Prospect Town Council
Regular Meeting
Unapproved Minutes
January 21, 2020

Chairman Slapikas called to order the Regular Meeting of the Prospect Town Council @ 6:30p.m. The meeting was held at the Prospect Town Hall, 36 Center Street and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was taped.

Members Present: R. Blanc, P. Geary, T. Graveline, P. Murray, S. Pilat, M. Patchkofsky, J. Slapikas and S. Lusas Kolodziej
Absent: L. Fitzgerald
Also, Present: Mayor Robert J. Chatfield

Chairman Slapikas began the meeting by commenting that the Departmental Reports would be given at tonight's meeting as this process is still a work in progress. Chairman Slapikas advised that in the future these documents will be going out with the Agenda and minutes. At this point, Mayor Chatfield entered the meeting.

Mayor's Report:
-Mayor Chatfield thanked everyone for coming.
-The Mayor advised that the best bid results for the Re-Val were in, with a cost of $75,000.00. Mayor Chatfield advised with any money left, it would be used for hardware or software.
-Senior Center Addition: Mayor Chatfield advised that he had stopped the bid process for the STEAP grant for the Senior Center addition. The Mayor stated that the reason why he stopped the bid process was because the grant does not allow for reimbursement of the Town's money. If an application that was submitted for the town was successful to receive the grant that was previously applied for, the Town will not be using any Town's money.
-Grange: The Mayor stated the Town Building subcommittee had met regarding the Grange. The Mayor continued that the heat had been shut off at this facility for at least 2 years; the building has not been used since the Community Center opened. The Mayor would now like for the power to be shut off. The Mayor stated that he would like to bid-out to find out the cost to demo the building. Mayor Chatfield advised that there is a question of asbestos under the ceiling tiles and floor tiles, which is a concern about the glue not the tiles. The Mayor stated that he would like a proposal for the cost of the work. The Mayor also stated that this is the process that was done for the Nolan House which came in at $80,000. The Mayor stated that this project could cost approximately $300,000. The Mayor stated that he would like for the contractor to bring in their subcontractor for all the work and have the proposal based on the asbestos abatement. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. No other comments were made. **Motion** made by R. Blanc, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to allow Mayor Chatfield to send out an RFP for a quote on demolition and abatement of the building of the Prospect Grange. T. Graveline and P. Geary commented that first the power would need to be shut off. The Chair asked for a motion to table the prior motion. **Motion** made by P. Geary to table this motion. Chairman Slapikas asked for a motion to allow the Mayor to turn off the power at the Grange as the Grange has not been used in 2-years. **Motion** made by T. Graveline, seconded by R. Blanc to allow Mayor Chatfield to have the power turned off to the Prospect Grange as the building has not been used in the past 2-years. Disc. M. Patchkofsky commented that the public should be included in plans as to what to do with the property. Mayor Chatfield advised that once he receives a quote, he will have a public hearing to see what the public would like to have in that area. **Unanimous.** Chairman Slapikas called for a motion to remove from table; **Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by T. Graveline to take from Table the motion for demolition and abatement of the Prospect Grange building. **Unanimous.**
A motion was called for; **Motion** made by R. Blanc, seconded by P. Murray to allow Mayor Chatfield to send out an RFP for a quote on demolition and abatement of the building of the Prospect Grange. **Unanimous.**

Transfers:
-**Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by T. Graveline to approve the transfer within the Library Account of $7,400 from #7350-02 (Staff/Clerk Salary Acct) to 7350-06 (Contracted Maintenance) to cover the cost of paying a

cleaning service (Luso Cleaning Service) to clean the Library for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020 (till June 30, 2020). T. Graveline questioned if the amount was correct and why the transferring of monies. Chairman Slapikas commented that the transfer was from an employee account to a contractor account. Chairman Slapikas commented that he is researching if it is more beneficial to have outside sources for maintenance. P. Geary would like an answer as to if it is a wash from one account to the other. Chairman Slapikas asked P. Geary if she would like to table the motion. **Motion** made by P. Geary to table this motion for more information.

