

**Prospect Town Council  
Special Virtual Budget Workshop  
Unapproved Minutes  
March 18, 2021**

Chairman Slapikas called to order the Special Budget Workshop of the Prospect Town Council @ 6:02 p.m. The meeting was a Virtual Meeting by video conference via GoToMeeting as authorized by Executive Orders 7B and 7I. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

J. Slapikas mentioned the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The Council will discuss the Zoning Letter from the State. Zoning voted on it and PRTC voted on it. Hopefully all commissions will be on the same page; then it is sent back to the State.

J. Slapikas thanked the Council members for raising their hands during the virtual meetings. It is hard to tell who wants to speak. Everyone is handling the virtual meetings well.

**Organizer of Virtual Meeting Present:** J. Slapikas. A roll call for attendance was taken by Chairman Slapikas.

**Council Members Present via online:** J. Slapikas, R. Blanc, P. Geary, S. Pilat, T. Graveline, L. Fitzgerald, K. O’Leary & M. Patchkofsky, S. Lusas Kolodziej (6:55 pm.)

**Council Members Absent:** none

**Guests:** Mayor Chatfield, Chris Moffo & Mike Palmieri Board of Rec., Nelson Abarzua, Prospect Police

**Budget Discussion:**

• **Parks and Recreation-Line Item#7400** (Page 10 Information book page 73-74 & breakdown page 76.)  
Chris Moffo discussed the increase in supplies by \$120. The computer program being currently used has increased in price. Park Dev. increased by \$110,000. Early this week he sent out a packet of several quotes received for a pavilion at Hotchkiss Field. The quotes ranged from \$38,000-\$120,000. He is anticipating it being somewhere in between; Close to \$100,000. The Youth Programs increased due to the Summer Camp Program for grades 1-5 and the Hall Monitors. This increased due to the increase in minimum wage. They did make cuts in Youth Basketball. They looked back on the past couple years and the numbers were down. Chris clarified that the potential pavilion was brought to them by L. Fitzgerald. The Grange will potentially be replaced by a gazebo, not a pavilion. J. Slapikas asked where they may have a surplus from the 2020-2021 budget due to the fact the Community Center has not been open in 9 months. Chris Moffo explained that they did not run anything in person over the past year & they will have funds leftover in their budget. They have run some online classes that they used program funds for and the drive-in movie theater they did at the end of summer last year but there will be a surplus in programs coming into the new fiscal year. P. Geary stated she knows where the idea of a pavilion at Hotchkiss Park came from. When the property was first purchased by the Town there was a plan drawn up. In that plan there was a covered pavilion. The plan has gone in many different directions. She is concerned about the cost. She asked where the planned location is. Chris and Mike explained it would be behind the bathrooms to the left. Mayor Chatfield mentioned a survey that was done in the Town. L. Fitzgerald was appointed as the Rep. from the Council. The plan at Hotchkiss Field has changed throughout the years due to an increase in population and the needs of the Town etc. P. Geary stated that she does not think a shaded pavilion is necessary, especially when there is a possible shaded building being built in place of the Grange. M. Patchkofsky mentioned that a majority of responses from the survey showed that residents wanted to see some type of covered pavilion somewhere. She is not sure that the Town Buildings Committee or the Council necessarily wanted Park and Rec. to take this on this year. The Town is still figuring out what’s going on when the Grange is taken down. She does feel that a pavilion would be a great asset to the park but not necessarily something we need to jump into this year. Other projects were discussed for ex. other tennis courts, something with the playground. Mike Plamieri stated this pavilion would be more or less a multipurpose complex. I could be used for Summer Programs. There is a lack of outdoor space in inclement weather; it can be used as a shelter. Also, instead of groups having inside trophy days they

