Watertown Town Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor

Caroline Bays
Councilor At Large

Anthony J. Donato,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Kenneth M. Woodland,
District D Councilor

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.
MEETING WILL ONLY HAVE REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
MINUTES

The Town Council of the City known as the Town of Watertown held a public meeting on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 COVID-19 emergency and to avoid group congregation, this meeting had only remote opportunities for participation with public access provided as follows:

ACCESS INFORMATION:

A. The meeting was televised through WCATV (Watertown Cable Access Television): https://wcatv.org/government-channel/
B. The Public was permitted to join the virtual meeting online: https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/92991331344
C. Public was permitted to join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 929 9133 1344 #
D. Public was permitted to comment through email: vpiccirilli@watertown-ma.gov

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1. ROLL CALL
   Council President Sideris called to order a regular meeting of the Town Council at 7:00 p.m. in accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, relating to the 2020 opportunities for participation with public access. Those present were Councilors Caroline Bays, Anthony J. Donato, John G. Gannon, Lisa J. Feltner, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Vice President Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Kenneth M. Woodland, and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were Steve Magoon, Acting Town Manager, Thomas Tracy, Town Auditor and Assistant Manager for Finance, Mark Reich, Town Attorney, and Marilyn W. Pronovost, Town Council Clerk.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. PUBLIC FORUM
   Debbie Dugan – Raised concerns about using the E. Joyce Munger Apartments as a voting precinct and the potential of infecting the residents

   Lisa Caffererata – Had concerns about using the Munger Apartments for a voting precinct.

4. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
   A. Minutes of the June 23, 2020 Town Council Meeting
      Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the minutes as written; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

   B. Minutes of the June 29, 2020 Special Town Council Meeting
      Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the minutes as written; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
   Gift of Tree from Girl Scout Troop 79196

   Town Council President Sideris stated that Girl Scout Troop 79196, sixth grade scouts working on their Power of Community Badge, contacted him,. As part of their work, they would like to donate a tree that may be planted in Watertown Square or along the Charles River as a memorial to those who have suffered from COVID-19. He further stated this donation would blend in well with a future public ceremony honoring those affected by the virus.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS
   Public Hearing and Vote on a Proposed Order Establishing Water and Sewer Rates and Charges for Fiscal Year 2021.

   Mr. Tracy reviewed the findings of the Water and Sewer Rate Study presented at the previous Town Council Meeting. He stated that there was a shortfall because consumption was not meeting projected use. The suggested rates for Fiscal Year 2020 are a 7% increase for water and a 9.5% increase for sewer or an overall 8.6% increase for both Water and Sewer usage. This would result in an increase of $30/Quarter or $120/year for a household using 2,500 cubic feet/quarter.

   Council President Sideris opened the Public Hearing. There being no speakers; the Public Hearing was closed.

   Councilor Piccirilli moved for the Town Council to approve the order establishing water and sewer rates and charges for Fiscal Year 2021; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion.

The Council discussed the following matters:

* The average household uses about 2,000 cubic feet, so the average increase will be about $96/year
* The rates could be subsidized by retained earnings; however they are decreasing. Funds from the General Fund could be used to subsidize the water and sewer needs.
* Option 1 in the rate settings was selected because it helps get the base to a more solid position
* If a resident has issues with paying their bills, there are aid options available through the State. A request was made to pass the information of these agencies to the Town's Social Services Specialist
* If there were an increase in the anticipated local aid, those funds could be used as a transfer for the next Fiscal Year to lower the water and sewer rates
* Although there is a desire to establish a fund to assist residents abating the costs of their water and assessments, it is essential that the program not conflict with the anti-aid amendment that prohibits public funds from being used for private purposes.
* There is a referral to the Budget and Fiscal Oversight Committee to consider ways to minimize the impact of the rates and to create a process that provides for accurate projections

The motion was adopted on a roll call vote of 8-1. All Councilors voted in favor of the motion except for Councilor Feltner who voted in the negative.

7. MOTIONS, ORDINANCES, ORDER, AND RESOLUTIONS

A. An Order on 2020 Polling Locations – Vote to Review Town Clerk's Report and Further Vote to Change Polling Locations for 2020 Locations

Mr. Magoon stated both the Cunniff and Hosmer Schools had been voting stations for precincts 2, 11, and 12; however alternative voting places need to be selected as the schools sites are under construction. The Hellenic Center and the E. Joyce Munger Apartments were chosen; however, due to concerns raised by residents, the Middle School Cafeteria will be used for precincts 11 and 12 and the Hellenic Center will serve as the Precinct 2 voting station.

