



TOWN OF MONROE

TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Session # 2025-01

Regular Meeting – Monday, January 6, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.
Meeting conducted in Council Chambers of Town Hall
& Remotely via Zoom

PRESENT: Chairperson Jonathan Formichella
Vice-Chairperson Enid Lipeles
Councilmember Vincent A. Duva
Councilmember Cathy Kohut
Councilmember Jason Maur
Councilmember Sean O'Rourke
Councilmember Janice Persico
Councilmember Kevin Reid (remote)
Councilmember Dona-Lyn Wales

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Terrence P. Rooney

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Formichella called the meeting to order at 7:01PM and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Formichella stated every member was present in person with the exception of Council Member Kevin Reid, who was remote.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting held on December 9, 2024 (Session 2024-23).
- B. Approval of the Tax Collector's Request for Refunds, dated December 30, 2024, totaling \$5,315.41.
- C. Acceptance of the donations received for the following programs:
- Edith Wheeler Memorial Library: \$300.00 & in-kind donations of towels for cleaning the Children's Department, a 45-minute salt session gift card, eyeglasses repair kit, 4 books & 17 DVD's.
 - Emergency Medical Services: \$10,115.00
 - Food Pantry \$830.00
 - Police Department: \$50.00
 - Project Warmth \$600.00
- D. **Item was relocated to New Business as Item E by Chair.**

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated January 2, 2025 regarding various donations.

- B. Memo from the Tax Collector to the Town Council Chair dated December 30, 2024 regarding a Request for Refunds.
- C. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated January 2, 2025 regarding the resolution for the Motorola Solutions Purchase Order & Online Terms Acknowledgement.
- D. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated December 24, 2024 regarding the resolution for the Motorola Solutions Purchase Order & Online Terms Acknowledgement.
- E. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated January 2, 2025 regarding the resolution for the MetroCOG Connecticut DOT Active Transportation Microgrant Agreement.
- F. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated December 23, 2024 regarding the resolution for the MetroCOG Connecticut DOT Active Transportation Microgrant Agreement.
- G. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated January 2, 2025 regarding the resolution for the Stryker Preventive Maintenance Agreement.
- H. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated December 23, 2024 regarding the resolution for the Stryker Preventive Maintenance Agreement.
- I. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated January 2, 2025 regarding the resolution for the 1st Amendment to the Cleaning Services Group Agreement.
- J. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated January 2, 2025 regarding the resolution for the 1st Amendment to the Cleaning Services Group Agreement.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Formichella asked if anyone in chambers or online wished to participate.

Formichella asked if anyone else online or in person wished to participate. Hearing none, **Formichella** closed Public Participation.

VI. APPOINTMENTS

None

VII. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council Committee on Finance, Education, Health & Public Safety Matters – **Lipeles** noted they had not met for a meeting in a while.
- B. Town Council Committee on Planning & Zoning, Public Works and Park & Recreation – **Duva** stated that they had not met since the last meeting
- C. Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters – **Reid** noted they met prior to the meeting and discussed four resolutions regarding Motorola Solutions Purchase Order and Online Terms, MetroCOG DOT Active Transportation Microgrant Agreement, the Stryker Preventative Maintenance Agreement, and the 1st Amendment for the Cleaning Services Group. He noted that all resolutions passed for consensus to come before Council.
- D. Strategic Planning Committee - **Formichella** stated they had not met since the last meeting but he provided an update. He noted the first update was that he mentioned previously a meeting to discuss the Beardsley property and previously noted the wrong date. He stated that he would work with the Chair of the Historic Society to schedule another meeting date. **Formichella** stated there was an update for the Board of Education facilities update group and that he did attend the meeting in December. He stated that there were five or six various options presented by their architects. **Formichella** stated there was no consensus on which of the options fully met the needs of the Board of Education, however some were eliminated. He noted the process was ongoing and would provide updates when they become available.
- E. Open Space Preservation and Acquisition Committee – **O’ Rourke** noted they have not met since the last Council meeting.
- F. First Selectman’s Update –First Selectman Rooney provided an update as follows:

Operations Update:

Budget

- All departments have submitted their budgets for fiscal year 25/26. We will be meeting with

Department directors to go over their projections and what they need to keep their departments operating fiscally responsible while maintaining a peak level of efficiency.