can take place there. Organizational meetings can be done there and free up other indoor space. He understands and agrees it does not need to be done this year. T. Graveline was under the impression when surveys came in that the requesting of the covered pavilion was a combination of a covered area with a stage. When the weather is not cooperative town concerts and others youth activities can take place there. T. Graveline agrees this may be a little early to expend those funds this year. We really have to figure out what we're doing at the Grange. T. Graveline asked for a breakdown of the \$110,000 amount requested. Chris Moffo stated they have also discussed McGrath Park. It was partially resurfaced in 2019, they recoated the Tennis Court and did some crack repair. There are other cracks that are starting to appear. This might be something we resurface completely like at Canfield Park. T. Graveline asked for price of that. Chris stated the general range is \$20-30,000 or more if they have to go to length, they did at Canfield Park. T. Graveline asked if the \$110,000 included McGrath Park. Mike Palmieri mentioned the Park Dev. line item is also for anything that may come up during year. They replaced 10-15 sections of fence near the eye doctor. etc. L. Fitzgerald asked how much is left in their budget. Chris stated they currently have \$60,000; however, they just received a bill for the fencing around Canfield Park and still have to complete the resurfacing when the weather is better. After all that is paid for, they would probably have about \$12,000 remaining. Mayor asked if they redid the tennis courts at McGrath would the existing fence be ok. Chris Moffo stated it is curling at the bottom it can maybe tightened it up. They will have to take a section down if they need to repave the whole surface. P. Geary asked the total cost of the Canfield Project. Chris Moffo stated he will have to get those numbers. McGrath Park would cost more than Canfield. J. Slapikas stated the Town Crew did a lot of work over there, excavation, fence repair etc. Chris estimates the cost is around \$70-80,000 for Canfield. Despite all the work the Town Crew did new drainage had to go in, trees had to be cut. Chris stated the fencing cost \$22,000, painting of the court cost \$21,995. He does not have the cost of the asphalt. They also put in LED lights for \$4500. P. Geary said she isn't questioning the price, but she is surprised at how much the painting cost. Chris mentioned there will be 4 pickle ball courts there as well. Mayor Chatfield explained they took the asphalt up, took the fence down and took trees down. They are dressing up the front side and are going to tie in the parking lot to Rte. 69. They also put extra curtain drains underneath as well. P. Geary stated they did it right. The fact that it sat from last fall over the winter and wasn't paved until it started getting warmer this year. She is just amazed at the cost. T. Graveline asked if this painting company has given any guarantee or warranty on how long this painting will last. Chris stated they did give them a warranty. He will look in the packet and get back to them. Mike Palmieri stated the warranties for everybody were so similar 1-2 years. They tried to get an extra warranty, but they could not. These did all go out to bid. J. Slapikas stated this was presented at the Council meeting sometime last year. P. Geary is disappointed there are cracks already at McGrath; it was repaired 2 years ago. Chris stated it is existing in the surface. Due to the water coming up from the ground and with the freeze overtime. Mike Palmieri stated that is why they did Canfield so extensively; McGrath will be done the same way to hopefully prevent any issues. The Mayor stated a lot of that water is coming from springs. McGrath will need same type of curtain drains. L. Fitzgerald asked Chris if they need the \$110,000 or would the Mayor's recommendation of \$80,000 be sufficient. Chris stated if they were not including the pavilion the Mayor's recommendation would be sufficient at \$80,000. L. Fitzgerald stated it would have been nice to be able to tie the pavilion in with the new sidewalks happening this spring. He would be in favor of doing it this year. P. Geary mentioned that the Programs line item has a \$7000 difference from the Mayor's request. Is it possible to go with the Mayor's recommendation? Chris stated it could be possible; with the numbers for summer camp being fewer than usual. Mike Palmieri mentioned they also think they need to increase their budget because they are trying to foresee the future. Everyone has been in their house for a year, and everyone wants to get out and do things. They would then have to worry about more counselors, min. wage increases etc. J. Slapikas questioned how much they have left over from the \$80,000 budgeted last year, since programs did not happen this year. He asked if they could leave the budget at the Mayor's Rec. and the surplus from this past year's budget will be deposited into an account that will be committed back to Park and Rec. Chris and Mark stated that works for them. J. Slapikas stated that the Council can commit this to Park and Rec. This would not be "capital non reoccurring". The Mayor mentioned transferring the money. They can pay for the concrete and then July they can pay for the building. T. Graveline stated the Council will be looking for keeping the extra monies from last year in the budgets going forward. If there is plenty of money in Park Development that really isn't being used, they can also do transfers between accounts. They would just need to come before the Council or have the Mayor come before the Council.

**Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by T. Graveline to approve the Mayor's Recommendation for the Recreation Budget line item# 7400 in the amount of \$304,611. **Unanimous.**

• **Police-Line Item #6700**

(Page 7 of the budget, pages 57-65 of the booklet. There was also supplemental info. sent out today discussing cameras and tasers)

Lt. Nelson Abarzua thanked the Council for having him. Lt. Abarzua explained some unforeseen fees that came up due to the new bill from the State of CT. He referred to the index in the information packet he submitted. The Officer, Office Manager, Lieutenant & Clerical Asst. line items increased by 2.75% according to the union contract. They currently have one officer on midnights 7 days a week. He mentioned the letter from State Police Headquarters. They redid their figures for the Resident Trooper Program. Lt. Abarzua explained the Fleet Gas and Repairs line item. They must keep cruisers in conjunction with OSHA requirements. Lt. explained State Mandated Training that is required. Officers need to get recertified in 10 different classes and keep their certifications up to standards. The Vehicle Computer Line item is for the laptop computers that are in each cruiser. They can't control the cost of the computer program and support systems, radio equipment and tasers. As of July 1<sup>st</sup> the radio communication in the cruisers and portable radios on each officer are sufficient. There is currently a new town radio system in the works. This involves the Police Dept, Fire Dept. Town Crew and Town Hall. This was addressed at last year's budget. The big increases in the Police Budget are the tasers and body worn camera. Lt. mentioned the new bill 6004. By July 1, 2022 each officer needs to wear a body cam on patrol and also one in the cruiser. This year Lt. is putting in for the body cameras. Prospect has had 4 cameras shared by 16-17 officers. However, they need to have a camera assigned to the officer that is working. For credibility and liability, he is looking to get a camera registered to each officer. This will show officers name and date on the screen. Lt. mentioned the additional package from AXON company that makes the cameras. Five years ago, he purchased the cameras. At the time, the biggest expense was the storage capability, so he chose a cloud storage system. AXON Company uses a cloud storage system. He also mentioned that the tasers are a lease program. If they have any issues it is replaced. They currently have 4 tasers that they need to test every shift with a 5 second test strike. This affects the life of the taser. If there was a taser assigned for each officer they would be only tested by one officer and the life expectancy of the taser would be much longer. In the new bill 6004 any contact with a civilian is supposed to be recorded. There were some incidents in the past where someone came to him to file a complaint against an officer. Once Lt. asked to listen to the recording with that person; they decided not to file a complaint. The body cams and cruiser cams are meant to protect the officers and the Town.

**Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by M. Patchkofsky to discuss the Police budget with a proposed total of \$1,079,910. P. Geary asked if line item 6700-03 is for office supplies only; and what would cost \$17,000. Lt. Nelson stated that 2 computers are going to be crashing soon.; His office and secretary's office. This amount would also cover new copiers, printers, toners and other office equipment. P. Geary asked if they are all going to be replaced. Lt. mentioned redoing the Patrol Tracker Program. They are now moving on to other programs for the Town of Prospect. They are looking to do alarm systems and trying to get away from paper and 3 ring binders. P. Geary stated it seems like a lot of money for computers and office supplies. P. Geary questioned the Patrol Tracker that does the police payroll. Is the payroll not done at the Town Hall? Lt. explained the Patrol Tracker gives a spreadsheet for each officer with their name, badge numbers start and end hours and a total. Lt. Abarzua then reviews and submits these to the Town Hall. Then the Town Hall sends to ADP to process the payroll. P. Geary asked who signs the checks. The Mayor stated that ADP signs the payroll checks. P. Geary mentioned line item# 6700-06 Vehicle Computer Supplies. Lt. explained that he added \$3000 for the NexGen Program That is his estimated cost. He also stated that right now computers in the cruisers are working ok. The newest cruisers have brand new laptops. The older cruisers have the original laptop. The fee per laptop is \$4000. If one of the laptops crashes it must be replaced immediately. He also mentioned a federal black box that is installed at the Police Dept. The Federal Govt and State check this once a year. Lt. anticipates the NexGen program will be about \$3000 more. P. Geary mentioned line item 6700-11 K-9. The Budget was \$3200 for last year and to date nothing has been spent. She asked how this happened. Lt. explained the K-9 already went to training, the vest was donated as well as the cameras for him and his handler. Lt. is unsure why there has been nothing spent. There should be cost for food, medical insurance etc. P. Geary asked how many times the K-9 has been used for incidents in Town. Lt. explained he has not done any school functions due to the pandemic. He spends a lot of time in the park when kids are there. He also does training there. He has been used in burglaries, people in the woods, evidence and people tracking. P. Geary asked how many times this has happened. Lt. stated 7 police incidents involving the K-9. P. Geary wants to express that one of her concerns about the dog and what it's costing is that the Handler is from Haddam. The use of dog in town depends on if that particular officer is on duty when incidents occur. Also, there is a timeframe before the dog even gets into Town. She feels there are enough surrounding towns for example: Naugatuck who have other dogs that can be here in 10 min. Lt. clarified that if an incident takes place the closest K-9 responds to that incident. However, a dog doing a track is only good for 30-35 min. before they need to rest. The K-9 from Haddam can be here within 15-18 minutes. He then replaces the other dog who has not found that person or taken care of the incident yet. There usually is not just one dog working. Depending on the situation we can get dogs from Waterbury, State Police or Naugatuck. If Naugatuck needs assistance for a missing child, our dog is going.

