

Prospect Town Council
 Special Meeting
 Unapproved Minutes
 June 23, 2020

Chairman Slapikas called to order the Special Meeting of the Prospect Town Council @ 6:00 p.m. The meeting was a Virtual Meeting by videoconference via GoToMeeting as authorized by Executive Orders 7B and 7I. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: J Slapikas

A roll call for attendance was taken by Chairman Slapikas.

Via Online: P. Murray, T. Graveline, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Geary, M. Patchkofsky,

S. Lusas Kolodziej

Absent: L. Fitzgerald

Also, in Attendance via phone/online: Mayor Chatfield and Tax Collector AnneMarie Burr. There were additional callers online that could view, listen and chat.

Mayor's Report:

Resident State Trooper Contract: Mayor Chatfield had sent to the Council the new Resident State Trooper Contract for July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Discussion.

Motion made by P. Geary, seconded by R. Blanc to approve the Resident State Trooper Contract between the towns of Bethany and Prospect for the contract period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in the amount of \$105,000. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved/J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, T. Graveline, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Murray, S. Lusas Kolodziej. Opposed/None. Motion carries.**

Transfers:

#6-16-2020-1:

From:

BTE # 6200-1 Medical Ben \$ 74,891.00

To:

Fire Marshall #6650-08 3,736 miles \$ 2,132.00
 Insurance Worker Comp #6750-01 13,585.00
 Cap Non-Recurring-Sidewalk Design 53,974.00
 Town Hall Buildings #6100-02 Phones 5,200.00

Total: \$ 74,891.00

Total \$ 74,891.00

Disc. **Motion** made by R. Blanc, seconded by T. Graveline to approve the transfer in the amount of \$74,891.00 from BTE #6200-1 Medical Ben to several line items. Council members raised concerns as to the transfer to phones and the amount left in Medical Benefits. Disc. Council members asked for a detail of worker's comp. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. No other comments were made. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved/J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, T. Graveline, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Murray, S. Lusas Kolodziej. Opposed/None. Motion carries.**

Transfers:

#6-23-2020-1

The Mayor requested the following year end transfer for the 2019-2020 Budget:

From:

Town Council #6050 Conf. \$ 500.00
 I&S Salt #7050 – 1 \$ 6,000.00
 I&S Contractor #7050 \$12,000.00
 Town Truck Diesel #7150-04 \$ 5,000.00
 Police Res Trooper #6700-01 \$ 4,783.00

To:

Election & Reg Salary #5150 \$ 983.00
 BTE #6200 Vacation \$ 3,100.00
 Legal Fees #5450 \$15,000.00
 Insurance #5750 Package \$ 1,200.00
 Cap Non Recurring Traffic
 Light (Sidewalks) \$ 7,500.00
 Town Council Clerk #6050-1 \$ 500.00

Total \$23,283.00

Total \$23,283.00

In addition, the Mayor advised that the traffic light on the corner of Rtes 68 & 69 allowed for traffic to stop to Rte 68 for pedestrian walking, but not as to Rte 69 pedestrian traffic. T. Graveline continued that on the new lower traffic lights installed as a courtesy to drivers as the higher lights, due to sun glare, are sometimes not seen. T. Graveline explained that with the traffic light for pedestrians being a safety issue, Milone and MacBroom will address this matter with the sidewalks at Rte 69, but the cost for design is the Town's responsibility and the price is \$7,500. Chairman Slapikas called for further comments. There were no other comments. **Motion** made by P. Murray, seconded by R. Blanc to approve the year end transfer for the 2019-2020 Budget:

From:		To:	
Town Council #6050 Conf.	\$ 500.00	Election & Reg Salary #5150	\$ 983.00
I&S Salt #7050 – 1	\$ 6,000.00	BTE #6200 Vacation	\$ 3,100.00
I&S Contractor #7050	\$12,000.00	Legal Fees #5450	\$15,000.00
Town Truck Diesel #7150-04	\$ 5,000.00	Insurance #5750 Package	\$ 1,200.00
Police Res Trooper #6700-01	\$ 4,783.00	Cap Non Recurring Traffic	
		Light (Sidewalks)	\$ 7,500.00
		Town Council Clerk #6050-1	\$ 500.00
Total	\$23,283.00		\$23,283.00

Disc. No other comments were made. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved**/J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, T. Graveline, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Murray, S. Lusas Kolodziej. Opposed/None. **Motion carries.**

Bank Bid on Bonds:

The Mayor advised that he had reborrowed money to repair roads. The renewal on the bonds for the borrowed monies usually comes due in July; this time the renewal was for 13 months and would be due in August. The Mayor stated that the new interest rate is @ 1.319.

