



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

**QUESTIONS TO DIRECTORS  
NOVEMBER 4, 2019  
AT 6:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

The Special Meeting, the Questions to Directors Workshop of the Common Council of the City of Middletown, was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Monday, November 4, 2019, at 6:00 PM.

Present: Councilman Carl Chisem Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski  
Councilman W. Vance Cotten (6:06PM) Councilman Eugene Nocera  
Councilman Gerald Daley (6:08 PM) Councilman Philip Pessina  
Councilman Sebastian Giuliano Councilwoman Linda Salafia  
Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. Councilman Robert Santangelo

Absent: Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta; Councilman Robert Blanchard

Also Present: Council Clerk – Linda Reed Health – Kevin Elak, R.S.  
Arts Coordinator – Keisha Michael Library – Ramona Burkey, Director  
City & Town Clerk – Ashley Flynn, CCTC Police Department – Capt. John Lozefski,  
Diversity & Equal Opp. – Faith Jackson, Dir. Public Works – William Russo  
City & Town Clerk – Ashley Flynn, CCTC Recreation – Cathy Lechowicz  
Finance – Carl Erlacher, CPA Tax Assessor – Damon Braasch, CCMA II  
Fire Department – Chief Robert Kronenberger Technology Service – Bryan Skowera  
General Counsel – Brig Smith, Esq. Water & Sewer – Joseph Fazzino, P.E., Director  
Youth Services – Justin Carbonella, MPA

Members of the Public: 1

**1. Call to Order**

Deputy Mayor Robert Santangelo, calls the meeting to order at 6:03 PM and leads the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Acting Council Clerk reads the Call of the Meeting and the Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

**2. Questions to Directors Opens**

The Questions session opens at 6:04 PM. The Chair asks if anyone has questions for any director. The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner.

Councilman Faulkner states that he has questions regarding the proposed tax abatements. Planning, Conservation, & Development Director Joseph Samolis and General Counsel Brig Smith, Esq. step to the podium. Councilman Faulkner states that there are no minutes or notes on these items, so he has questions. Typically, abatements are to bring people into town, but these proposed abatements are for people, who are already in Town.

Director Samolis states that, for context, they are for two (2) buildings in a medical office complex at 400 Saybrook Road. They are professional medical office buildings, which will bring in professionals for medical uses. It will have a tendency to bring people in regionally for these uses. In addition, development such as this usually generate quite a bit in terms of personal property taxes outside of the abatement. In general, they are good use to have in the municipality, reiterating that they employ professionals and bring people in from the region, who hopefully stay and put more into the local economy.

Councilman Faulkner asks if the developer – the LLC -- owns the property.

Director Samolis replies that is correct.

Councilman Faulkner asks if the developer got an abatement when buying the property.

Director Samolis replies that he does not know.

Councilman Faulkner asks why there are two (2) separate applications, asking if there are two (2) separate locations.

Director Samolis replies that there are two (2) separate buildings, one on each lot, noting that the developer asked for an abatement for each building.

Councilman Faulkner asks if there is a timeframe for when they will build.

Director Samolis replies that one is under construction and the other has permits for the foundation.

The Chair asks if anyone has question for this Director. The Chair states that he has a question for Director Samolis. He states that there is something for the animal shelter, the agreement. He asks Director Samolis to provide an explanation of how this will work.

Director Samolis explains that his project has been tossed around for six (6) or more years in terms of looking for a potential replacement so that the Animal Control Officer (ACO) can bring animal, who are caught during the routine day. Currently, the City has an inter-local agreement with the Town of Portland so that animals are sent to Portland for sheltering until they are recovered. At this time, that location – noting he will defer to Police Chief McKenna and Police Captain Lozefski, who run the program – the needs of the ACO have outgrown the space in Portland that is currently used. For the past six (6), the City has been looking for a place in Middletown so that the ACO can bring animals and maintain that space. They have looked at several potential parcels where they might build a facility. Those costs were approximately \$3M. About a year ago, Dr. Olsen of Piper-Olsen acquired the property on Berlin Street – the former Dog Cabin – and he is looking at renovating that space. He remarks that ACO Gail Petras has been instrumental in orchestrating this along with Police Captain Lozefski. They started having conversation with Dr. Olsen, who agreed that he would enter into a long-term agreement with the City to rehab a portion of that building so they could shelter the animals. What is currently under consideration is a lease agreement with Dr. Olsen where the City would upfront costs of \$300,000 so that the ACO would have a newly renovated space for the ACO's needs and to meet State standards for sheltering. The monthly rent would be reduced from that \$300,000 on an annual basis. Instead of spending \$40,000 annually for rent in Portland, that would be reduced because of the upfront payment for the renovations of the Berlin Street facility. The City will have a reduced lease amount to pay for larger, safer space than now available in Portland.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina notes that this also includes office space for the ACO. He recounts that, when he was in the Police Department, the ACO and staff are here and on the go while the facility is in Portland across the river. There was also ways a lapse in time to check on animals. With this the ACO will have the space they deserve, can be there without wasting travelling to another Town. They will no longer need to worry about travelling to another town and they will know the type of facility available.