-Mayor Chatfield advised that he requested this motion to transfer from the Fund Balance to Town Roads – Tree Trimming in the amount of $6,275.00. **Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to approve the transfer from the Fund Balance in the amount of $6,275.00 to the following account: #7000-03 Town Roads -Tree Trimming $6,275.00. Disc. The Mayor also stated that the tree-trimming occurred during a storm with 50 mph winds and happened during the night. There was a quick response and the bill had been paid. T. Graveline stated that there had been other transfers into this account. Mayor Chatfield advised that the monies had been drained down and now he was replacing it. P. Geary and T. Graveline commented on the timeframe of receiving the transfer at 4 p.m. today. T. Graveline commented that since this activity happened 2 weeks ago and the bill was paid, the Council should have been made aware last week. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. No other comments were made. A vote was taken. **Unanimous.**

-Mayor Chatfield read into the record a statement regarding the theft of $100,000 from the Town's Payroll Account. The Mayor stated that the Town was the victim from an outside source; the dates of the theft were from November 2017 through October 2018. The Mayor stated that the actions were not done by a Town employee. The Mayor also stated that he is considering a part-time account clerk. Mayor Chatfield advised that the Town has since gained back $130,806.15. The Mayor also stated that the investigation is continuing in great detail. Chairman Slapikas stated that he would like an Audit review by a 3rd party for the past two years of the Town's financial records and requested a motion. **Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by R. Blanc for a 3rd party Audit review of the Town's financial records for the fiscal years of 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. Disc. T. Graveline questioned what the Chair anticipated to gain from the Audit. Chairman Slapikas stated why this was missed from the Audit. Chairman Slapikas continued that he would like the 3rd party audit to look through the financial records. T. Graveline commented that the last pages are called an Audit of their Annual Audit Report, yet there is a difference. Chairman Slapikas commented that he has been speaking with Attorneys and Auditors. He would like a 3rd set of eyes, not a forensic audit. Chairman Slapikas commented that the current Auditor of the past 2 years has not given answers to questions nor has set meeting dates. Chairman Slapikas explained that this had not happened in 20 years with the previous Auditor. T. Graveline commented on no one to oversee routines, checks or balances. Chairman Slapikas commented that he is working with Accountants, Attorneys and Auditors to write an RFP which the Council will get. P. Geary commented on looking at more than 2 years. T. Graveline commented on the Annual Report not separating out Payroll. P. Geary asked for the Council to review the RFP prior to being sent out. Chairman Slapikas requested a vote. **Unanimous.**

Public Participation:

-*Kathryn Zandri, 271 Sycamore Dr., Prospect, CT* moved into Town in April of last year, was a municipal employee in another Town and a 16-year Town Council secretary. K. Zandri continued that her comments and questions pertained to the crime of $100,000 theft from the Town of Prospect's payroll account. K. Zandri submitted her questions (Schedule A). Chairman Slapikas commented on these questions; As to the total number of transactions, Chairman Slapikas advised that he did not have an answer but stated that there were multiple; largest amount of the transaction, Chairman Slapikas did not have the answer; who reconciles, Chairman Slapikas did not know as he does not run the office. Chairman Slapikas stated that the Mayor would need to answer as the questions were only asked through the Chair. As to when was anyone notified, Chairman Slapikas commented that the Mayor found out November of 2018. The Mayor notified the Police, the Bank, he also called the insurance company and the Attorneys. The Mayor made all the important phone calls. Chairman Slapikas commented that the Mayor was advised to be tight-lipped and not say anything as to not hinder the investigation. Chairman Slapikas stated that he himself found out December 11, 2019 and the rest of the Council found out December 17, 2019. The rest of the questions, Chairman Slapikas deferred to the Mayor; one at a time, if he has the answers, he could give the answers to you legally; if he can't, it is because he has to be quiet about it. Chairman Slapikas stated that is the best that he could do. Chairman Slapikas Thanked K. Zandri for her time. Chairman Slapikas asked Mayor Chatfield the following: how many transactions, The Mayor stated that he did not have that figure. Chairman Slapikas continued with the largest transaction. Mayor Chatfield advised still under investigation. Chairman Slapikas asked who reconciles the books. Mayor Chatfield replied, right now Mike Battiste, right up until January 31, 2019. The Mayor stated that we are right up to date. Chairman Slapikas asked until December 31, 2019, to which the Mayor agreed. K. Zandri questioned how often the