Code Red: The Mayor advised that there is another platform that he could use for notifying the public through Code Red.

Land Purchase: The Mayor advised that there is a landlocked piece of property owned by the CT Water Co., measuring 15 acres off of Old Log Town Rd. The Mayor stated that he would like to meet with the land acquisition sub-committee as soon as possible for a possible donation by the CT Water Company or possibly purchasing the property for \$1.00. T. Graveline questioned if CT Water Co. would be willing to donate the property. The Mayor stated that he had spoken with the VP of Water operations from CT Water and stated that the CT Water Co. would be interested.

Census- The Mayor commented that through C.O.G., he was informed that the Town of Prospect came in 3rd as to the number of returns received for the US Census.

Tax Refund:

Motion made by P. Geary, seconded by P. Murray to approve the Tax Refunds dated 6/23/2020, in the amount of \$85.94. Chairman Slapikas asked for comment; no comments were made. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved**/J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, T. Graveline, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Murray, S. Lusas Kolodziej. Opposed/None. **Motion carries.**

Request to waive the Delinquent Tax Amounts of \$1.00 or less for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 Fiscal Year.

Chairman Slapikas read into the record the letter from Tax Collector, AnneMarie Burr requesting to waive the delinquent tax amounts of \$1.00 or less for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 Fiscal Year as the cost to send out the bills would be more. Disc. **Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by M. Patchkofsky to approve waiving the delinquent tax amounts of \$1.00 or less for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 Fiscal Year. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved**/J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, T. Graveline, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Murray, S. Lusas Kolodziej. Opposed/None. **Motion carries.**

Unions: The Mayor advised that he will be having a second meeting with Town Hall Supervisors for their Union contract. The Mayor recently met with Public Works to settle their contract. The Council will be getting copies of the contract.

-Mayor Chatfield advised that through the month of July the Town Hall offices will be open 5 days a week until 3 p.m.

-Public Participation: Chairman Slapikas opened public participation at this time as the Mayor lost communication with the Council.

-Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Terrace questioned if the Chairman Slapikas received his email today, to which the Chairman advised that he did. T. Galvin thanked the Chairman.

-Tax Collector, AnneMarie Burr commented that the Tax bills will be going out on the 29th of June; the residents should receive the packets as of June 30th or July 1st. P. Geary questioned if the assessments would be included. A. Burr stated that re-evaluation will not be noted until next year's bill. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments; no other comments were made.

-T. Graveline commented that there was a caller on the line that could not get through. Chairman Slapikas asked the public to press *6 to speak with the Council. Andrea Sutton, 39 Cambridge Dr commented that she had sent an email to Chairman Slapikas and the Mayor to have the Pride Flag flown during the month of June. At the 5/19/2020 meeting, the Council discussed this topic and most did not have a problem with flying the flag, but the Chairman advised that it was the Mayor's decision. Since that time, on May 23rd, June 2nd, and now, on June 23rd there is still no response. Chairman Slapikas advised that it was brought to the Council's attention and noted that it is not the Council's decision but the Mayor that runs Town Hall. The Mayor stated that he had spoken with Democratic Registrar of Voters, Katie Blinstrubas and advised that a flagpole would be erected on another piece of Town property to raise flags. A. Sutton commented that it was June 23rd, with only 1 week left to the month, with no recognition. Chairman Slapikas advised A. Sutton to email the Chairman if she had any questions.

-Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. No further public comments were made.

-The Mayor commented that he received 4 bids from different architects that are associated with the CT Historic Society for the Meeting place to repair the roof and other items which will be considered for the future. The Mayor stated that he will interview 2 of the contractors.

-The Mayor stated that he received 2 bids for removing oil tanks, including the Community Center. The Mayor stated that one of the bids was very reasonable.

-Grange- There will be a rebid separately due to more work needed on removing the asbestos. The Mayor continued that he received a quote to tear down the building of \$100,000.

