

Prospect Town Council  
Regular Meeting  
Unapproved Minutes  
March 3, 2020

Chairman Slapikas called to order the Regular Meeting of the Prospect Town Council @ 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Prospect Town Hall, 36 Center Street and began with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was taped and videoed.

**Members Present:** J. Slapikas, R. Blanc, P. Geary, T. Graveline, P. Murray, S. Pilat, L. Fitzgerald, M. Patchkofsky, and S. Lusas Kolodziej

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Mayor Robert J. Chatfield

**Mayor's Report:**

-Mayor Chatfield commented on the meeting held by Chesprocott at the Firehouse on Monday, March 2, 2020 on the response to the Coronavirus. The outcome of the meeting was to make public to municipal personnel, EMAC, C.E.R.T., Firefighters and the Mayor, etc. that the public should no longer shake hands, stand at least 6 ft apart instead of 3 ft apart and to consistently wash hands. The Mayor advised that there is a test that is done in Connecticut, ER rooms of the hospitals have the kit, the test is sent to Rocky Hill and within 24 hours a result is given. The test is also sent to the CDC in Atlanta for results.

**-Transfer: #3-3-2020 – 1**

**Motion** made by R. Blanc, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to approved the transfer for January:

<b>From:</b>		<b>To:</b>	
Public Works OT #7200	\$11,500	Town Hall Building Heat #6100	\$ 5,500
		Contingency – Evictions #7750-2	\$ 1,000
		Community Center #9100-06 Repairs	\$ <u>5,000</u>
Total	\$11,500		\$11,500

Discussion. **Vote:** 1 Opposed/ P. Murray; 8 Approved/J. Slapikas, S. Pilat, M. Patchkofsky, P. Geary, R. Blanc, T. Graveline, S. Lusas Kolodziej, L. Fitzgerald **Motion Carries.**

**Sending out info to the Council before a meeting:**

-**Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by T. Graveline, to send the minutes and correspondence package out to the Council on the Friday prior to the meetings. Council members advised that they would like the packets on the Friday before the Meetings to review the contents of the packet and minutes. Discussion. A vote was taken. 1 Opposed/R. Blanc; 8 Approved/ J. Slapikas, S. Pilat, M. Patchkofsky, P. Geary, R. Blanc, T. Graveline, S. Lusas Kolodziej and L. Fitzgerald **Motion Carries.**

-The Mayor gave the Council handouts of the General Fund Expenditures for January 2020.

**-Budget Workshop Meeting Dates:**

A draft of Budget Workshop dates was previously sent to the Council.

**Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by R. Blanc to accept the proposed Budget Workshop dates. Discussion. T. Graveline advised that she would not be at the Monday, March 9, 2020 meeting. **Unanimous.**

-A handout of the Mayor's reappointments to the various Boards and Commissions was also sent to the Council. Discussion. Council members questioned what the Constables actually do; Mayor Chatfield advised that now it is an honorary position.

-The Mayor commented that the Building Official is still ailing and two Building Officials from Burlington and Berlin are filling in. A comment was made as to the Waterbury Building Official filling in, Gil Graveline. T. Graveline questioned paying the officials. Mayor stated that the Building Officials are volunteers.

-The Mayor read into the record a letter (Schedule A) regarding the breach of the payroll account giving his apologies, with the deepest regret, that this breach was allowed to happen under his supervision. The Mayor advised

'We are working to resolve shortfalls that have been discovered and we are looking into the future with a secure, proactive and financial solidity for all aspects of the Towns' operability. Within the upcoming months, I will be working with my office staff and council on the following changes to ensure we protect ourselves, to the best of our ability, from allowing anything like this from occurring again.

1. We are currently researching online payroll services with direct deposit for all employees.
2. Written policies and procedures continue to be worked on and updated to fit the needs of the Town and will be implemented.
3. The hiring of a financial clerk is being discussed in depth and job responsibilities and expectation for all financial processing is being looked at extensively and updated as needed.

These changes are necessary, and I welcome them in order to keep Prospect the best small town that it has grown into, while moving forward for the future.' The Mayor thanked everyone. At this point, the Mayor left the meeting.

Chairman Slapikas stated that the Mayor advised that he would read the letter and asked to leave the meeting after he completed the reading. Chairman Slapikas commented that after all the years that the Mayor had in service, this was the hardest thing that he had to do. Chairman Slapikas commented that he will do his best to take questions and get answers. Chairman Slapikas stated that in 2017, when elected as Chairman he advised that he was a bipartisan person and has done so. Chairman Slapikas continued that the Mayor read this statement to the Council in Executive Session on 2/26/2020; this is very difficult for someone that puts their heart and soul and time into the Town. Chairman Slapikas asked for further comments. No other questions or comments were made.

### **Public Participation:**

-Gene Zandri, 271 Sycamore Dr. questioned the hours for Town Hall as he works out of town until 3:30 p.m. and it is hard to come to Town Hall to make a department that closes at 4:00 p.m. Chairman Slapikas commented that the average time is 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; though some departments open at 8:30 p.m. and the Building Department opens at 1:30 p.m. Gene Zandri suggested to open the Town Hall until 5:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. at least one night a week, for those that work to come to Town Hall to conduct their business. Chairman Slapikas noted this request.

-Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Terrace commented on the new Treasurer's Report showing more information. T. Galvin also commented on the June 30, 2019 Treasurer's Report and the Audit showing two different sets of numbers and questioned what the Council thought they were signing off on. T. Galvin also commented on the Mayor's appointments and concerns of having Carmody and Torrence as the Attorney's for the Town and questioned cost effectiveness. Chairman Slapikas thanked T. Galvin and asked for further comments.

-Kathryn Zandri, 271 Sycamore Dr. commented that she was happy to see the info for the transfer was posted on the Agenda as this was a step in the right direction and would like to see 'to and from' on the Agenda for transfers as is done in Wallingford. K. Zandri continued that this would help with the decision if someone would like to attend the meeting or not. K. Zandri commented on the times of the Building Departments, hours in Wallingford from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.; the rest of the day the Officials are out in the field. Chairman Slapikas commented that every town is different. K. Zandri thanked everyone for their service and gave 'Kudos' to Council and elected officials. K. Zandri also commented on calling a roll-call vote for all votes. K. Zandri continued with asking if the investigation into the breach of the payroll account was concluded and once concluded would information on how it happened be shared with the public. Chairman Slapikas advised that they are still working on the investigation and once concluded the information would be shared. K. Zandri also commented that in the Town of Wallingford, the agenda packet is sent to the Council one week before the meeting. The Mayor and department heads discuss what they would like on the Agenda. K. Zandri continued that a consent agenda is created, if a Council member would like something to be taken off the agenda, the request is made and that information is removed; if everyone agrees on the transfers at the meeting then it is just one vote. K. Zandri advised that this might save time for the current Council meetings. Chairman Slapikas thanked K. Zandri and asked for further comments.

-Peter Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr. questioned how M. Battista found the theft occurred. Chairman Slapikas stated that in the past it was stated that on December 11, 2019, Chairman Slapikas was advised of the incident; on December 17, 2019 at Executive Session the Council was made aware and at the next Town Council meeting it was stated that it was when M. Battista came in and opened bank statements to reconcile that he found the discrepancies. Chairman Slapikas commented that this was the same answer that he gave in January, February and in March and he was sticking with it. P. Blinstrubas thanked Chairman Slapikas and continued was M. Battista doing this on a monthly basis to which Chairman Slapikas advised that he did not have this answer. Chairman Slapikas commented that though he spends many hours at Town Hall,

he does not work in that office; he did not have an answer. P. Blinstrubas commented that the firm that did the 2019 Audit had advised that the financial controls worked. Chairman Slapikas commented that that was their decision. P. Blinstrubas continued that he did not point out what worked and when pushed he did note lack of paperwork nor defined policies written down; it was called a deficiency this year. In the previous two Audits they did not identify this as a deficiency and he tried to give an answer saying well there was a crime committed, the controls worked but we are calling a deficiency this year. The facts are the facts; if it is a deficiency this year, then it was a deficiency 2 years ago. P. Blinstrubas stated that he would highly advise the Council not to hire this firm again. Chairman Slapikas noted the information and thanked P. Blinstrubas. The Chairman called for other comments.

- Katie Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr. chided the Council members that have been here for years and stated that she has sat on Charter Revision and when Council came for the first time, all of the sitting Council people asked for policies to be updated. Everyone acknowledged that nothing was written down and it had to be done. K. Blinstrubas questioned T. Galvin and asked when Charter Revision was done, to which he stated was 2016 for the work to be done and the vote was at the last Presidential election. K. Blinstrubas continued that in the Charter it states that in conjunction with the Mayor the Council is supposed to write the policies and procedures. K. Blinstrubas congratulated the Council on the creation of an employee manual. K. Blinstrubas also stated that she did not know where the Council was on job descriptions but advised that all this was discussed at the Charter Revision. K. Blinstrubas commented that she heard the other night that there is a draft in process; when could a draft on the policies and procedures be expected or the final product. Chairman Slapikas commented that he did not have an answer, but when he does have an answer, he will get it to her. K. Blinstrubas commented that the answer would be great, but the action would be better. Chairman Slapikas thanked K. Blinstrubas.

-Tom Galvin, 27 Rockridge Dr. commented that it would be interesting to see whose job description it was to balance the bank statements. T. Galvin again stated that the Council should reappoint an Audit sub-committee. Chairman Slapikas thanked T. Galvin and asked for further comments.

-Peter Blinstrubas, 24 Maple Dr. commented that it is not specified in the Town Charter, but it is in the State Statutes what the duties of the Treasurer are.

Chairman Slapikas thanked everyone.

**Guests:** None

**Chair's Report:**

Chairman Slapikas commented on the following:

-Budget Dates – previously discussed

-Coronavirus- previously discussed

-Town Clerk has hired a full-time assistant from within Town Hall, Joanne Kochiss; Joanne previously worked in the Tax Office.