Director Samolis adds that there are a couple of other points. First, not only does the ACO travel across the river to Portland, but citizens must also travel to recover an animal. This will provide a centrally located facility on Berlin Street, which can be reached relatively quickly. There will also be trained staff on site maintaining the facility – Dr. Olsen's staff – as part of this agreement. This will offer more amenities than we now have in Portland.

Councilman Pessina adds that the animals will have access to good medical care while now, in Portland, they do not.

Director Samolis adds that now they have to be transported to Dr. Olsen's office.

Councilman Pessina notes that good medical care on site and the preservation of the animals is just as important regarding agenda Item 12E. He states that these transfer are not just neutral, but a money savings, a reduction.

Director Burkey explains that there have been two (2) resignations this past summer by staff members, who are at relatively higher pay classification based on their slotting in steps of the union contract. They saw an opportunity to reclassify three (3) lower level positions, which they wanted to reclassify based on library service needs and higher skill level they would like to require from these staff members. It is actually a cost savings, particularly in Year 1, as there are carrying the two (2) vacancies now, but also a cost savings going forward.

Councilman Giuliano replies thankyou and good job.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera requests that Technology Services Director Bryan Skowera to the podium, asking that he update the Council on the IT systems devices, the goal of the bond ordinance, and time line.

Technology Services Director Bryan Skowera states that, looking back to the last two (2) budget cycles, they had identified a fair amount of CNR requirements in repose to the request for a 5-year plan so that the Council could plan for future years. They established the need for \$307,000 in FY 2019 and \$667,000 for FY 2002. They found a shortfall between those two (2) years in the amount of \$691,290. They have chosen

either to postpone or cancel initiatives which are not necessary for the health of the City's infrastructure. That leaves the requirements, which will hopefully be met with this bond: that is primarily the wired network, which has a number of components that are now obsolete. With the central core aspects of the network becoming obsolete by February 2020. This is the piece of technology, which every piece of data in City Hall, Central Communications, the Senior Center, every building comes through. This include emergency radio transmissions, email, internet, and access for citizens, and the AUC financial system. There are associated pieces that go in throughout the City to transmit this data, which are already close to the end of life. They need to replace that core by February 2020. If they do not, it is not a cataclysmic event where everything will break, but, at that point, there is no support from any manufacturer, vendor, partner, or consultant. At that point, an outage becomes more likely and more costly to recover from. We would be trying to find these funds in an emergency situation while the City would be crippled. We would be unable to process day-to-day technology that we need. This is the largest part of this. Secondary is the wireless infrastructure. Our wireless infrastructure is very outdated. Our peers – Russell Library – is going with a wireless solution. Some years ago, the school system went it a bond to redo there wireless infrastructure. Our City infrastructure is so aged that Recreation & Community Services have had to find alternate solutions to technology services provided. Water & Sewer has had difficulty meeting day-to-day needs. The new Mile Lane facility has a problem with its wireless. This is the second large part of the bond. The final part if a smaller amount for document management to address simple fact that some office have simply run out of physical space. They have file folders stacked under desks. This is to develop a solution to digitize and store items indefinitely. If the Council would like a breakdown, he has that information available.

Councilman Nocera notes that this is a multi-purpose plan. He asks if Director Skowera characterizes this mostly as devices or software.

Director Skowera replies that the vast majority is the physical hardware with some licensing to enable it. It is physical hardware and the networks, specifically the wireless and the wired infrastructure has a lifespan of 10 years.

The Chair asks if anyone has any additional question for any the Directors.

There being no further questions for any director, the Chair closes the Questions to Directors at 6:20 PM.

#### **4. Meeting adjourned**

Councilman Sebastian Giuliano moves to adjourn. Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski seconds the motion. There being no discussion, the Chair calls for a vote. The vote is unanimous with 10 aye votes (Councilmembers Chism, Cotten, Daley, Faulkner, Giuliano, Kleckowski, Pessina, Salafia, and Santangelo). The Motion to Adjourn is approved.

The meeting is adjourned at 6:20 PM

ATTEST:

LINDA S.K. REED,  
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK