

Prospect Town Council
Regular Meeting
Unapproved Minutes
November 17, 2020

*This meeting was held live at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/781861189>
Public comment was available virtually via <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/781861189>
via email to towncouncil@townofprospect.org
and by voice during the meeting by calling in on any of the following:*

- One-touch: tel: +18773092073;781861189
- United States: +1 (571) 317-3129
- One-touch: tel: +15713173129,, 781861189

ACCESS CODE: 781-861-189
To Unmute on a telephone call Press *6

Chairman Slapikas called to order the regular meeting of the Prospect Town Council @ 7:00 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.

Organizer of Virtual Meeting Present: J. Slapikas

A roll call for attendance was taken by Chairman Slapikas.

Via Online: J. Slapikas, P. Murray, R. Blanc @ 7:03 p.m., P. Geary, M. Patchkofsky, L. Fitzgerald, S. Pilat S. Lusas Kolodziej

Council Members Absent: T. Graveline

Absent: Mayor Robert J. Chatfield

There were several callers on the line.

Mayor's Report: None

The Mayor did not attend the meeting.

Public Participation:

Chairman Slapikas stated that he would open Public Participation and advised the callers to press *6, state their name, address. The callers would have a 5-minute timeframe, if they had questions for the Council. The Chairman repeated this request 3 times. There were no requests. Public Participation was closed.

Guests: None

Chair's Report:

Update on External Auditor Bonadio Group:

Chairman Slapikas commented that he will have regular meetings with the Bonadio Group. There will be monthly meetings; there will be portal access; Information from T. Galvin and the letter from Carla Perugini Erickson was submitted. The Bonadio Group was advised to follow the RFP that was created for them. A new letter from Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Terrace was received today, November 17, 2020 @ 10:52 a.m. Chairman Slapikas continued that the Bonadio Group will be interviewing Office Manager Anne Fortier, the Town Clerk and the Tax Collector. Meetings will be attended by the Chairman and if he is unavailable, Stan Pilat will be attending the meetings. Chairman Slapikas advised that the result of the work will be done by the end of March 2021. P. Geary requested a meeting with the Council and the Bonadio Group. Chairman Slapikas commented that he will be involved with the procedures, he will ask the Bonadio Group to attend a meeting with the Council. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. P. Geary questioned the progress of the investigation of the theft as it is two (2) years since the occurrence. Chairman Slapikas advised that he would follow up with the Mayor on this matter.

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Discussion on Council Food Bank/or Fuel Fund

The Council discussed donating to one of two entities: Prospect Food Bank or the Prospect Fuel Fund. The Council felt that at this time, due to the increase in fundraisers for the Food Bank, it would be best to donate to the Fuel Fund. The Council members will each donate \$50.00 to the Fuel Fund. Chairman Slapikas will be collecting the donations. The Chairman advised that at the 2nd meeting of the Council in January, a request for donations to the Food Bank will be made.

Discussion of Possible Community Wellness

An email was sent out to the Council regarding a draft for Possible Community Wellness. Chairman Slapikas advised that he is looking for suggestions to help the taxpayers of Prospect. Disc. After discussion, Chairman Slapikas commented that this discussion will be placed on the December 1st meeting Agenda.

Discussion on Hours for Winter Meetings

Chairman Slapikas commented that at the previous meeting T. Graveline suggested that she did not have a problem with changing the winter hours from 6:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. during the months of December 2020, January 2021 and February 2021. Disc. After discussion, **Motion** made by M. Patchkofsky, seconded by P. Murray to approve a Special Meeting of the Town Council for their first meeting in December on Tuesday, December 1, 2020 to be held @ 6:00 p.m. instead of the approved time of 6:30 p.m. and to change the times of the 2021 Calendar meeting times and review the dates for Town Council meetings to change the times to 6:00 p.m. from 6:30 p.m. for the months of December 2020, January 2021 and February 2021. A roll call vote was taken. **8 Approved/ J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, P. Geary, S. Pilat, R. Blanc, S. Lusas Kolodziej, L. Fitzgerald, P. Murray Opposed/None. Motion Carries.** S. Lusas Kolodziej also commented to correct this information on the Town's website once determined.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by P. Geary to approve the minutes of 11/3/2020.

A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved/ J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, P. Geary, S. Pilat, T. Graveline, R. Blanc, S. Lusas Kolodziej, L. Fitzgerald, P. Murray Opposed/None. Motion Carries.**

New Business:

Transfers: None

Refunds:

Motion made by R. Blanc, seconded by P. Murray to approve the Tax Refunds of 11/17/2020 in the amount of \$1,175.79. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved/ J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, S. Pilat, S. Lusas Kolodziej, P. Geary, P. Murray, R. Blanc, L. Fitzgerald Opposed/None. Motion Carries.**

Resignations:

Motion made by P. Geary, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to accept the resignation of Robert. S. Guynn from Zoning Board of Appeals and Board of Assessment Appeals. **8 Approved/ J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky, P. Geary, S. Pilat, S. Lusas Kolodziej, L. Fitzgerald, P. Murray, R. Blanc Opposed/None. Motion Carries.**

Appointments: None

Bids & Grants:

Chairman Slapikas commented on the email received from T. Graveline on the STEAP grant for Bridges and Culverts. Chairman Slapikas had spoken with Mayor Chatfield and was advised that he was aware of this grant and had spoken with the STofCT. Chairman Slapikas advised that the Town did not qualify, at this time, for this grant and there was no need to push forward.

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Chairman Slapikas commented that the Town was awarded a STEAP grant in the amount of \$50,000 for the move of EMAC from the Fire House to the Prospect Community Center. P. Geary commented that the request by the Mayor for the amount could have been higher as other Towns were granted a larger sum and the match by their Town was lower.

Correspondence:

Letter from Chairman Jeff Slapikas dated 11/17/2020

Chairman Slapikas read into the record his letter addressing T. Galvin's concerns, questions and opinions.

Chairman Slapikas included and commented on the Bonadio Group beginning work; RFP scope of work listing the items that the Council would like in the analysis; T. Galvin's concerns on the administrative staff not providing any and all information requested as needed to complete their tasks for the yearly audits; The Council requesting online portal access, monthly updates; Charter Revision looking into internal controls; Public Works Accounts and claim discrepancies with reports, invoices, etc. Chairman Slapikas continued reading into the record: 'We are ensuring that this audit is an all-encompassing review of financial records and processes and paying close attention to specific areas of concern. While I appreciate Mr. Galvin's suggestions, I believe we need to acknowledge that the Council has requested the process to be inclusive and as detailed as possible. I have full confidence that at the conclusion of the internal audit, the Council, the residents of Prospect and Mr. Galvin will have all the answers needed and wanted and established and approved internal procedures and controls. (Schedule A).

Agenda

Minutes 11-3-2020

Zoning Inspector's Report October 2020

PVFD Report October 2020

Prospect Library 11/9/2020

Tax Collector's Report October 2020

Tax Refunds dated 11/17/2020

Prospect Park & Rec Report dated 11/2020

Letter from Thomas Galvin, dated 11/17/2020

Treasurer's Reports September and October 2020

Resignation letter from Robert Guynn dated 11/2020

Message from office of the Governor, Ned Lamont Re: Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) 11-2020

Bridges and Culverts Grant information for the Town received from T. Graveline 11-2020

Community Wellness Sub-Committee Draft Plan 11-2020

P. Geary commented that two (2) months of reports for the Council were missing including the Police, Senior Center and Town Clerk reports. Chairman Slapikas advised that he would follow-up.