When you have a K-9 and with situations that officers are experiencing now, sometimes it's better to have a dog go into a house than have an officer hurt. P. Geary understands. L. Fitzgerald asked about the office supplies. Do they own or lease the copiers and is there a maintenance contract? Lt. stated that they lease them and there is a maintenance contract. Every month a report is sent from the copiers and then they receive a bill. L. Fitzgerald asked if that is tied into the Town Contract or is this separate from all Town buildings. Lt. clarified it is a separate contract. L. Fitzgerald asked if it would save the Town money if they were tied into the same contract as the Town. The Mayor stated that this all goes out for State bid. M. Patchkofsky asked about the NexGen in the cruisers. Is this anticipated for all of them.? Is this a software upgrade? Lt. explained that \$2256 is what they charge for the NexGen Program, not per laptop. K. O'Leary mentioned the body cams. His understanding of the Police Accountability Bill is that it is not required for officers to have their own assigned camera. Lt. explained he is looking for this for liability purposes. The question could come up who's camera it was same and same with tasers. K. O'Leary asked if there have been any issues with confusion with a camera or taser. Lt. Abarzua stated there has not been any issues however, he must go right to the scene of an incident and take that one camera immediately. That is where the credibility comes in and liability to the Town. K. O'Leary is trying to understand if we are getting any advantage to have personally assigned body cams. It seems that they are able to pull footage relatively easy. He also asked if there were any State Grants available for this. Lt. stated we used State Grants the last time around. Under the bill 60-04 grants will be available. If a grant does appear after July 1<sup>st</sup> they will definitely apply for the grants and of course will come back to the Town Council and say they aren't going to need that money. T. Graveline asked about the tasers and cameras. Is this a lease to purchase program and will we ever own these? Lt. explained that we will eventually own them after 5 years. However, because of technology always changing the current tasers are outdated by 3 models. If we want new technology, we have to start another lease program. If something happens to the equipment in the interim, they will be replaced no questions. T. Graveline asked what the typical life of a taser is and how often roughly are they used. Lt. stated they are lucky to not use them at all. T. Graveline stated this means the life of the taser is significantly extended. Lt. Abarzua agreed. T. Graveline mentioned that under the NexGen program we have 6 laptop vehicle computers and 8 vehicles. Lt. explained that "34-Pro" Ford LTD 2006 is used just for construction projects or if someone needs to go to a class or the academy. T. Graveline asked about the different types of vehicles. Lt. Abarzua explained there are 7 SUVs. The "4x4" are the Expeditions. When they have heavy snow storms the smaller SUVs could not get around town. The "others" are the 3 Explorers and then the 1-2006 LTD. T. Graveline asked how the department is accounting for the upkeep of the dog. If nothing has been used in the budget how did they pay for food, vet, training etc. She asked how this is tracked and documented. Lt. stated he gives the receipt to the Town Hall and they write a check for payment. Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> he did go to the vet. Because he has medical insurance, after a full examination they paid \$367 for that visit. T. Graveline asked where the documentation is. Line item 6700-11 should have something in it. The Mayor stated he will look into this. J. Slapikas stated that the Jan. vet bill would not be shown because this is as of Dec. 2020. T. Graveline understands, but there had to have been something incurred from July 2020-Dec. 2020. T. Graveline asked about the Police Overtime account. What was the amount that flowed to the Town of Prospect used for, other than officers salary and social security. Lt. stated to the best of his knowledge the money was used to purchase their last new vehicle as well as the upgraded radio system. The vehicle was \$54,000 and once it's set up and ready with laptop, radio, lights etc., the cost is about \$75,000. The amount for the radio system was approximately \$115,000 for the Police Dept. and \$115,000 for the Fire Dept. Lt. explained the importance of the radios being installed. T. Graveline mentioned there are currently 16 officers. She asked what the plan is for the next year as far as number of officers. Lt. stated he just took the advertisement off the website. He will probably repost it in another month. He was receiving too many resumes. He is also waiting for the new bill. A lot of Law Enforcement are concerned of what their careers are going to be after July 1<sup>st</sup>. There will also be a mass exodus from the State Police next year due to the contract. He tries to recruit the best people that fit the best profile for the Town of Prospect. All of Prospects officers are highly respected. There are a group of retirees coming up in July. Lt. Abarzua stated his goal is to get up to 20 officers. Currently, all shifts are covered. T. Graveline asked if all the officers are getting the hours they would like to have. Lt. stated they cater to the officers. Whoever wants to work can work as much as they want and some can do as little as they want. J. Slapikas asked is if there is any where we can cut due to extra monies from last year's budget. Lt. Abarzua stated gas increased, and vehicle maintenance. J. Slapikas mentioned the Training line item. The adopted budget was \$17,000 last year and as of now only \$4458 has been expended. Lt. stated he put the increase in due to the new bill. There is certain testing that needs to be done every 5 years. Urinalysis, psychological testing as well as polygraph for new recruits. J. Slapikas asked if Lt. foresees leftover funds at the end of the fiscal year. Lt. stated yes but under the new bill he is unsure what to expect. J. Slapikas asked the Lt. if he would be okay with the Council taking the leftover monies and putting it into a fund that will go towards the Police Dept. budget. Lt. Abarzua stated that does work for him. M. Patchkofsky recommended amending line item#6700-05 to read Training/Recertification (SM). She asked if the training that they get in other towns counts for Prospect. Lt. stated yes it does count for us. Every time they get recertified the information is forwarded to the Lt. However, as far as weapons testing and training they must qualify with Prospect's weapons, taser and DWI portion. He is looking for clarification