Community Center Site

- The school is currently being cleaned and space analysis has begun regarding move preparation of the Parks and Recreation Department as well as the Technology department into the building. I met with IT staff and DPW today to go over first issues of business which revealed the need for installation of fiber optic into the structure from Town Hall. A strategic plan is expected from said departments by the end of the month which will be followed weather permitting by the excavation needed for the connection of technology. Safety issue number one was broken glass on the entry of the building which has been repaired since last council meeting. Bids will be going out shortly for other health and safety issues needing to be addressed, such as the gym wall that this council was made aware of during the purchasing process.

Allen Cassatt

- With sadness we announce the passing of Allen Cassatt. He was our landfill attendant for 13 years of service. Allen will be missed by the Town and the customers of the landfill.

Emergency Services Update:

Great Hollow Lake

- Great Hollow Lake was temporarily closed due to a fallen tree that created a fire from powerlines at the end of Doc Silverstone Drive. The issue was resolved quickly thanks to our Monroe Volunteer fire department, Eversource, Lewis's tree service and Department of Public Works. Great Hollow Lake was reopened the next day.

Capital Projects:

Animal Shelter

- The Animal Shelter is moving along very well with interior walls and kennels being constructed. I visited the sight and spoke to all involved about how the building layout felt once the walls were built. Some minor modifications were noted and expressed to the contractor.

Community Update:

Tax Collector's Breakfast

- I attended the annual Tax Collector and Assessor Breakfast. Many involved individuals were present, as well as Katherine Stauffer from our Board of Finance. This event revealed some information regarding veteran benefit programs, tax relief concepts for seniors, the impact of decreasing motor vehicle values, and navigating State mandated re-evaluation impact.

Brokers Luncheon

- A large assembly met for the Brokers lunch. Discussions revolved around the future of the economy as it relates to interest rates, housing markets and other investment strategies. William Holsworth, our Economic and Community Development director spoke about the 60 new businesses that opened in Monroe in the last year and the hundreds of local jobs they have provided to our community. I spoke about the young entrepreneurs I've met, having a dream of running their own business and how some motivated entrepreneurs risk a lifetime of earnings to accomplish their dreams in Monroe. While not every location is optimal, regulatorily I remind staff the importance of recognizing the financial undertaking needed to open a business. It is paramount for the staff to be civil and accommodating during the process. I also expressed engineering and especially manufacturing is on the rise in Connecticut and we are seeing interest from those sectors here in town. Monroe welcomes people seeking to do business in Monroe and the environment is geared around our businesses having success in this administration.

Ribbon Cutting

- Testo's was a staple in Bridgeport for many years, opened by Mario Testa and was bought several years ago by Ralph and his wife Lili Giacobbe. The Giacobbe family chose Monroe as

their new home in the old vacant building where Roberto's was located, a very successful restaurant in Monroe. The Giacobbe family including daughter Victoria and son Giovanni have taken a dilapidating building and turned it into a bustling eatery in town. Congrats to the Giacobbe family, thank you for investing in Monroe and we wish all of you many years of success.

Menorah Lighting

- Every year it is customary for the First Selectman to attend the Menorah lighting. As always, I was welcomed with overwhelming acceptance and I was asked to say a few words. Our Jewish community in Monroe is such a strong, happy and welcoming group of people and it's a pleasure to spend a night with them, learning more every year about the history of their culture and beliefs.

Passing of President Jimmy Carter

- Flags are at half-mast due to the passing of Former President Jimmy Carter. He served in the Georgia State Senate, was the Governor of Georgia from 1971-1975 and our 39th President from 1977-1981. Thank you, President Carter, for your years of public service and may you rest in peace.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A.** Pepper Street Reconstruction Project – Tabled

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** Acceptance of the following donations that individually exceed \$1,500.00:

Food Pantry:

- \$3,000.00 from Carolyn Giampe

Second: Maur

Discussion: Rooney stated that the donations were greatly appreciated.