account statements are reviewed and reconciled, to which the Mayor answered, monthly. K. Zandri commented that then they were not reviewed. Chairman Slapikas stated that he did not have the answer. Mayor Chatfield advised that some of the questions he could not answer as the investigation is ongoing. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments from the public. Mayor Chatfield commented that he was advised not to say anything and that was the reason.

-*Patricia Zappone, 247 New Haven Rd.* gave the Council a letter dated January 20, 2020 and read the letter into the record (Schedule B). P. Zappone questioned how a town could run without continuing audits and oversight. P. Zappone commented on procedures to be changed. P. Zappone also questioned if the town ever balanced its checking account. P. Zappone suggested to have a complete and independent audit of the whole system in Prospect Town Hall: including all departmental accounts, the phone system, the email system. P. Zappone also commented why the online reports of various town committees are so far behind in posting and are not updated regularly. Chairman Slapikas thanked P. Zappone for her time. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments.

-*Peter Blinstrubas,* 24 Maple Dr. advised that he had 3 comments: (1) at the next meeting, a group from Woodland High School will be filming the meeting and asked to have an ethernet connection in the room. (2) P. Blinstrubas commented that a crime was committed by an outside source and not a Town employee; then a forensic audit should be done and let it take as long as it needs to. (3) P. Blinstrubas also commented that getting a notification @ 4 p.m. on the day of the meeting was inappropriate. (4) P. Blinstrubas questioned why did it take two weeks to notify the Council of the transfer for tree trimming and not provided 48 hours prior, but given the same day as to the meeting. M. Patchkofsky commented that sometimes things happen, in an emergency you need to do what needs to be done. P. Blinstrubas stated that yes in an emergency, but the transfer should have been sent to the Council within 48 hours. Chairman Slapikas thanked P. Blinstrubas for his time.

-*Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Dr* commented that there had been documentation for fiscal years 2014-2015 that showed deficiencies. T. Galvin continued that to update the 4 new Council members, an investigation was done and recommendations were made. In 2018 the Council chose to ignore those recommendations on the findings of the 2014-2015 deficiencies. T. Galvin stated that he is anxious to see the outcome of this matter.

-*Katie Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr.* commented on investigating and cybersecurity. K. Blinstrubas questioned how the woman received payroll information. K. Blinstrubas commented that some things need to be addressed such as opening the wrong emails. K. Blinstrubas continued that she does not know how the information was hacked, but it is something that needs to be addressed so that nothing else happens. Chairman Slapikas commented that safe guards are in place, but cannot guarantee. Mayor Chatfield stated that a conduit was run last week. Mayor Chatfield commented on the increase to the election costs and advised K. Blinstrubas that she will be receiving a letter from the Secretary of State, Denise W. Merrill.

-*Jim Borbus, 29 Beach Dr* questioned if someone had received this information through 'fishing' through the mail; if items were thrown in trash and not shredded. Mayor Chatfield advised that that items are actively shredded. J. Borbus suggested to get the Audit done and to review the Town records back to 2016 or 2017 at least.

