



# TOWN OF MONROE

## TOWN COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES

Session # 2024-14

Regular Meeting – Monday, June 24, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.  
Meeting conducted in Council Chambers of Town Hall  
& Remotely via Zoom

**PRESENT:**

Chairperson Jonathan Formichella  
Vice-Chairperson Enid Lipeles (remote)  
Councilmember Vincent A. Duva  
Councilmember Cathy Kohut  
Councilmember Sean O'Rourke  
Councilmember Janice Persico  
Councilmember Kevin Reid (remote)

**ABSENT:**

Councilmember Jason Maur  
Councilmember Dona-Lyn Wales

**ALSO PRESENT:**

First Selectman Terrence P. Rooney  
Town Attorney Frank Lieto  
Shelton Administrative Aid to the Mayor, Special Projects Ray Baldwin  
Planning & Zoning Administrator Kathleen Gallagher  
Building Inspector John Morris

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**I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**Formichella** called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**Formichella** took the roll call as noted above.

**III. MASUK GIRLS SOFTBALL PROCLAMATION**

**Rooney** noted that members from the Masuk Girls Softball team was in attendance. He presented them with a Proclamation for their State Championship.

**IV. CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A.** Approval of the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting held on June 10, 2024 (Session 2024-13).
- B.** Acceptance of the donations received for the following programs:
- Emergency Medical Services: \$ 1,131.27
  - Farmers' Market: \$ 1,834.80
  - Food Pantry: \$ 796.72
  - Police Department: \$ 1,000.00
  - Project Warmth: \$ 87.40

**V. COMMUNICATIONS**

- A.** Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated June 20, 2024 regarding various donations.

- B. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated June 20, 2024 regarding an appointment to the Board of Ethics.
- C. Memo from Young Developers to the Town dated June 17, 2024 regarding the request for a contract extension for the Stepney Firehouse Roof Replacement project.
- D. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated June 20, 2024 regarding the First Amendment to the Stepney Firehouse Roof Contract.
- E. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated June 18, 2024 regarding the First Amendment to the Stepney Firehouse Roof Contract.
- F. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated June 20, 2024 regarding the Open Gov Software Agreements.
- G. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated June 18, 2024 regarding Open Gov Software Agreements.

## VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

**Steve Kirsch, 35 Applegate Lane** – Kirsch noted that for the record he is a member of the Board of Finance but that tonight’s comments were his own and not of the Boards or any other member. He stated that he wanted to address new business item C, Pepper Street, executive session anticipated. Kirsch stated that he would like a public meeting so that residents knew what was going on and he reminded the Council and the public that the contract for the work was signed in October of 2029 with a completion date of the end of 2021. He noted that completion did not happen and we are well beyond that date. Kirsch stated that on August 15, 2022 Ken Kellogg provided an updated-on Pepper Street and out of that report he noted Ken stated that “at the most recent meeting, the contractors President and his legal counsel, made a clear commitment to devote resources necessary to substantially complete the project by November of that year”, meaning 2022. Kirsch stated that on August 15<sup>th</sup> an executive session was held, on August 26<sup>th</sup> there was a Town Meeting to approve the MOU and here we are two years later.

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

## VII. APPOINTMENTS

- A. **Resolution #24-109:** To consider and act upon the resolution regarding the appointment of **Robert Tranzillo (R)** of 4 Pamela Circle to the Board of Ethics for a term ending January 1, 2026.

**Motion by Formichella** to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-109: RESOLVED**, that the Monroe Town Council hereby approves the First Selectman’s appointment of **Robert Tranzillo (R) of 4 Pamela Drive** to the Board of Ethics for a term ending January 1, 2026.

**Second: Duva**

**Discussion: Formichella** stated that Bob had lived in the Town of Monroe since 1966. Not only did he serve as Chairman of Town Council, he was also chairman of the Board of Finance, both elected positions. **Formichella** noted that Bob’s volunteerism continued as he served on the Parks & Recreation Commission and a long-time member of the Memorial Day Parade Committee. He stated that Bob was an active member of the Monroe Jaycees and St. Jude Church. **Formichella** stated that Bob has been committed to the town for over 58 years. The appointment filled the vacancy created by Anthony Marciano who had completed the Monroe Town Charter requirement of serving three (3) consecutive 2-year terms on the Board of Ethics.