Motion passed 9-0:

Voting Yes: **Formichella, Lipeles, Duva, Kohut, Maur, O'Rourke, Persico, Reid, Wales**

Voting No: None

Absent: None

- B. Resolution #25-002:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the MetroCOG Connecticut DOT Active Transportation Microgrant Agreement.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #25-002: RESOLVED**, that Terrence P. Rooney, First Selectman of the Town of Monroe, is authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of the Town of Monroe the MetroCOG Connecticut DOT Active Transportation Microgrant Program Agreement and any associated documents by and between MetroCOG for the Connecticut DOT Active Transportation Microgrant Program.

Second: Kohut

Discussion: Rooney stated that the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) in conjunction with MetroCOG had announced an Active Transportation Microgrant. He noted that this grant would provide funding up to \$5,000 on a rolling basis for the purchase of one hundred (100) bike helmets which would be distributed at the Town's annual Monroe Night at the Park event. **Rooney** stated that the agreement had been reviewed by our Town Attorney, who provided his letter of opinion. **Maur** stated that the Monroe Night at the Park event was an event that gets better each year and he wanted to provide recognition and a thank you to the Department of Transportation for the grant, the Police Department for the event.

Motion passed 9-0:

Voting Yes: **Formichella, Lipeles, Duva, Kohut, Maur, O'Rourke, Persico, Reid, Wales**

Voting No: None

Absent: None

- C. Resolution #25-003:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the Stryker Preventive Maintenance Agreement.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #25-003: RESOLVED**, that Terrence P. Rooney, First Selectman of the Town of Monroe, is authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of the Town of Monroe, the ProCare Services Agreement, ProCare Product Service Plan Agreement, Stryker Terms and Conditions, and any associated documents by and between Stryker Sales Corporation for the Preventive Maintenance Program for certain EMS equipment.

Second: Wales

Discussion: Rooney stated that in 2021, our Emergency Medical Services (“EMS”) leadership worked to procure a comprehensive preventive maintenance program for critical equipment, specifically our Stryker Power Cots (stretchers), Power-LOAD cot fasteners, Stair Chairs, and Lucas automatic chest compression devices with Stryker Sales Corporation. He noted, that at that time, Stryker was able to quote a four-year comprehensive agreement to cover all equipment, most parts (including high-cost batteries), labor and associated travel. **Rooney** stated that Chief Rosenberg had advised him that Stryker Sales Corporation had provided the Town with its four-year renewal equipment service plan and continued to be the only company that could provide an effective maintenance contract for their equipment. He stated that the new agreement’s annual cost was estimated to be about \$2,000 lower than what the department had budgeted. **Rooney** stated that the agreement had been reviewed by our Town Attorney, who provided his letter of opinion.

Motion passed 9-0:

Voting Yes: **Formichella, Lipeles, Duva, Kohut, Maur, O’Rourke, Persico, Reid, Wales**

Voting No: None

Absent: None

- D. Resolution #25-004:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the 1st Amendment to the Cleaning Services Group Agreement.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #25-004: RESOLVED**, that Terrence P. Rooney, First Selectman of the Town of Monroe, is authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of the Town of Monroe, the 1st Amendment for the Cleaning Services Contract and any associated documents by and between Cleaning Services Group, Inc., for cleaning services at certain Town facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council waives §3.3 of the Town’s Purchasing Policy as set forth in that certain Procurement Exception/Waiver Justification form dated January 2, 2025.

Second: Maur

Discussion: Rooney stated that in 2022, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for cleaning services at certain Town facilities. Several bids were received, with the low bid submitted by Cleaning Services Group, Inc. (“CSG”), which at that time, Director of Public Works, Chris Nowacki had determined to be acceptable. CSG was the firm that has currently utilized for this contracted service.

He noted that CSG was currently providing cleaning services for the Library, EMS, Town Hall, and the Police Department and that the company had provided excellent service, had practiced the upmost confidentiality while tending to the sanitary needs of municipal buildings and therefore, Mr. Nowacki had requested a contract amendment to extend the cleaning services bid for an additional two (2) years with CSG. **Rooney** stated that the execution of this agreement would require the waiver of a formal bid process which was required by §3.3 of our Purchasing Policy as follows. He stated that he attached the Procurement Exception/Waiver Justification Form executed by our Public Works Director, Chris Nowacki, our Finance Director, Ron Bunovsky, and the undersigned as First Selectman. **Rooney** stated that he requested that the Town Council approve and endorse the request for a waiver of such formal bidding pursuant to §5.0 of the Purchasing Policy, which states:

5.0 Waivers.

5.1. In any other case in which compliance with any of these purchasing requirements shall be deemed to be impractical or not in the best interests of the Town, they may be waived with the approval of the First Selectman and the Town Council.

