



TOWN OF MONROE

TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Session # 2024-22

Regular Meeting – Monday, November 25, 2024 – 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 7:02PM and led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Formichella took the roll call as noted above.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approval of the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting held on November 12, 2024 (Session 2024-21).

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated November 21, 2024, regarding an appointment to the Commission on Aging.
- B. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated November 21, 2024 regarding the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the Geothermal Feasibility Study.
- C. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated November 5, 2024 regarding the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the Geothermal Feasibility Study.
- D. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated November 21, 2024 regarding the 2025 Radio Community Service Grant Agreement.
- E. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated November 12, 2024 regarding the 2025 Radio Community Service Grant Agreement.
- F. Memo from the First Selectman to the Town Council Chair dated November 21, 2024 regarding the WhoFi Library Room Management Software Agreement.
- G. Letter of Opinion from the Town Attorney to the First Selectman dated November 12, 2024 regarding the WhoFi Library Room Management Software Agreement.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

VI. APPOINTMENTS

A. Resolution #24-154: To consider and act upon the resolution regarding the appointment of **Susan Bannay (D)** to the Commission for the Aging for a term ending July 2, 2027.

Motion by Maur to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-154: RESOLVED**, that the Monroe Town Council hereby approves the First Selectman’s appointment **Susan Bannay (D)** to the Commission for the Aging for a term ending July 2, 2027.

Second: Kohut

Discussion: Maur stated that Susan Bannay brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to community service. Before retiring in 2019, she served as Dean of Students at Fairfield Ludlowe High School in Fairfield, CT. Over the past 35 years, Susan had been actively engaged in the Monroe community, contributing to initiatives like Save Our Stepney and participating in regional activities. She is also a dedicated volunteer with Meals on Wheels in Newtown and an advocate for senior services. A long-time resident of Monroe, Susan has four generations of family living in town. Her 94-year old mother, a former active participant at the senior center, has greatly benefited from its invaluable programs and support. Inspired by this personal connection, Susan is passionate about enhancing the quality of life for seniors in our community. She is eager to bring her experience, dedication, and vision to the Commission on Aging. This appointment fills the vacancy of Debbie Malewicki, whose term ended on July 2, 2024.

Motion passed 9-0:

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

Voting No: None

Absent: None

Ms. Bannay was in attendance and sworn in by First Selectman Rooney.

VII. 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 – **Formichella** stated that he did receive a request from the First Selectman requesting that a matter be referred to the subcommittee related to the water main extension request for Richmond Drive. He stated that the Department of Public Works and the First Selectman were notified of a petition from members of that street to hook up to city water. **Formichella** stated that he would refer this matter to this subcommittee to provide Town Council with a recommendation regarding the next steps for this request. **Duva** stated there was no update since the last meeting.
- C.** Town Council Committee on Legislative & Administrative Matters – **Reid** noted they met prior to the meeting and discussed three topics which have all reached consensus to come before Council. **Reid** noted the agreements were resolution 24-155 Professional Engineering Services for the Geothermal Feasibility Study, resolution 24-156 for the Radio Community Service Grant for 2025, and resolution 24-157 for the WhoFi Library Room Management Software Agreement.
- D.** Strategic Planning Committee - **Formichella** stated that he spoke with the Historical Society’s Chairwoman, Karen Cardi and they discussed organizing a meeting regarding the Beardsley property. He noted they agreed on the date of January 13, 2025 at 5:30 or 6:00pm at Town Hall to begin the initial discussions regarding the best use of the property, and the plan going forward to address concerns regarding the dilapidated state of the building on the property.
- 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:

Property Revaluation

- A new assessment notice has been mailed to property owners from Vision Government Solutions informing them of their new property assessments as result of the state-mandated 2024 Revaluation conducted through the Assessor's Office. The new assessments will first be utilized to calculate property tax bills issued in July of 2025.

Saint Jude

- The Town officially acquired the Saint Jude property. Town Hall representatives, Former First Selectman Ken Kellogg, and Father Joseph Gill joined together for this announcement. This project is an opportunity for more activities and growth of services in town sought by our citizens. First line of business is mitigating health and safety issues recognized during this purchase followed by researching options in modern energy such as geo-thermal heat and solar.

Emergency Services Update:

CERT Graduation

- I attended and spoke at the CERT graduation at the Senior Center. Our volunteers play a vital role in town and CERT aside from managing crowds at local events contribute in times of emergency.

Capital Projects

Animal shelter

- Construction began today on our new animal control facility. Our DPW department is being utilized for all site work which assisted in reducing overall costs on this project.

