

BOROUGH OF NETCONG

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG HELD JANUARY 7, 2021 AT THE NETCONG MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 23 MAPLE AVENUE, NETCONG, NEW JERSEY COMMENCING AT 7:30 PM.

Mayor Nametko called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT STATEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting as defined by the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided by:

1. Posting a notice of said meeting in the space provided for such announcements at the Borough Hall on January 3, 2020.
2. Publishing a notice in the Daily Record, the official newspaper of the Borough of Netcong on January 15, 2020 and sending a copy to the Star Ledger on January 3, 2020.

STATEMENT OF DETERMINATION

The Statement of Determination was read by the Borough Clerk.

SWEARING IN OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilman Elmer Still
Councilman Jack Sylvester
Joseph W. Albensi III

The three Councilman were sworn in by the Borough administrator.

ROLL CALL

Those in attendance were Councilman Albensi, Councilman Hathaway, Councilman Koster, Councilman Laureys, Councilman Still, Councilman Sylvester, Mayor Nametko, Mr. Blakeslee - Borough Administrator, Mrs. Eckert-Borough Clerk.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Good evening. On behalf of the Council and our Borough employees, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year.

Before I make my opening remarks, I would like to thank everyone who joined our Reorg meeting virtually.

As hard as we try, the events of 2020 will not easily be forgotten. We are all looking forward to a much better year in 2021 including successfully getting the COVID-19 virus under control.

We all know members of our community who suffered from COVID last year and unfortunately many who lost the fight against it. We also lost several longtime residents due to natural causes including a member of our Recreation Commission, John Bauer. Along with his task of scheduling the use of our municipal fields, John took on the job of refinishing the two buildings at DiRenzo Park. Please join me in a moment of silence to remember John and all of our residents we said goodbye to in 2020.

While it seems like our state came to a stop for months, I can assure you our Council members, Borough employees, our Department of Public Works, our Police and Fire Departments and our Ambulance Squad were there providing the high level of service our residents and businesses are accustomed to.

Our volunteer organizations including Recreation, Planning Board, Board of Health and the Netcong Community Partnership continued to serve our community. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, many of their meetings were virtual, which added a bit of a challenge.

Along with our municipal committee members, I would like to thank all of Netcong Emergency Food Bank volunteers. Without the help of our three key volunteers, it would have been very difficult to make the food bank such a success.

FIRE DEPT

- Fires and emergency calls do not take a vacation during a pandemic. The men and women of the Netcong Fire Department answered 106 calls, of which 16 of them were for the RIC team.
- The Council and I are happy to join Fire Chief Eddie Koster in saying we are all Very Proud of our Fire men and women. They approached every incident as true professionals even though we were in the heart of a Pandemic.**No call went unanswered.**

- While our leaders were telling us, STAY HOME, STAY SAFE that was not an option for our Police, Fire fighters, our Office of Emergency Management and our Department of Public Works.
- When they were called out for an emergency regardless of the time of day, pandemic or no pandemic: **staying home and staying safe was NOT an option.**

Thank-you ladies and gentlemen!

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Finally, after years of meetings and negotiations, all the hard work by the Economic Development Committee along with the support of the Council is paying off. Our initial redevelopment project, the **126 Unit** Crown Point complex, known as **34 Bank** is open for business and we are welcoming new residents every week.

The 4th and final building of 34 Bank is near completion and is on track to open and available for renting this Spring.

Our 2nd redevelopment project, where the pocketbook factory used to stand is scheduled to break ground this spring. That redevelopment project will bring **86 rental** units into Netcong.

It might not be obvious to the members of the public, but months of meetings with the developer, Crown Walk got to this point. I want to thank, our Economic Development Committee, the Borough Council, our redevelopment legal team, Municipal planner and our Borough engineer for working so hard on the Crown Walk project.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- After months of issues with our contractor, the tennis and basketball courts completed, ending Phase 1 of the Arbolino Park improvements.
- Phase 2 of the improvements is well underway. The OUTDOOR ADA compliant exercise equipment was delivered and the concrete pad to support the ADA exercise equipment has been installed. We expect Phase 2 to completed after the spring thaw.
- On a personal note, I am excited to say our privately funded ADA kayak ramp and dock have been installed and are in use. We will have an