5.2. Each waiver shall contain a statement of the specific sections of the policy being waived, the reasons for such waiver, and shall be kept on file with the records for the corresponding purchase.

In compliance with §5.0 et seq., I approve a waiver of the formal bidding process, as required by §3.3, with respect to this matter based upon the following reasons:

1. The current vendor was procured through a formal bidding process;
2. The current vendor has agreed to an extension of the current contract at a 0% increase;
3. The current vendor provides cleaning services to the Town Hall (incl. Police Department), EMS Facility and Library. Many of these locations included highly sensitive equipment and confidential information and in the case of the Police Department, operate 24 hours/day. The current vendor has performed its services to the complete satisfaction of all department heads, including, public safety and IT;
4. It is in the best interest of the Town to continue to work with the current vendor to maintain confidence in the protection of the Town's highly sensitive equipment and confidential information; and,
5. A formal bidding process is unlikely to result in a more favorable outcome and developing a relationship with a new vendor is not in the best interest of the Town in maintain the efficiency, continuity and security provided by the current vendor.

Included for your review and consideration is the new extension proposal, the current contract, and the original bid proposal. The matter was reviewed and the 1st amendment was drafted by our Town Attorney, who also provided his opinion letter.

Motion passed 9-0:

Voting Yes: **Formichella, Lipeles, Duva, Kohut, Maur, O'Rourke, Persico, Reid, Wales**

Voting No: None

Absent: None

- E. Resolution #25-001:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the Motorola Solutions Purchase Order and Online Terms Acknowledgement.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #25-001: RESOLVED**, that the execution and delivery of the Motorola Solutions Purchase Order, executed by Terrence P. Rooney, as First Selectman of and for the Town of Monroe, is hereby approved and ratified; and further, that Terrence P. Rooney, as First Selectman of and for the Town of Monroe, is hereby authorized to execute and deliver any associated documents by and between the Town and Motorola Solutions which may be required to consummate the transaction contemplated by the Purchase Order.

Second: Wales

Discussion: Rooney stated that in 2020, the State of Connecticut mandated the use of body worn cameras by law enforcement officers whenever they are dealing with the public however, the Monroe Police Department was always at the forefront in implementing technology to ensure public trust, and had been utilizing in car video recording for over 25 years and noted that our officers had worn body worn cameras since 2017. **Rooney** stated that last year the body cameras worn reached end of life and were no longer being manufactured or serviced. He noted that additionally, the current in-car units were expected to reach end of life next year and the operating system currently utilized on our server would no longer be supported by the manufacturer nor compatible with the current technology. He stated that Chief White had provided a purchase order from Motorola Solutions for the purchase of all body worn and in-car camera units, and cloud-based server access and ancillary software. **Rooney** stated that the Purchase Order had been reviewed and approved by our Town Attorney, who provided his letter of opinion. **Maur** noted that he requested this item be removed from the Consent Calendar to New Business out of transparency due to the cost. He stated this was discussed in L&A and that the Federal Grant had not yet come through and that would cover a significant amount of the cost. **Maur** noted that he did inquire if it was available within what was budgeted and it was. He noted additionally that this was a state mandate. **Maur** stated that this item was discussed for last year's capital budget and he was reminded that it was removed due to the ability to utilize grant funding. **O'Rourke** inquired what the amount of the grant would total. **Rooney** stated he believed it was a Congressional grant totaling \$300,000. **Wales** noted that if the grant did not come through before the net 30 would the Town reapply our grant money. **Rooney** confirmed.

Motion passed 9-0:

Voting Yes: **Formichella, Lipeles, Duva, Kohut, Maur, O'Rourke, Persico, Reid, Wales**

Voting No: None

Absent: None

X. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Formichella adjourned the meeting at 7:29PM. **Formichella** noted that there would be a Town meeting on January 21, 2025 regarding the bonding that was passed previously.

Respectfully submitted by, Kerry McAndrew, Clerk