on the packets. He is unsure if they have to complete 2 mental health assessments: one in each town. The Mayor mentioned 4 radios in Town; there are no dead spots in Town. When the Town had a power outage and the generator didn't start the State knew it in 10 min. This was because the black box wasn't working without the power. P. Geary mentioned line item 6700-02 Fleet Gas & Repair. The Mayor stated there is a contract for gas for this year and next year so this will not increase. P. Geary would like to see that go back to \$55,000. She would also like to see line item 6700-03 Office Supplies go to the Mayors Recommendation at \$16,000. She would like the K-9 line item 6700-11 go back to last year's budget of \$3200. The only change would be the \$1300 decrease of line item 6700-11. J. Slapikas reminded the Council they are working on the Mayor Rec. Lt. Abarzua stated he is ok with the Mayors recommendation. The Lt. would like to keep the K-9 line item at \$4,500. P. Geary asked about \$4000 and split the difference. The Mayor feels if the dog saves one person it pays for itself. M. Patchkofsky stated the only cost that is included in the K-9 line item is the vet bills and food. They classified whatever hours the K-9 works into the Officers account. She would like to keep this line item at last year's budget. She feels the Council needs at least a year to see what the overall program cost before they increase. J. Slapikas reminded the Lt. line item 6700-11 K-9 will stay at \$3259 and this is a very watched over line item. They need to document all info. and numbers. The Lt. stated he will stay on top of this. If at any time they need extra money the Council will be sure he gets the funds as long as he shows proof they need it. Lt. Abarzua agrees with the Council members. He thanked the Council for the opportunity to come before them. He also thanked them for welcoming him back if more funds need to be requested. Motion is with the option to revisit before it is sent to the town. P. Geary and M. Patchkofsky amended their motion to approve the Mayor's Recommendation for the Police line Item #6700 changing 6700-01 to \$103,189, and 6700-11 to \$3259 with a total in the amount of \$1,073,521 for the 2021-2022 year. Also, line Item 6700-05 will read as Training/Recert. (SM). **Motion unanimous.** The Council thanked Lt. Abarzua for taking the time to discuss everything with them.

T. Graveline asked for accounting of the expenditures in Police Overtime. She has requested for knowledge of how much has been brought in and how it is divided and spent. The Council received a balance sheet today and a general ledger. She can't quite tell what has been purchased using Police Overtime money. She would like to see departmental expenditures and what is being done with the Police Overtime extras that are going into this fund. She likes this program; What bothers her is the lack of documentation for what we do for those funds. The Mayor stated this is only 3 months of this fiscal year. T. Graveline stated this is as of Sept 30. The Treasurer's report doesn't match the fund balance. There are missing pieces of information. Also why is it as of Sept. 30 and not Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>? The Mayor stated he will have up to March 1<sup>st</sup> very soon, in the next week and a half or so. T. Graveline asked if he will be able to break down employee expenditures and departmental purchases. T. Graveline stated it shouldn't be this difficult to get itemization and documentation as to how we spend funds in this Town. M. Patchkofsky asked to go back this last fiscal year 19-20 and 2020 to date with a breakdown. Whatever is paid out of this account and deposits in so we can see where the money is going. M. Patchkofsky asked why we would pay the Borough of Naugatuck. J. Slapikas asked about the expenditure of \$4000 paid to Naugatuck. Lt. Abarzua stated that is when the Police Dept. purchased a cruiser from Naugatuck. It is a used 4x4 AWD/ smaller Explorer. T. Graveline asked about the Nationwide Retirement Payments. The Mayor stated that has nothing to do with the Town or Pension Committee. No one on the Police Dept. is on our Pension. No monies from the Town are going into this account. The officers put their own personal monies in only. J. Slapikas stated he will get info. and make sure it is taken care of.

The Mayor requested an adjournment for the night.

**Public Participation: (5 Minute Time Limit) - none**

- **Boards and Commissions**-discussion at future meeting
- **General Government**-discussion at future meeting
- **Other if Time Warrants-n/a**

**Correspondence: none place on file**

**Motion** made by T. Graveline, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. **Unanimous**

Jeff Slapikas  
Chairman

PROSPECT, CONN  
TOWN CLERKS OFFICE  
RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
2021 MAR 22 PM 3:31  
Margaret A. DeMarco  
TOWN CLERK