Community Update:

Center for Family Justice Legislative Breakfast

- As always CFJ reaches out to Monroe to attend functions. The breakfast outlined Federal funding that has been slowly reduced in past years, what funds will be removed in the upcoming year, how state funds have helped keep them operational, and the impact reduction in funds will have on their work force.

Tip a Cop

- The Monroe Police Department had their annual tip a cop fundraiser to support the Special Olympics at Jennie's Pizzeria. This is for a great cause and it was great to see everyone that came out to support.

Ribbon Cuttings

- Takumi Ramen
- Capital Spirits
- Shak's Boxing

Barnum Festival Ringmaster Dinner

- Greg Gndt was chosen as the 2025 Barnum Festival Ringmaster. Monroe hosts an event every year in celebration of the Ringmaster tradition. Congratulations Mr. Gndt.

Passing of Jodi Rell

- Former Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell passed away last week at 78 years of age. Mrs. Rell was the second female Governor in Connecticut history and served as Connecticut's 87th Governor for 7 years from 2004-2011. Condolences from Monroe to the family and friends of former Governor Rell.

Selectman Rooney asked for a moment of silence in honor of former Governor Jodi Rell.

Maur stated that there were a couple items brought to his attention by community members, one is the revaluation notice and there was confusion about what it meant for taxes. He stated it would be helpful to put out additional information to the public or have a public meeting with the Assessor. **Maur** stated the other item was the purchase of St. Jude. He stated it was brought to his attention that the church would be giving away a lot of the equipment and residents brought up concerns about why the Town was not acquiring the equipment and what that would mean for the cost to the Town.

Rooney stated there was a press release stating the process and the letters came out today. He stated there were plans

to put another letter out to confirm what would need to be done, how to handle the appeal, and so on. **Rooney** stated there would be a mill rate deduction, but that it would depend on the budget. He stated that regarding St. Jude, there was an agreement that whatever the church needed to take they would be allowed to take. **Rooney** stated Father Gill made the announcement to offer some things to the community and that was how that was negotiated.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Resolution #24-155:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the Professional Engineering Services Agreement for the Geothermal Feasibility Study.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-155: 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 Professional Engineering Services Agreement and any associated documents by and between Consulting Engineering Services, Inc., for the St. Jude Geothermal Feasibility Study.

Second: Wales

Discussion: Rooney stated that the Town had closed on the St. Jude property and would like to have a geothermal feasibility study of the property completed. He stated that geothermal energy can provide an alternative heating, cooling, and electricity source for the building and that the geothermal feasibility study report would identify if the current mechanical and electrical systems could support a geothermal system, any limitations of the building, and summarize the feasibility of a geothermal system application. **Rooney** stated that the Town had contacted Consulting Engineering Services, Inc. to provide these services and attached was their proposal for professional engineering services. He noted that the cost of the study was \$7,500 and would be paid from the Scope & Design Development Reserve account. **Rooney** stated the agreement had been reviewed by the 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

- B. Resolution #24-156:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the 2025 Radio Community Service Grant Agreement.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-156: RESOLVED**, that the 2025 Radio Community Service Grant Agreement and Certification of Eligibility dated October 1, 2024, by and between the Corporation for the Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the Town of Monroe and WMNR-FM are hereby approved and that Terrence P. Rooney, First Selectman and Kurt Anderson, General Manager of WMNR- FM are authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the Town of Monroe as Licensee and WMNR-FM as Grantee, respectively.

Second: Maur

Discussion: Rooney stated that WMNR was able to benefit from an annual grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). He noted that the grant for 2025 is for \$102,828, which goes directly for the operation of WMNR, was not a matching grant, and was relatively unrestricted. **Rooney** stated that only \$24,023 would be required to be spent on the purchase or production of nationally syndicated programs. He noted that the station spent at least that amount on national overnight and early morning classical music programs. **Rooney** stated that the matter had been reviewed by the 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

C. **Resolution #24-157:** To consider and act upon a resolution regarding the WhoFi Library Room Management Software Agreement.

Motion by Lipeles to adopt **RESOLUTION #24-157: 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 Room Management Software Agreement and any associated documents by and between 1030 LLC dba WhoFi, for the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library room management system.

Second: Maur

Discussion: Rooney stated that the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library would like to utilize WhoFi for the Library's room and meeting space management and reservation system. He noted that the current provider sunset services effective October 31, 2024. WhoFi had comparable costs and services and offered room management services free until December 31, 2024. **Rooney** stated that this matter had been reviewed by the Town Attorney, who 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

X. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

XI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Formichella adjourned the meeting at 7:21PM.

Respectfully submitted by, Kerry McAndrew, Clerk