-P. Geary commented on receiving a dog license renewal notice and was advised to send back-in in a self-addressed envelopment with payment.

T. Graveline commented on only receiving a temporary recycling sticker and not a permanent one. The Mayor commented that a temporary permit is given on his stationary. At this time, there are no permanent recycling permits. The Mayor stated that the Town is having a problem with surrounding town residents trying to use Prospect's recycling center.

-T. Graveline commented on voice mails and Town's utility bills and reminded the Mayor that prior to COVID-19, a member of the public requested a review of the utility bills. T. Graveline highly recommended for the Mayor to have someone look into this area.

-P. Geary commented on the Prospect Police website and noticed that the Canine, Mayhem, graduated. In the article, it stated that Mayhem was accompanied by his handler, a Prospect Constable. The Mayor advised that the Town did not have constables and advised that he would speak with Lt. Abarzua on this matter.

-T. Graveline advised that she had several concerns and brought to the Mayor's attention the new contract between the Town of Bethany and the Town of Prospect St Police program. T. Graveline commented on coverage of the St Police Trooper responsibilities including Police overtime. Mayor Chatfield advised that the only time there would be police overtime for a St Police Trooper is if the Mayor or Lt. Abarzua called for his presence. T. Graveline continued with the St Police Trooper issuing special assignments for the Police Officers. The Mayor advised that it is Lt Abarzua that assigns the Police Officers their responsibilities and not the St Police Trooper. T. Graveline commented on tech equipment and the compatibility with the St Police. The Mayor advised that all tech equipment for the Police is compatible with the St Police. T. Graveline commented on the Police canine and alternative training programs. The Mayor commented that the Police canine is owned by the Town. T. Graveline advised of her reservations with liability by having the Police canine. T. Graveline commented on the St. Trooper disciplining the Police officers of the Town. Mayor Chatfield advised that the Town takes care of disciplining the Town officers. T. Graveline asked the Mayor to review the contract so that the Council would have a clear understanding of what they agreed to.

-T. Graveline also commented on the Police Overtime expenditures and requested a complete accounting as to the expenditures. T. Graveline advised that the Council is not aware of how the monies are spent and would like the process to change as a vehicle of \$58,000 was purchased for the Police Dept. without advisement to the Council. Mayor Chatfield advised that he did not agree

as the Council was apprised prior to the purchase. The Mayor also commented on going by the State bid price. T. Graveline commented on being more transparent and keeping the Council informed. P. Geary commented that she would like an accounting of the Police Dept and what is spent from the Police Overtime account. M. Patchkofsky commented to look into the article on the website and change the Police Constable. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments; no other comments were made.

Mayor Chatfield advised to remember what the 4th of July means. The Mayor left the meeting @ 7:02 p.m.

Guests: None

Chair's Report:

-Breach Update – No update to report

-Special Audit Review for 3 years – Chairman Slapikas asked what the Council's opinion was on this matter. P. Geary commented that she would like to go back farther than 3 years. M. Patchkofsky would like to stay at 3 years and to move forward. P. Murray commented that he would like to go back 4 years and to move forward. M. Patchkofsky suggested to create an RFP and advertise it 'well'. Chairman Slapikas advised that the Council was moving in the right direction, but needed to act; he did not feel an Audit Sub-committee was necessary. P. Geary commented that she would like to go back 3 to 4 years, stating that the Council needed to know why it happened and why the Council was not informed in a timelier manner. T. Graveline commented to find the discrepancy and go back to 2015. T. Graveline continued with putting the right process in place with a system of checks and balances to be more effective and to consider what other towns do for their checks and balances. Chairman Slapikas advised that he will contact several Accountants and send out an RFP to the Council prior to the July 21st meeting. Chairman Slapikas asked the Council to reply to him individually and not as a group. P. Geary also commented that a new job description be made which should include balancing of check books.