Attorney Reich explained the process for changing the E. Joyce Munger Apartments location to the Middle School on Waverly Street.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to adopt the order changing the 2020 polling locations as amended to show the Middle School as the voting location for precincts 11 and 12; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion.

In the discussion that followed, it was noted:

* Residents will be notified of the change on the Town's website, at the Council on Aging, on CATV, and in the paper

* That a sign should be placed at the Munger Apartments redirecting residents to the Middle School voting location
* That no resident of the Watertown Housing facilities has contacted COVID during the pandemic
* That efforts have been made to sanitize the school voting facilities and equipment has been purchased to facilitate this.

The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

B. Resolution Authorizing Acceptance and Expenditure of Gifts of Funds in the Amount of $500 from Eversource Energy Service to Offset Expenses Related to the "Saltonstall Park Concert Series"

Mr. Magoon asked for the Town Council's favorable consideration of the donation from Eversource Energy to offset the costs of the Concert Series that began on July 29. Councilor Piccirilli moved to authorize the acceptance and expenditure of gifts of funds in the amount of $500 from Eversource Energy Service to offset expenses related to the "Saltonstall Park Concert Series"; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

C. An Order Accepting A Grant Of Easements For Drainage From Arsenal Park To Arsenal Yards Development And Authorizing The Town Manager To Execute A Grant Of Easements

Mr. Magoon stated that these easements related to stormwater drainage and listed the Town's responsibility of maintaining the drains.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept a grant of easements for drainage from Arsenal Park to Arsenal Yards Development and to authorize The Town Manager to execute a grant of easements; Councilor Gannon seconded the motion.

After a brief discussion, the motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

D. An Order Conveying And Accepting A Grant Of Easement For Temporary Access For Construction Of Improvements To Arsenal Park, And Building G Of Arsenal Yards And Authorizing The Town Manager To Execute A Grant Of Easements

Mr. Magoon provided background on this easement. Councilor Piccirilli moved to approve an order to convey and accept a grant of easement for temporary access for construction of improvements to Arsenal Park, and Building G of Arsenal Yards and to authorize The Town Manager to execute a grant of easements; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. After a brief

discussion, the motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

A. Committee on Human Services Report Regarding Affordable Housing with an Emphasis on a Rental Assistance Program and an Emergency Rental Assistance Program – Anthony Palomba, Chair

ACTION ITEM:

That the Town Council Vote to Endorse the Watertown Housing Partnership's Decision to Allocate $175,000 of Its Available Affordable Housing Funds to Support an Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Councilor Palomba read the Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Committee Report; Councilor Woodland the motion. Councilor Woodland stated that the vote listed in Item 2 needed to be corrected. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to have the Town Council vote to endorse the Watertown Housing Partnership's decision to allocate $175,000 of its available affordable housing funds to support an Emergency Rental Assistance Program; Councilor Palomba seconded the motion. After a discussion regarding the action item, the motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

B. Committee on Personnel and Town Organization Report Regarding Confirmation of Members to the Licensing Board and the Board of Assessors – Caroline Bays, Chair

ACTION ITEMS:

1. That the Town Council Confirm Donna Doucette for Re-Appointment to the Licensing Board for a Term to Expire on February 15, 2022
2. That the Town Council Confirm Jimmy Tsekrekas for Appointment to the Licensing Board for a Term to Expire on February 15, 2022
3. That the Town Council Confirm Earl Smith for Re-Appointment to the Board of Assessors for a Term to Expire on May 15, 2023
4. That the Town Council Confirm Kathleen Colleary for Appointment to the Board of Assessors for a Term to Expire on May 15, 2021

Councilor Bays read the Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the Committee Report; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. Councilor Gannon made a friendly amendment stating that Ms. Ducette had been a member of the Licensing Board since 1992 and its Chair since 2000. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to confirm Donna Doucette for re-appointment to the Licensing Board for a term to expire on February 15, 2022; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to confirm Jimmy Tsekrekas for appointment to the Licensing Board for a term to expire on February 15, 2022; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to confirm Earl Smith for re-appointment to the Board of Assessors for a term to expire on May 15, 2023; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved to confirm Kathleen Colleary for appointment to the Board of Assessors for a term to expire on May 15, 2021; Councilor Woodland seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

C. Committee on Personnel and Town Organization Report Regarding the Evaluation Forms for the Town Auditor and the Town Council Clerk and Consideration of Salary Adjustments for Both Positions – Caroline Bays, Chair

ACTION ITEMS:

1. That the Town Council Use the Current Evaluation Form for the Council Clerk Without Changes
2. That the Town Council Use the Current Evaluation Form for the Town Auditor Without Changes
3. That the Town Council Send Both Evaluation Forms to the Full Town Council at the August 11, 2020 Town Council Meeting to Fill Out and Return to the Town Council President by September 1, 2020 for Future Salary Consideration by the Committee

Councilor Bays read the Committee Report. Councilor Piccirilli moved to accept the report; Councilor Gannon seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Councilor Piccirilli moved that the Town Council use the current evaluation form for the Council Clerk without changes and the current evaluation form for the Town Auditor without changes, and send both evaluation forms to the Full Town Council at the August 11, 2020 Town Council Meeting to fill out and return to the Town Council President by September 1, 2020 for future salary consideration by the Committee; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Feltner stated that the sound quality of the meeting was difficult.

10. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Request for Confirmation of Reappointment to the Watertown Housing Authority

Mr. Magoon requested the confirmation of the reappointment of Allan Gallagher to the Watertown Housing Authority with a term to expire in 2025 be sent to the Committee on Human Services for review.

11. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION/REVIEW OF LIST OF PENDING MATTERS

    Councilor Palomba requested the MWRA assessment rates for the last ten years for water and sewer charges.

    Councilor Bays asked if the election drop-off box at the Town Clerk's office was the only one in the community and if the box was large enough to collect all of the submitted ballots.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

    Councilor Palomba stated there was an error in the Committee on Human Services Report that stated that the unemployment rate in October was 11.9%; however, as that is a future date, he requested that the report be updated to read May. Councilor Sideris agreed that the error would be corrected.

    Councilor Palomba also reminded all that on September 1, 2020, there was a state election and that early voting now included two Sundays. The specific dates for early voting could be obtained from the Town Clerk.

13. PUBLIC FORUM

    There were no speakers for the Public Forum.

14. RECESS OR ADJOURNMENT

    Councilor Piccirilli moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Feltner seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

ADDENDUM

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted by a vote of _9_ for, _0_ against, _0_ present on September 8, 2020

_____

Mark S. Sideris, Council President
s:/MWP

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.
MEETING HAD ONLY REMOTE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PARTICIPATION WITH PUBLIC ACCESS
LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Minutes of the June 23, 2020 Town Council Meeting – Item 4A

2. Minutes of the June 29, 2020 Town Council Meeting – Item 4B

3. Letter to the Town Council Regarding a Gift of a Tree in Memory of COVID-19 Victims – Evelyn Kain, Lily Ng, Ruthie Sherrill, and Kemiyoda Limketkai, Girl Scout Troop 79096 to Town Council – Item 5

4. Fiscal year 2021 Water and Sewer Rates – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – July 9, 2020 – Item 6

5. Report of the Town Clerk on Precincts 2, 11, and 12 Polling Location Changes – John Flynn, Town Clerk - Item 7A

6. Agenda Item – Approval of Gift Expenditure from Eversource Regarding the Saltonstall Park Concert Series – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager, to Town Council – July 30, 2020 – Item 7B

7. Arsenal Park Drainage Easement – Katherine Lord Klein, KP Law, P.C. to Michael Driscoll, Town Manager – September 1, 2020 – Item 7C

8. Agenda Item – An Order Relative to the Temporary Construction Access Easement Agreement – Arsenal Park – Steven Magoon, Acting Town Manager – August 6, 2020 – Item 7D

9. Committee on Human Services Regarding Affordable Housing Rental Assistance Program and a Permanent Housing Assistance Program – Anthony Palomba, Chair – June 22, 2020 – Item 8A

10. Committee on Personnel and Town Administration Report Regarding the Confirmation of members to the Licensing Board and the Board of Assessors – Caroline Bays, Chair – July 13, 2020 – Item 8B

11. Committee on Personnel and Town Organization Report Regarding the Evaluation Form for the Town Auditor and the Town Council Clerk and to Consider Salary Adjustments for Both Positions – Caroline Bays, Chair – Item 8C

12. Request for Confirmation – Reappointment to the Watertown Housing Authority – Michael Driscoll, Town Manager to Town Council – July 30, 2020 – Item 10

13. Request for Information Regarding the MWRA Assessment Rates for the Last Ten Years – Councilor Anthony Palomba – August 11, 2020 – Item 11

14. Request for Information Regarding Election Preparedness for Ballot Drop Offs – Councilor Caroline Bays – August 11, 2020 – Item 11