-*John Schwarzkopf, 26 Maple Dr* questioned if Town employees had an option of Direct Deposit. Chairman Slapikas advised that he is working on this. J. Schwarzkopf continued that after working in the banking industry for several years, he stated that it is possible to get a routing # on-line for any bank. Mayor Chatfield advised that the previous account that was used was closed. Chairman Slapikas thanked John Schwarzkopf for his time.

-*Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Dr.* commented on the recommendation of a payroll service stating that there would only be one (1) check to the payroll service and no one would need to suffer through this as it is difficult for all.

-Concerns were raised as to taking business home and doing personal business on Town computers.

-*Peter Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr.* commented on Chairman Slapikas' statement of doing an analysis. Chairman Slapikas stated that he has been researching with different companies and banks and doing a cost analysis for payroll services. Chairman Slapikas commented that he is hopeful to have answer in the near future.

-*Patricia Zappone, 247 New Haven Rd* commented on using a Town user domain and not Yahoo or Gmail as she had sent a condolence letter to the Town when the Tax Collector passed and was answer via email on a Saturday. P. Zappone continued that she would like to see a phone system going directly to the

departments without going through the Mayor's office. Chairman Slapikas commented that the Town Hall offices are not opened on Saturday and Sundays; people still respond to texts and emails on the weekends.
-*Peter Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr* commented on hacking of email and mail 'fishing' and stated that he wanted to avoid what happened in Wolcott.
-*Katie Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr.* commented that she is having a problem with Town of Prospect email address as she is not able to upload; the system will only allow one at a time. K. Blinstrubas that this is time consuming and not cost efficient. K. Blinstrubas suggested ongoing computer upgrades.
-*Nicole Zappone, Reporter for the 'Patch Newspaper'* advised Mayor Chatfield that she had contacted the Mayor's office, spoke to a woman that took a message and was advised that the Mayor would call her back, but she never received a call. The Mayor asked N. Zappone what her question was, to which she said was who was the Town's Attorney. Chairman Slapikas advised Carmody & Torrance.
Chairman Slapikas asked if anyone had a comment.
-T. Graveline questioned the analysis of a payroll service. Chairman Slapikas commented that he would like to bring a smaller packet of services to the Council. T. Graveline continued on emails and leaving employees at risk for FOIA. Chairman Slapikas commented on no longer using personal emails or Yahoo and Gmail address.
-P. Geary agreed with looking into a payroll service and questioned when a direct deposit started. Chairman Slapikas advised that as of the meeting of last week with Webster Bank he has been notified that the employees will have this option.
Chairman Slapikas asked for other comments. P. Geary commented that the Councils needs the residents to come to the meeting for their input so that the Council could do their job.
-Jim Borbus, 29 Beach commented on the using colored lights at Christmas on the trees.
-Paul Murray commented that Direct Deposit shouldn't be a choice, but should be automatic.
Mayor Chatfield thanked everyone for coming.
Comments were made as to the new mailbox outside of Town Hall and questioned the position of the box as the slot is on the inside where motorists need to park and get out to mail letters. Chairman Slapikas commented that any questions should be made to the Post Office.
-Fred Bonyai, 18 Woodcrest Dr., also commented on the mail box and also advised to call the Post Office.
Chairman Slapikas thanked the public for their participation.

Guests: None

Chair's Report:
Chairman Slapikas advised that the Executive Session will be at the end of the meeting to update the members of the Council that were not at the Friday meeting.

Approval of Minutes:
Motion made by T. Graveline, seconded by P. Murray to approve the minutes of 1-7-2020. K. Zandri requested to place additional minutes at the Library for those that work out of Town and would like to view the minutes. P. Zappone commented that she has found the minutes for any Boards & Commissions are not online for at least 8 months to a year. Chairman Slapikas commented that there had been a transition in the Town Clerk's office and he is working with the Town Clerk to put the minutes online. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. No other comments were made. **Unanimous.**