**Formichella** noted that Mr. Tranzillo was interviewed during L&A and his appointment was moved to Town Council.

**Motion passed 7-0:**

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

Voting No: None

Absent: Maur, Wales

## VIII. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Town Council Committee on Finance, Education, Health & Public Safety Matters – **Lipeles** noted they had not met since the last Council meeting.
- B. Town Council Committee on Planning & Zoning, Public Works and Park & Recreation – **Duva** stated there was no update.
- C. Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters – **Reid** noted they met prior to the meeting. He noted they conducted an interview and discussed two items on the agenda, the First Amendment to the Stepney Firehouse Roof Contract and the OpenGov Software Agreements, both which were passed to go before Council this evening.
- D. Strategic Planning Committee - **Formichella** stated they have not met since the last Council meeting.
- 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:**

#### Historical Society

- Met with members of the Society to discuss options for the Beardsley House and property. The Beardsley house is owned by the society; however, the Town of Monroe owns the property. I recommend this Council take the time to visit this location as everyone is welcoming ideas on how to proceed with this historic property that needs considerable maintenance.

#### Employee Appreciation

- Monroe resident Dave Kuban and his family owned business Planet Pizza supplied food to our dedicated Town Employees. Members of all departments attended, directors and employees alike, as well as many members of Monroe PD and DPW. Thank you to our municipal staff for making our Town Hall the friendly environment it is today. Our citizens are noticing and vocalizing their appreciation for the kind culture and proactive work being accomplished by the municipal sector.

#### Michael Manjos

- Mike is stepping down from chairman of Board of Finance. Mike has kept Monroe on a very responsible and fiscally conservative path for over a decade while working with all personalities to make the best decisions for Monroe. I have great admiration for Mr. Manjos for his years of offering his expertise to the Board of Finance and it’s impossible to find anyone that has ever worked on budgets with him to say they did not learn something from his leadership. He will be greatly missed and my hope is whoever is chosen to fill his shoes will bring the same energy and diligence to the position, it has been an honor working with you.

#### Bond Rating

- The Director of Finance had informed me that we received our bond rating from S&P Global Ratings. I am happy to report that we have been assigned a AAA bond rating with a stable financial outlook.

### **Emergency Services Update:**

#### Power Outage

- Significant winds, rain, and hail surged through parts of Monroe Saturday and Sunday evening. The extreme weather left many residents without power, approximately 1850 residents. My office was in contact with the Department of Public Works and Police Chief during these events. Our officers blocked roads temporarily where needed and kept DPW notified of hazards needing immediate attention. The Department of Public Works worked through the night on Saturday clearing trees along with the Eversource tree crew to take care of any trees leaning against power lines. Our DPW was called out again early this

morning for a downed tree on Moose Hill Road at 1:30am. The Parks and Recreation Director, Missy Orosz, reported Doc Silverstone Drive was blocked from down trees and closed the park temporarily until it was safe to pass. A cursory visit to Great Hollow by me revealed several large oak trees had fallen and created a very heavy and timely job for crews on scene. The Park was opened by 1:05pm Sunday afternoon. Eversource was very responsive during this storm event as well. Clean ups are ongoing in the walking trails, so please enjoy the parks with caution. Thank you to all departments for the excellent communication and hard work to get our Town back on track.

- Detective Buckley retired last week after 19 years of service to the Monroe Police Department. She was a favorite among youth detectives, and will be missed. We wish her the best of luck with future endeavors and thank her for her years of service.

### **Capital Projects Update:**

#### Paving

- Paving has been done on several of our roads by our contracted vendors and our Public Works Department. As many of you know, last year's repairs were done using our personnel, however the rental of 6-foot paver although helped keep our roads safe and operational, the appearance was not optimal. This season we opted to rent a 13-foot paver which allows our road section repairs to extend curb to curb and the transitions from old to new pavement are much smoother. All these paving projects have been seen by me and I'm happy about the progress Public Works is making on the in-house ability to pave our roads. This not only allows us to make repairs on our own schedule but there is also a cost saving which I am trying to calculate as the season progresses.