- Emails – 25 trial emails will be sent to the different departments for feed-back

-2019 Audit was done, but not approved by the Town Council, the approval was for sending the Audit to the STofCT.

-Breach of Payroll Account – Attorney and investigation still underway

-To the Council, if an email is sent, send back to the Chair one out at a time; this should not be a quorum or meeting.

-At the Budget Workshop on 3/9/2020, a request to change Budget Workshop dates could be discussed.

-General discussion on RFP Audit Review. A suggestion was made by Council members that prior years, not just the last 3 years should be reviewed; financial statements and inhouse internal controls should be reviewed, getting an in-depth look. M. Patchkofsky advised that she had contacted CC-M. CC-M advised that they have consults for the municipalities and there could be options for the Council to obtain. S. Pilat advised that a consultant could come to a Council meeting. L. Fitzgerald commented that an Audit is necessary to identify the deficiencies. M. Patchkofsky advised that she would contact Andy Merola for more information on their offerings and resources. Council members were asked for recommendations as to auditing services. At a prior meeting T. Graveline submitted a request for auditing services from the Town of Darian, S. Pilat researched and found An Audit - AU-C Section 940 An Audit of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting That is Integrated with an Audit of Financial, which will be forwarded to the Council tomorrow. At this meeting, J. Slapikas gave the Council handouts of proposals from the Town of Farmington, CT, Town of Guilford and the Town of No. Stonington. Questions were raised as to an RFP and contract that was given to Charles Heaven & Co.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by S. Lusas Kolodziej to approved the minutes of 2/18/2020. Discussion. **Unanimous.**

**Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by M. Patchkofsky to approve the minutes of 2/26/2020. Discussion. **Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by M. Patchkofsky to approve the amended minutes of 2/26/2020. **Unanimous.** A copy of the corrected minutes with P. Geary's information was given to the Council clerk and will be attached to these minutes.

**Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by T. Graveline to approve the Executive Session minutes of 2/26/2020. Discussion. **Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by T. Graveline to approve the amended minutes of 2/26/2020 with p.m. added after 4:37 'p.m.' and after '4:55' p.m. 8 Approved/1 Abstained, P. Murray. **Motion passes.**

**New Business:**

**Refunds: Motion** made by T. Graveline, seconded by L. Fitzgerald to approve the Tax Refunds dated 3/3/2020 in the amount of \$841.63. **Unanimous**

Transfers: None

Resignations: None

Assignments: None

Bids/Grants: None

**Correspondence:**

Transfer #3-3-2020 – 1

Tax Refunds dated 3-3-2020

Town of Prospect's Treasurer's Report as of January 2020

Mayor's Reappointments to the various Boards and Commissions dated 2/3/2020

Draft of Budget Workshop dates – dated 3/3/2020

Letter from Mayor Chatfield Re: Breach of Payroll Account – apology and changes that will be implemented to protect the Town from this type of incident happening again.

AU-C Section 940 An Audit of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting That is Integrated with an Audit of Financial Statements – 2019 AICPA pages 1613-1673

Town Clerk's Letter of Appointment of Asst. Town Clerk

Proposals from No. Stonington, Town of Guilford, and Town of Farmington, CT for auditing services

Prospect Police Report January 2020

General Fund Expenditures January 2020

**Motion** made by P. Geary, seconded by T. Graveline to place correspondence on file. **Unanimous.**

**Old Business:****Sub-Committees:**

Land Use & Acquisition – No update

Ordinance- No Update – New Abatement update for volunteers

Public Works Maintenance – Chairman Slapikas advised that the subcommittee met, walked through the garages and whole area.

Salary Review –M. Patchkofsky advised that a new job description will be made for a Financial Clerk. Chairman Slapikas commented on minimum wage changes, clerk salaries and certifications. Council members commented on creating forms for the Council to sign once a person is hired at a wage or increase due to certifications are completed. T. Graveline also commented on having something in writing; a complete package to be given to new employees with an engagement letter, employee medical and benefit information.

Sidewalk Task Force – T. Graveline stated there has not been a meeting, but it is moving along and could be breaking ground in June.

Town Buildings –Sub-committee met this evening with Gil Graveline – this will be a 3-part process for demo of Grange; RFPs for bid out of asbestos removal

Pension – 20 new investments for employees including Nationwide; There will be presentation, feed-back and decisions made.

**Canine Police Officer:**

A discussion took place on the liability of having a Canine Officer for the Town. After Discussion, Motion made by T. Graveline, seconded by L. Fitzgerald to request that the Chairman of the Town Council, act at the behest of the Council, that if indeed, there is a canine in training with a Patrol Officer, for service and use, to be stopped immediately. **Unanimous.**

**Adjournment:**

**Motion** made by S. Lusas Kolodziej, seconded by R. Blanc to adjourn the meeting. **Unanimous.** The meeting adjourned @ 8:38 p.m.

*Jeff Slapikas*  
*Chairman*