New Business:
Refunds:
Motion made by P. Geary, seconded by S. Pliat to accept the Tax Refunds dated 1/21/2020 in the amount of $4,496.20. **Unanimous.**
Transfers: Previously acted upon
Resignations: None
Assignments: None
Bids/Grants: Previously discussed

Correspondence:
Transfer within the Library Account in the amount of $7,400 dated 1/13/2020
Transfer from Fund Balance in the amount of $6,275.00 dated 1/21/2020
Questions from Kathryn Zandri submitted 1/21/2020 (Schedule A)
Letter from Patricia Smith Zappone dated 1/20/2020 (Schedule B)
Tax Refunds dated 1/21/2020
Tax Collectors Report dated 12/2019
Letter from Secretary of the State Connecticut, Denise W. Merrill dated 1/2/2020
Town of Prospect Notice of Bid dated 1/14/2020 – Street Sweeping
Notice of Bid – Sealed Bids for furnishing Milling of Bituminous Pavement – 1/27/2020
Notice of Bid, Town of Prospect – Sealed bids for furnishing Road Paving, Regrading and Pavement, Tree Maintenance, Catch Basin Cleaning, Equipment Rental for the Town of Prospect – 1/27/2020
Departmental Reports:
Prospect Senior Center Financial Report – 1/17/2020
The Volunteer Fire Department of Prospect, Inc Treasurer's Report dated 12/2019
Town Clerk Fees Collected for December 2019
Prospect Library dated 1/8/2020
Prospect Police Patrol Report dated 12/2019
Prospect Parks & Recreation dated January 2020
Land Use Report November & December 2019
Building Department Reports – Building, Electrical, Gas, Mechanical, Plumbing & Grand Totals dated 12/2 – 12/27/19
General Fund Expenditures Compared with Budget – Expenditures December 2019
Town of Prospect Treasurer's Report Month – December 2019
-T. Graveline commented on the Treasurer's Report that the bottom of the report is still blank. Comments were made transitioning month to month.
-P. Geary commented that the Police Report did not show any indication of stolen vehicles.
Chairman Slapikas commented that he will check into the Treasurer's Report and contact Lt. N. Abarzua about the additional information on the Police Report.
Motion made by T. Graveline, seconded by S. Pilat to place correspondence on file. **Unanimous.**

Old Business:
Sub-Committees:
-Land Use Acquisition – No update
-Ordinance- L. Fitzgerald was not in attendance. There was a meeting this evening that there will be a new Tax Abatement – If there has been 25 years of Service for a Town Employee there will an assessment of $1,500 from $1,000. Chairman Slapikas is working with Attorney Yoxall on this information.
Pension – There is a meeting this Friday. There will be a new plan administrator for Ameriprise.
-Salary Review – will bring to next meeting
-Public Works Maintenance – Not met
Town Buildings – Met last Saturday, walk through Grange; a new meeting was planned for tonight, did not happen. M. Patchkofsky commented that the sub-committee would like to have the Town's input on what to go into this space. This will be put as an Agenda item.
-Sidewalk Task Force – There was a meeting last Monday for all the property owners, from St. Anthony's Church to Hartford Healthcare; all approved and now they are moving forward. T. Graveline advised that the plans will be brought to the C.O.G. for a peer review and then onto the State. The Sub-committee tried to contact one property owner six (6) or more time with no response. Chairman Slapikas suggested to send out a certified letter. Questions were raised as to a sidewalk ordinance for clearing and cleaning the sidewalks. Chairman Slapikas stated that it was the Town's responsibility. T. Graveline stated that the State of CT allows for the Town to push responsibility onto the residential property owner (though not a requirement); then this becomes the residential property owner's responsibility.
-The meeting convened to an Executive Session @ 7:55 p.m.
The regular meeting reconvened @ 8:09 p.m. No motions were made or votes taken.

Adjournment:
Motion made S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by P. Murray to adjourn the meeting. **Unanimous.** The meeting adjourned @ 8:10 p.m.

Jeff Slapikas, Chairman