P. Geary also questioned the Treasurer's Report with the \$7,338.50 received into the dog fund during the month of September. A follow-up will be made. **Motion** made by P. Murray, seconded by P. Geary to place correspondence on file. A rollcall vote was taken. **8 Approved**//J. Slapikas, M. Patchkofsky S. Pilat, P. Geary, R. Blanc, P. Murray, L. Fitzgerald, S. Lusas Kolodziej. **Opposed/None. Unanimous.**

Old Business:

-P. Geary acknowledged and recognized the Registrars, the office of the Town Clerk and the people working the poles, stating that she was more than satisfied with their work during the Election.

-M. Patchkofsky commented that for future reference for the Council to determine where the monies are most needed, she would like to have the Fuel Fund and Toy Fund balances during the months of October and November.

-A request was made to create a mission statement for the Council as to what the Council would like to work toward and establish.

Sub-Committee:

-Land Use & Acquisition – None

-Ordinance – Working with Mayor.

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Chairman Slapikas commented that the Mayor is doing much better than last week, but is very tired and is grateful for everyone offering him a full recovery.

-Public Works Maintenance – No meeting.

-Salary Review – New meetings should be made around the time of the Budget.

-Sidewalk – Starting possibly in spring.

-Town Buildings- M. Patchkofsky advised that the sub-committee will be posting the results of the survey regarding the Grange. The Mayor had advised that he did not want a covered pavilion with picnic tables at the site of the Grange, the Hotchkiss Field Plan had shown a concept for this suggestion. L. Fitzgerald commented that he presented the idea of a pavilion at Hotchkiss Field to the Board of Rec at their last meeting. L. Fitzgerald stated that they were going to discuss it at their meeting as a possibility for next year. M. Patchkofsky commented that the asbestos would be removed from the Grange in the coming weeks. As to a monument to commemorate the Grange, nothing had been finalized. Chairman Slapikas commented that there was a good turnout for the Veterans Day ceremony which he presided over as the Mayor could not attend. Chairman Slapikas recognized that Gil Graveline played the Star-Spangled Banner and Taps for the ceremony. The next ceremony will be held on December 7th @ 2:00 p.m. for Pearl Harbor.

-Pension – P. Murray commented that M. Riley had sent out his response to both Chairman Slapikas and to S. Pilat. There will be a transfer of accounts from Ameriprise to Nationwide as of 11/25/2020. M. Riley will be meeting with Town employees either virtually or in person.

Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. M. Patchkofsky commented on a deadline to get funds to Chairman Slapikas for the donation to the Fuel Fund. Disc. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments.

Public Participation:

Chairman Slapikas stated that he would open Public Participation again and asked the callers to press *6 and state their name, address. Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Terrace commented that the current letter he submitted did not have questions. T. Galvin stated that he had concerns with the analysis accessing the various reports, procedures and checks and balances. (Schedule B).

Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments from the callers. There were no other comments made.

Chairman Slapikas wished everyone Happy Thanksgiving.

Adjournment:

Motion made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by R. Blanc to adjourn the meeting. **Unanimous.** The meeting adjourned @ 8:17 p.m.

Jeff Slapikas
Council Chairman

(No subject)

Jeff Slapikas <jslapikas@townofprospect.org>

Wed 11/18/2020 6:51 AM

To: Rosalyn Moffo <rmoffo@townofprospect.org>

From: Jeff Slapikas <jslapikas@townofprospect.org>

Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 6:07 PM

To: Jeff Slapikas <jslapikas@townofprospect.org>

Subject:

I want to make sure we discuss the correspondence that Mr. Galvin has submitted several times. I know we read correspondence into the record but at this point with the Bonadio Group preparing to begin their work, I want to alleviate some of the concerns and address the questions and opinions Mr. Galvin has submitted. I believe the council has done an excellent job in preparing the RFP and ensuring inclusion of all requirements of the Bonadio Group to produce a full and detailed analysis into Prospect's financial records and policies.

If Mr. Galvin recalls from the RFP that was sent out, on page 2 the Scope of work lists the items we have requested to be included in the analysis but certainly not limited to those.

