong. I want my town back. Shame on you."

## **APPOINTMENTS**

**Motion:** (T. Unger)

To approve the appointment of *Elizabeth Edgerton (R)* of 111 Fan Hill Road to the *Board of Ethics* for a term ending January 11, 2013.

**Second:** (C. Catropa)

**Discussion:** Elizabeth is a zealous public servant who has served the Town of Monroe for many years on various elected and appointed boards and commissions including a number of terms on the Board of Education. She continues to serve the Town of Monroe as a Justice of the Peace and is an active member of the St. Jude Parish. Elizabeth's commitment to the betterment of the community shall serve the Town of Monroe well in this capacity. This appointment replaces the vacancy created by Joanne Parshall and the term is ending January 11, 2013. *Councilmember Sredzinski* said L & A interviewed Ms. Edgerton prior to this meeting and voted to bring her full motion and appointment to the full Town Council. *Councilmember Mount* said she will be voting against this appointment based on her past public comments regarding Ms. Edgerton's behavior. She said she didn't believe this appointment comports the best choice for the Board of Ethics.

**Motion passed 6 to 3. (Opposed: D. Halliwell, D. Martin, M. Mount)**

**Motion:** (T. Unger)

To approve the appointment of *James Weinberg (R)* of 59 Rowledge Pond Road to the *Board of Ethics* for a term ending January 11, 2013.

**Second:** (C. Catropa)

**Discussion:** Jim is a dedicated volunteer and active member of the Monroe community. He is the Founder and President of Safe Harbour Tanker Chartering, LLC, a ship brokerage and marine consultancy firm headquartered here in Monroe. Jim has served the Town of Monroe as a former member of both the Board of Education and the Board of Finance. He also served as a liaison to the Masuk High School Building Committee and was appointed to serve on Governor Jodi Rell's Commission on Unfunded Mandates. Jim's vast experience and proven dedication shall be an asset to the Town of Monroe as a member of the Board of Ethics. This appointment replaces the vacancy created by Ann Marie Hughes. *Councilmember Sredzinski* said the L & A Committee interviewed Mr. Weinberg prior to this meeting and unanimously supported his nomination to the Board of Ethics.

**Motion passed 8 to 1. (Opposed: M. Mount)**

*Councilmember Sredzinski* asked that the First Selectman perform the swearing in of the two new Board of Ethics members, as they are present and appointments are effective immediately following Town Council's approval. There is no longer a two-week waiting period.

*First Selectman Vavrek* performed the swearing in of **Elizabeth Edgerton** and **James Weinberg** to the Board of Ethics.

**Motion:** (T. Unger)

To approve the appointment of *Theresa Rotella (R)* of 39 Ryegate Terrace to the *Economic Development Commission* for a term ending January 31, 2016.

**Second:** (J. P. Sredzinski)

**Discussion:** Teri is a longtime resident of Monroe. She is the Founder and Owner of Trinkets by Teri based out of Monroe. She has been the President of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce since 2009 and her leadership thereat has been instrumental in the continued growth and success of the Chamber. She is a committed volunteer with a firm understanding of the commercial framework in town and her breadth of knowledge and community ties shall serve to further responsible economic development in Monroe. This appointment replaces the vacancy created by Timothy Quinn.

**Motion passed 9 to 0.**

**Motion: (T. Unger)**

To approve the appointment of *Mitchell R. Beck (R)* of 272 Fan Hill Road to the *Economic Development Commission* for a term ending January 31, 2015.

**Second: (J. Guttman)**

**Discussion:** Mitch has been a resident of Monroe for nine (9) years. He is the Founder and President of Crossroads Consulting, LLC a full service employment agency operating in Monroe. Prior to his current career, Mitch was a radio personality and program director for various radio stations throughout the United States and appeared in a number of featured films, television productions and commercials. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and the Connecticut School of Broadcasting. Mr. Beck's well-rounded professional skills will serve to benefit the Town of Monroe on the Economic Development Commission. This appointment replaces the vacancy created by Susan Ownes. *Councilmember Mount* said she will vote against this appointment, based on the way he conducts his own personal business and didn't feel he would be the best representative for the Town of Monroe.

**Motion passed 8 to 1. (Opposed: M. Mount)**

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Town Council Committee on Finance, Education, Health & Public Safety Matters**

*Councilmember Heim* said they met earlier this evening. The Board of Education is working on the STEM program in preparation for the students at Masuk High School. They are conducting a search for the superintendent. The Board of Finance met last Tuesday regarding renovations for the Police Department and passed it forward to the Town meeting on July 5<sup>th</sup>. The Police Department has one opening and possibly a second opening. The Fire Departments addressed concerns regarding the roofs on their buildings and they questioned the progress of the grant regarding the cisterns. The next meeting will be scheduled sometime in July.

### **Town Council Committee on Planning & Zoning, Public Works & Recreation Matters**

*Councilmember Guttman* said they had a meeting last week and Interim Director, Frank S. Bent said all the pool figures for memberships are consistent with last year. They also formed a committee to look into a dog park for Monroe. They have volunteers from the public who are doing a lot of the leg work. The Committee has not scheduled their next meeting.

### **Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters**

*Councilmember Sredzinski* said they met this evening and interviewed two candidates for the Board of Ethics. The next meeting has not yet been scheduled, but will include

discussion on the Demolition Delay Ordinance, along with a possible amendment to the town code that pertains to auctions. The current code that is written requires that anyone who wants to have an auction taken place must notify the Chief of Police. He said this was never an issue because we never had very many auctions, until Fairfield Auction moved into 707 Main Street. As a result, every time they want to conduct business they have to contact the Chief of Police and ask for permission.