-Block the Box update – The Mayor had sent out the paperwork

-Mike Reilly Update – No new information. P. Geary advised that she had contacted M. Reilly and was advised that he would get back to her, but was then unavailable. Chairman Slapikas commented that he would try to get in touch with M. Reilly.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion made by m. Patchkofsky, seconded by R. Blanc to approve the minutes of 6/2/2020. **8 Approved**/J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, T. Graveline, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, P. Murray, S. Lusas Kolodziej. **Opposed/None. Motion carries.**

Correspondence:

Packet #1 (9 pages)

Termination of State Police Contract

Land Use Reports- April and May 2020 (2 pgs)

Prospect Police Patrol Report April 2020 (2 pgs)

Volunteer Fire Depart. Treasurer's Report – April 2020

Tax Collector's Report – May 2020

Request to write off delinquent tax amount of \$1.00 or less for the July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019 Fiscal Year (2 pgs)

Packet #2 (8 pages)

Transfer dated 6-16-2020-1

Termination of State Police Contract

Rep-Am Legal Notice Bid for removal of an in place abandoned 5,000 gal. fiber glass fuel tank dated 6/9/2020

Proposal for Architect with experience with the Connecticut Historic Commission for Repair to the Meeting Place:

Proposal will be opened on 6/22/2020 @ 11 a.m.

Proposal for removing asbestos and other containments from the Prospect Grange Building prior to being demoed:

Rep-Am Legal Notice 6/9/2020

Sealed bids on furnishing one Gledhill Road Machinery Model 10HSJPRT snow plow. Bid opening 6/17/2020: dated 6/9/2020.

Library Report dated 6/11/2020

Park & Rec Report dated June 2020

Packet #3 (7 pages)

Building, Demo Permits, Electrical, Gas, Mechanical, Sign, and Grand Total Receipts dated 5-8- 31-2020.

Contract Between the ST of CT; St Police; Towns of Bethany and Prospect - Contract Pd July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Packet #4 (8 pages)

General Fund Expenditures Compared with Budget dated April 2020

Region 16 - Net Cost to Member Towns

Transfers – 6-23-2020-1

Tax Refunds 6-23-2020

Town Clerk Report May 2020

Governor Lamont Signs Executive Order Modernizing Police Strategies and Programs dated 6/15/2020

Appointment of Auditor Annual Notification

The Volunteer Fire Dept. May 2020

Town of Prospect Sidewalk Task Force Subcommittee Via Webex Special Meeting Conference Call 6/19/2020

Letter from Tom Galvin, dated 6/22/2020 Re: ‘Don’t Cover It Up’

‘Human Errors’ document from Tom Galvin, dated 6/22/2020

Treasurer’s Report May 2020

Motion made by R. Blanc, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to place correspondence on file. A rollcall vote was taken. **9 Approved**/J. Slapikas, S. Pilat, L. Fitzgerald, M. Patchkofsky, R. Blanc, S. Lusas Kolodziej, P. Murray, T. Graveline, P. Geary. **Opposed/None Motion carries.**

Chairman Slapikas read into the record the following two emails sent by Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Terrace. As per T. Galvin’s request, the first and the last two paragraphs of each email are included in these minutes.

Don’t Cover It Up:

This document will deal singularly with what I believe is the overriding need for the Town Council to initiate a very thorough investigation of how the Town of Prospect has conducted its accounting practices over time, including the accurate recording of its financial transactions. As far back as 2016, a Town Council Audit Sub-Committee was appointed to review some emerging concerns but the Town’s ‘Administration’ failed to provide them many of the requested documents. The majority of you will recall that during the summer of 2017 the Town Council, by a slim majority (5 to 4, and mostly along party lines) voted to take a closer look a number of questionable transactions. Despite the clear objections of several elected officials who claimed that everything was being done properly, financial inconsistencies were uncovered. The Mayor ultimately acknowledged that some ‘human’ errors had been made, and that he would make sure they were ‘corrected’.

Each of these aforementioned ‘topics’ viewed individually could give rise to concerns about the Town’s financial processes, but collectively it should be impossible to conclude that everything is being done accurately. Given that, the nature of the current problems and what each of you should acknowledge is a lack of transparency, one could expect that as elected members of the Town Council, sworn to protect the best interest of the Prospect, you’d vote 9-0 to get to the bottom of what’s been going on. Given the realities of this Administration, and understanding ‘Partisan Politics’, that I’ll acknowledge that I was a part of for years, even a 5-4 vote to approve might be a real long-shot. I am however hopeful that at least two (2) members of the Town Council, (one to make a motion to initiate an investigation and another to second it) will at least cause something to be placed ‘on the record’ so the electorate will clearly understand exactly who stands for transparency and accountability and who will choose to continue to keep under wraps what for all too long has passed for good government in Prospect.