As far as the unique administrative environment goes in the town hall, The past auditing firm that compiled the last three years of our financial statements never once alluded to the administrative staff not providing any and all information requested as needed to complete their tasks for the yearly audits. As the council has requested access to the online portal and monthly updates, any delays will be made aware of and dealt with as the entire council has offered assistance throughout this process. Specifically, myself and Vice Chairman have said countless times that we will be present for the initial meeting and will assist in any way needed. I have emailed names to Bonadio so they can begin contacting those that need to be interviewed to begin the process.

As far as the past audit sub-committee minutes go, The purpose of that committee if understood correctly was for the selection of a new auditing firm that would perform the tasks as requested to complete the yearly annual reports and replace Mike Battista. That committee determined what they would like to see in an auditing firm and selected one. We have already selected the firm to complete the internal audit so they selection process is complete. Any insinuated shortfalls of the previously hired auditor from the sub-committee should not be considered as pertinent information in this audit process, we are not auditing past auditing procedures, we are auditing the internal control process.

The discussion of Charter Revision and looking into internal controls, again, I'll make reference to the RFP that specifically requests an audit of internal control and functions with an audit of the financial statements dating back to 2013-2014. Again, page 2 under the scope of audit, these concerns are addressed under the expectations we have of the Bonadio Group.

Additionally, though not included in this month's letter from Mr. Galvin, the Council has requested and provided correspondence to the selected firm to look into specific Public Works accounts and claimed discrepancies with reports, invoices, etc.

We are ensuring that this audit is an all-encompassing review of financial records and processes and

paying close attention to specific areas of concern. While I appreciate Mr. Galvin's suggestions, I believe we need to acknowledge that the council has requested the process to be inclusive and as detailed as possible. I have full confidence that at the conclusion of the internal audit, the Council, the residents of Prospect and Mr. Galvin will have all the answers needed and wanted and established and approved internal procedures and controls.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

Schedule B

November 17, 2020

Jeff Slapikas, Chairman
Prospect Town Council
36 Center Street
Prospect, CT 06712

Dear Chairman Slapikas and Honorable Members of the Prospect Town Council:

I'm submitting this to the Town Council for its inclusion with the Council's November 17th session, and with the anticipation that it will also be given to the recently selected external audit group. In previous writings I indicated that I'd provide a specific 'list' of detail items that should be included in their analysis. As I don't mean to imply any concern that left to their own resources they would not identify all applicable information, I'll refrain from even the appearance that I'm telling them how to perform their assignment.

I would however be remiss if I did not at least share my specific concern of how effective their process may prove to be in Prospect's somewhat 'unique' administrative environment. I would ask that besides my previous recommendation that they review the Town Council Meeting Minutes from 2017, I'd also suggest they obtain the Meeting Minutes from the Town Council's Audit Sub-Committee for that same timeframe. That should provide a preview of how difficult it can be to obtain specifically requested documents or to even meet with or ask questions of specific elected or appointed town officials.

I would also recommend that they review various statements made by members of this Administration before the Charter Revision Commission in 2017 concerning various internal audit policies that were supposedly in-place and being strictly adhered to, and which the Council's 2017 Investigation subsequently identified were non-existent. Further, as there were no actual documented procedures for the handling of financial transactions during that timeframe, they should also review the Prospect Town Charter, which at least provides some high-level direction as to how activities, such as the internal transferring of funds, the approval of invoices and the signing of checks, were to be performed.

I have one additional observation that I hope will receive appropriate consideration. I anticipate that the investigation will include the analysis of various printed reports. I would advise the reviewer that wherever possible that such analysis begin with the accessing of the original electronic data. On occasion it has been noted that not every 'total' presented at the bottom of an Excel worksheet should automatically be assumed to be the mathematical result of a specific Microsoft software function.

In closing, I wish the entire Town Council and their families a happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday.

Best Regards,

Thomas J. Galvin

Thomas J. Galvin
27 Rockridge Terrace
Prospect, CT 06712