### **Trumbull/Monroe Health District**

*Chairman Lipeles* said she did not hear from Mr. Knapp. There is no update.

### **First Selectmen's Update**

*First Selectman Vavrek* thanked Mr. Hossler and the entire Economic Development Commission for the successful Fairfield County Commercial Brokers Meeting and Tour and said over 40 brokers saw some economic opportunities and he shared some written comments to Mr. Hossler that he received. *"Thank you for being such a gracious host, and tell the First Selectman that, with the town's positive approach to business opportunities, Monroe will surely get its share of those opportunities."* *"You and your group did a wonderful job with yesterday's meeting. I heard from several members who were quite taken with your passion for Monroe. We learned things about your town that were previously unknown to most of us. It was a good experience for all of us."* *"It was a great event and really a progressive marketing tool for your town."*

*First Selectman Vavrek* said he's pleased to have the strong Economic Development Commission with their mission to move Monroe ahead, as well as a strong Land Use direction with the vision to make our departments system consistent, efficient and communicated to all that will let us move ahead and he thanked Scott Schatzlein for his leadership in the Land Use Group.

*First Selectman Vavrek* also thanked Rick Zini for his strong leadership with the Planning and Zoning Commission on the POCD, the Commission's insistence on fixing the Land Use Departments and for the CIFAP sub-committee.

### **Road Work**

*First Selectman Vavrek* provided a report that listed schedules of roads for Milling and Paving, Cape Seals and Chip seals. He noted the fluctuating costs of asphalt may affect the final amount of road work that the town can accomplish with existing funding to *Vice-Chairman Unger* in response to his question last week on the progress of Elm Street. He said he just found out that asphalt prices right now are the highest they've been in approximately two years. He said gas prices are going down and hopefully this will bring down the price of asphalt.

*Vice-Chairman Unger* said he received 16 calls on Elm Street and said we really need to review this. *Chairman Lipeles* said she received 4 and *First Selectman Vavrek* said he got 5 just sitting at the Farmers' Market. He said we are going to review this and reiterated that Elm Street was pushed aside in order to address the needs of Turkey Roost. He said we will be working on Elm Street as soon as possible.

### **Chalk Hill**

*First Selectman Vavrek* said we are working with the Board of Education to relinquish Chalk Hill back to the Town as of July 1<sup>st</sup> and not October 1<sup>st</sup> as previously reported. *Councilmember Martin* asked how the date changed and does the budget allow for the timeframe.

*First Selectman Vavrek* said, as the system was, the Board of Education was not able to get everything out of the building until October 1<sup>st</sup>. But he has been assured by the Board of Education's staff that everything non-essential will be moved out of the building. He said he spoke with Dr. Palmer and other Board of Ed. Members and they felt if we could work a situation with them where we would take the building over July 1<sup>st</sup> and let them come anytime they wanted to take stuff out, it would be advantageous to the town to not bring back laid off employees but let them come in and us not be charged for those three months. *First Selectman Vavrek* said Mr. Tomchik also agreed with this decision. *Councilmember Martin* asked how we will be paying for Chalk Hill. *First Selectman Vavrek* said we're going to pay for Chalk Hill the same as we would October 1<sup>st</sup> and that would be basically moth-balling it, doing the same exact thing we planned on doing October 1<sup>st</sup>. This money will have to come from the Town budget, we'll have to find a place for it. The alternatives are that we have a building that has been given back to us and we are trying to get it back and either way the town's is going to have to pay for it. *Councilmember Martin* said when a decision has been made as to where this money will come from, she asked if he would inform Town Council and he said he would.

*Councilmember Mout* said there seemed to have been a uniformed consensus regarding doing a facilities study and asked if there has been any talk about that and can this be discussed at a Town Council meeting. *First Selectman Vavrek* said this will be going to CIFAP who reviews projects and then forwards them to Town Council and the Board of Finance for approval.

### **Farmers' Market**

The Farmers' Market opened last Friday and he believes it will grow even bigger in the coming weeks.

### **Rochambeau French Army**

Richard Orr said they will be in Town on Wednesday, June 29, 2011 and *First Selectman Vavrek* said he will get the details and implored everyone to come to welcome them.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Police Department Project Town Meeting: July 5, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.**

*Chairman Lipeles* said there will be a **Town Meeting on July 5, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.** in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Town Hall for consideration of an act upon the **Resolution Regarding an Appropriation and Bond Authorization of \$4,105,000 for the Police Department Project.**

**Liaison to Conservation Commission (Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month)**

*Chairman Lipeles* reminded Town Council that the Conservation Commission requested a Liaison from Town Council. *Councilmember Mount* said she had been contacted by the Committee on an unofficial capacity to work with them and she told them she would, so she volunteered to be the Liaison.

**Tax Abatement for Surviving Spouses of Police and Firefighters**

*Chairman Lipeles* said this will be voted on at the next Town Council Meeting on July 25, 2011. *Councilmember Sredzinski* asked if there are any concerns that can be addressed this evening, prior to the next discussion and vote on the abatement. *Councilmember Halliwell* brought up the question raised during the public hearing regarding language to include injuries that occur on the job that can lead to death and *Councilmember Sredzinski* said he reviewed the abatement and the language is already included in Section 2 a VI. *Councilmember Martin* asked if the Town Attorney has reviewed this and if so, can we have his written findings.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

*Chairman Lipeles* reminded everyone of the two up-coming meetings:

**July 5, 2011 7:00 p.m. the Town Meeting for the Police Department Project**

**July 25, 2011 8:00 p.m. the next Regular Town Council meeting.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business *Chairman Lipeles* adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Backert  
Town Council Clerk