Before the Mayor tries to convince you that the cost of such an exercise would be prohibitive, remember that with just 8-10 hours of unfettered access to the ‘real data’ back in 2016, I was able to provide the Town Council with absolute proof that things were not as they appeared, and at a cost to the Town of zero. Knowing where to look, I’d be more than happy to do the legwork again and let a professional take it wherever it may lead from there. To be clear, I’m recommending that the Council opts for a minimum five (5) year look-back window, using the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year as a starting point. Thank you for your attention to this important topic. Chairman Slapikas commented that this would not be a 5-4 vote.

Human Error:

During the Town Council Investigation occurring the Summer of 2017, the Mayor acknowledged that some ‘Human Errors’ had occurred relative to the processing of certain financial transaction, and that those ‘errors’ would be corrected. As I never remembered seeing any documentation, or hearing any discussion as to what those ‘Human Errors’ involved, I’d like to provide what my read on what that situation entailed. As always, I am open to modifying / adjusting my opinions should any actual / related documentation ever be made available.

I sincerely apologize for the complex (OK, rambling) presentation of this ‘example’ but it should also point out the inherent complexity associated with the myriad of internal processes that in my opinion the Administration has opted to utilize for far too long. A few years ago, a former external auditor recommended that Prospect utilize one of its existing software packages to also provide all the ‘Budget Reporting’ instead of a stand-alone worksheet product. That would eliminate much of this complexity, save money and likely reduce the incidence of manual errors, but no one in this administration ever advocates that level of change, but perhaps they have other reasons to keep it in play?

In any event, and while I hope someone could provide any additional details, the aforementioned explanation of how things actually move through Prospect’s Financial ‘maze’ is to the best of my knowledge 100% accurate. However, absent any documented financial procedures or access to job descriptions, it is impossible to precisely determine exactly who might be responsible for doing what – hence my use of ambiguous terminology. Again, I wouldn’t want anyone to think that ‘Human Error’ indicates someone may just have entered a 1 and a 2 instead of a 2 and a 1 – as there’s a lot more going on than a casual observer might appreciate. Multiply that by however many transactions could be ‘suspect’ and the need for a structured review, and quite possibly a recommendation to consider a more comprehensive accounting solution, is all the more critical.

New Business:

Transfers: Previously discussed
Refunds – Previously discussed
Resignations – None
Appointments – None
Bids/Grants – Previously discussed

Old Business:

Sub-committee reports:

Land Use & Acquisition: M. Patchkofsky, J. Slapikas and T. Graveline to meet with the Mayor on the potential purchase of the CT Water Company property.

Ordinance: None

Public Works Maintenance: None

Salary Review: Met and will meet again to revise the original report as salary ranges would need to be changed. The new report will be sent to the Council for approval at the July meeting.

Sidewalk Task Force: Previously updated.

Town Buildings: The sub-committee met and walked through the meeting place. Several repairs would need to be done over a few years, which an RFP will address

The sub-committee commented on the demolition of the Grange. S. Lusas Kolodziej commented that the suggestion in the past was to build a bandshell or band stand. S. Lusas Kolodziej commented that the sub-committee would like to see a more multi-functional structure of a pavilion for different organizations to use. The sub-committee also advised that they would like input from the public advising of what they would like to see in this area and requested to have a Facebook page for this purpose. R. Blanc commented that previously there was a list from former Council member D. Merriman that suggested a bandshell. P. Geary, T. Graveline and S. Pilat advised that they were in favor of a pavilion. P. Murray agreed and also suggested to push the structure back for more space for spectators. The Council also advised to put something out to the Public advising that the Grange would be demoed, advising that this

structure was not on the Historical Society listing and ask for suggestions as to what they would like to see in this area.

Pension: None

Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. S. Pilat commented on the Special Audit Review and advised of materials that the Council could use: AICPA - AU-C 940 for Internal Controls & Financial Statements and PCABUS.org AICPA for audits. The Council thanked S. Pilat for his suggestions.

Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments and requested that if the public was on the line to press *6 and state their name and address. No further comments were made.

Adjournment:

Motion made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by R. Blanc to adjourn the meeting. **Unanimous.** The meeting was adjourned @ 8:01 p.m.

Jeff Slapikas
Chairman