### **Community Update:**

#### Trumbull Veterans and First Responder Center

- Over a month ago Trumbull had a groundbreaking event for their new state of the art facility on Whitney Avenue. This facility will be used by our Veterans in Monroe and will serve those who served us very well in the near future.

#### 838 Strength Ribbon Cutting

- This ribbon cutting was held on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. This fitness center offers personal training and tips for safe and effective workouts. Thank you to everyone who showed their support.

#### Jockey Hollow Middle School Graduation

- The Superintendent, myself, and other dignitaries attended the ceremony on Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> which awarded 260 eight graders with their certificates of recognition. Congratulations to all!

#### Masuk High School Graduation

- The Superintendent, myself, and other dignitaries attended the graduation ceremony which was held on Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to the class of 2024!

#### Fairways to Hope Golf Classic

- The Center for Family Justice held their annual Fairways of Hope Golf Classic on Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Mill River Country Club in Stratford. I had the opportunity to speak at this event, which was well attended. The golf classic benefits program services for children impacted by physical and sexual abuse. Thank you CFJ for all you do!

#### Production Metals

- Production Metals has been an outstanding investor into the future of Monroe. As this is a global business they employ a local staff adding 80 plus new jobs to the Monroe job Market. Myself and State Rep Tony Scott attended the ceremony in celebration of Production Metals continued success in Monroe.

#### Chamber of Commerce Dinner

- This dinner was held on Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> and was well attended. The Chamber has welcomed approximately 40 new members since last July with a total of 115 members. The Chamber continues to welcome new businesses into Town in addition to hosting several

networking events.

Lacrosse Girls Banquet Proclamation

- I was honored to attend the banquet for the Masuk Girls Lacrosse team on Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. It was an honor to present them and the coaching staff with a proclamation for their successful dedication and teamwork which lead them to win the 2024 CIAC Lacrosse Class L Championship.

Farmers' Market

- Despite the changeable weather, our Farmers' Market opened June 14<sup>th</sup> and will continue to run every Friday from 3 to 6 PM until October 25<sup>th</sup>.

Strawberry Festival

- The Monroe Congregational Church held its 52<sup>nd</sup> annual Strawberry Festival. While I was unable to attend, I was informed that it was very well attended.

BRBC Annual Luncheon

- The Bridgeport Regional Business Council invited me to attend their annual luncheon which was held on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Trumbull Marriott. During the luncheon, there were several panel discussions, networking opportunities and the launch of the new MetroCOG website.

CFJ Annual Dinner

- I was honored to attend the annual dinner for the Center for Family Justice on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Trumbull Marriott. The annual dinner recognized many community partners, staff, volunteers, donors, students, parents, and community leaders.

Social Services

- Last week it was brought to my attention that there was a resident in Town living in deplorable conditions. Through teamwork with our Social Services department, we were able to secure an emergency hearing with Probate Court regarding conservatorship within 24 hours. This swift action provided the resident with the assistance they were unable to obtain on their own. Great job to our Social Services Director and Trumbull Probate.

**IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**X. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Resolution #24-110:** To consider and act upon the resolution regarding the First Amendment to the Stepney Firehouse Roof Contract.

**Motion by Formichella** to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-110: 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 First Amendment to the Stepney Firehouse Roof Contract and any associated documents by and between Young Developers, LLC, for the Stepney Firehouse Station #2 Project.

**Second: Duva**

**Discussion: Rooney** stated that the Town had previously issued Requests for Proposals for the replacement of the two roofs at the Town-owned firehouses operated by the Stevenson and Stepney Fire Departments. He stated the project was approved and through the RFP process, Young Developers, LLC was awarded the construction contract for the Stepney Firehouse Station #2 Roof Project under Resolution #23-112. **Rooney** noted that due to material and weather delay's, Young Developers requested to extend the contract through the newly proposed completion date of July 31, 2024. The attached First Amendment was drafted by our Town Attorney, who also provided a letter of opinion.

**Motion passed 7-0:**

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

Voting No: None

Absent: Maur, Wales

- B. Resolution #24-111:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the Open Gov Software Agreements. **Motion by Formichella** to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-111: 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 Software Agreements and any associated documents by and between OpenGov, Inc. for hosted software and professional services.

**Second: Lipeles**

**Discussion: Rooney** stated that OpenGov attended the last Council meeting to provide a cursory presentation. He noted that for review and consideration, the Software Agreements by and between the Town of Monroe, OpenGov and the CROG for the hosted software and professional services that were presented at the June 10, 2024 Town Council Meeting were attached. He noted that additionally, § 4.3 of the Town Purchasing Policy exempts the proposed purchase from the public bidding process due to the purchase being procured through a public consortium. He stated that the agreement had been reviewed by our Town Attorney, who provided an opinion letter. **Rooney** stated that there were staff present who wished to speak on behalf of the software. He noted that Kathleen Gallagher, P&Z Administrator, John Morris, Building Inspector, and Ray Baldwin, the former First Selectman of Trumbull who currently works for the City of Shelton all would like to speak on OpenGov.

**Baldwin** stated that two years ago, he started with the City of Shelton and was asked to conduct an evaluation of the operations in the Land Use Departments. He noted immediately that they were still using paper applications. **Baldwin** stated they were unsuccessful with previously utilizing a program called Municipity. He stated they reviewed what other communities were using and visited the Town of Stratford to review their software with OpenGov. **Baldwin** stated that the key to the operation of the program is to have good people in place in various departments to implement them so they could hit the ground running. He stated the program was very effective, took a year to go live, but that it was loved by the residents and staff. **Baldwin** stated that field staff use tablets and could upload photographs from the field in real time. He noted that application fees could be paid online, residents and developers loved it since they could complete applications at their leisure, and that all of the departments could track application statuses. **Baldwin** stated that about 55 cities and towns in the State utilize this software. **Kohut** inquired if there was a savings to the Town from application fees and employee time. **Baldwin** stated that there was a ton of savings in staff time and that Shelton charges a \$30- or \$40-dollar technology fee based on the application which assists with the costs of the software. **Kohut** inquired if the program paid for itself. **Baldwin** stated that it does not pay for itself completely, but that it paid for a big part of itself.

**Gallagher** thanked the Council for their continued support. She noted that when she started in Land Use six months ago, they had inherited a projected that was larger than anticipated in addition to putting in many hours to deal with the backlog of applications, complaints, and violations. **Gallagher** noted that the First Selectman was very gracious, kind and always lending an ear to work through the department issues. She noted that they recently hired a Wetlands Enforcement Officer and the overall department morale was up. **Gallagher** stated that they now have the staff to better address the needs of the public and community. She noted that the last piece the department was struggling with was in record keeping because everything was done by hand and permit number. **Gallagher** stated when a resident comes to Town Hall and they want to obtain permits for their address, staff must access an excel file, look up every old permit number, find the file in storage and pull everything together. She noted this process leaves a lot of opportunity for human error. **Gallagher** stated that the OpenGov software would provide consolidation to the record keeping process, make documents more accessible, and the application process more effective and transparent.

**Morris** stated that with OpenGov, everyone would have access. He stated that the Assessor could review inspection reports and had asked us to include videos to track progress. **Morris** stated that in 2018, the State of Connecticut mandated that municipalities started storing electronic repositories for paperwork. He noted they used a Microsoft pro system that was about sixteen years old, unreliable, and was not yielding the same query results. **Morris** stated that having one program to put all information in that would be accessible by all departments would be a timesaver.

**Persico** noted that on the last page under the service terms of OpenGovs invoice, it stated July 1, 2026, and inquired if that should read July 1, 2024. **Rooney** confirmed that it should have been 2024. **Rooney** stated that the rate was discounted since the Town was involved with MetroCOG and the CRCOG.

**Motion passed 7-0:**

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

Voting No: None

Absent: Maur, Wales

**C. Pepper Street Discussion (Executive Session anticipated)**

**Formichella** made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:49pm to discuss the Pepper Street Litigation. He invited the Town Attorney and the First Selectman.

**Second: Kohut**

**Discussion:** None

**Motion passed 7-0:**

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

Voting No: None

Absent: Maur, Wales

Executive Session ended at 8:48pm and no votes were taken.

**XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**None**

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Formichella** adjourned the meeting at 8:48 PM.

*Respectfully submitted by, Kerry McAndrew, Clerk*