- official grand opening in late spring and will invite everyone who contributed funds to the project to the ribbon cutting.
- In 2019, we were awarded a **\$86,421 grant toward the 1st phase of our portion of the Morris County Trail**. We will go out to bid this spring to replace the pedestrian bridge between Arbolino Park and the Park and Ride lot. Phase 1 of our trail work will also create a dedicated path across Arbolino park to Koclas Drive.
 - The Borough was awarded **\$126,000 NJDOT** grant to make improvements to Helen Way and a **\$154,000 NJDOT** grant to resurface Brookside, Locust, Dogwood Roads.
 - Bids went out in last fall for the combined projects and the contractor who won the bid will begin work this spring.
 - Last January we were successful in our bid for a CDBG for \$80K towards replacing the water main on Elm Street. Unfortunately, the funds were not available in time to include the resurfacing and the water main on Elm St. with the work on the other 5 roads in the area. We go out to bid for the Elm Street work this year.
 - The County ordered the Borough to do a revaluation of all property in Netcong. Not doing so might have not gone well for myself and our Finance chair. The revaluation was completed and the 2020-2021 Taxes will reflect the results of the revaluation.
 - After many years serving as the Borough and Planning Board Engineer, Bob Guerin retired last year. After several nights of interviews, our hiring committee's recommendation to the Council was to engage John Ruschke of Mott MacDonald. John hit the ground running and is great help with our day to day needs as well as our redevelopment projects.
 - Thanks to all of the work by our Borough Administrator, Ralph Blakeslee we closed out our 3 million Water System improvement project.
 - Our office staff implemented a new online water/sewer/tax payment system. The online software provided a significant improvement over the old system which made it easier for our residents to pay their utilities online during the pandemic.
 - Throughout a portion of 2020 we had an issue with one of the wells. Our Water Operator, Tim Hess oversaw the rehabilitation of that well increasing the number of gallons of water pump-able per hour.
 - If you came to Borough Hall in the last couple of months, I am sure you noticed our resurfaced and relined parking lot. It took a couple years of work, but Ralph was able to secure a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to cover all the expenses of the project. BTW, our new ADA compliant automatic doors will be installed TOMORROW as part of that project!

2021 PROJECTS

- This year we are required to do a Master Plan Update. We will finalize the review committee very soon and they will work with our Borough Planner starting in the FIRST QUARTER. This committee will recommend the future direction Netcong's growth and land use for the Planning Board to vote on. (40:55D-28)
- Our **Town Center Designation** with the State is expiring at the end of this June. This designation is critical to the Borough because it increases our chances to receive Department of Transportation and other grants from the State. This is a major endeavor that must be started early in the first quarter 2021.
- Along with the prior two REQUIRED projects I mentioned for this year, we are also required to complete our **Water System Asset Management Plan**. Another challenging project.
- And finally, we will continue the Rehabilitation of our municipal wells going forward, concentrating on well #5.

As you can see, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the Council and all of our employees and volunteers did not skip a beat. We look forward to embracing all of our 2021 projects for another successful year and we look forward to trashing our masks.

Have a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year!

The Mayor read the following letter from The Netcong Borough Police Chief:

To the Members of the Netcong Borough Police Department
Netcong Department of Public Works
Netcong Fire Department
Netcong Borough Council
Netcong Stanhope American Legion Ambulance Corp.

This year 2020 has been like no other year in history. I am blessed to have worked with such dedicated and exceptional individuals in the Borough of Netcong. As 2020 comes to a close we look back at a year which was dominated by the Corona Virus Pandemic.

As the months wore on shutdowns, stay at home orders, wearing masks and low PPE would become an everyday way of life. I am proud of your unwavering support each and every day that you showed up to work under the possibility of being infected with the virus without giving it a second thought. It was proven to me that I work alongside the most dedicated and professional men and women of

the Netcong Borough Police Department. I am very proud of each and every one of you.

Thank you to the Administrative Office Staff, OEM and the Netcong Governing Body for their leadership and guidance. You did everything you could to help us through this time of crisis. As we are now learning, the worst may be yet to come, so we appreciate their leadership in the days and months ahead.

A special thank you to the Netcong Emergency Food Bank. The dedication of these volunteers that are working the Food Bank each day of the pandemic is nothing short of exceptional. They know what it means having food on the table. Mayor Joe Nametko and all the volunteers that worked tirelessly by shopping and providing a smile during these difficult times. Thank you for all you do for our community. To all who donated to our Emergency Food Bank especially Skylands Rotary and the Netcong Community Partnership for your financial assistance thank you.

Thank you to the Fire Chief Ed Koster and the Netcong Fire Department, Mike Canfield and the Department of Public Works and Captain Kunken of the Netcong Stanhope American Legion Ambulance Corp during this time who continue to work so bravely without giving a second thought to their own well-being. Thanks to their sacrifices we continue to have a well-functioning society with all of our needs being met.

Lastly, thank you to the neighbors, friends and family we all know and love. I believe that the worst of times has the potential to bring out the best in us. What we have seen is neighbors helping neighbors and those who have extra are reaching out to those who do not have enough. It is heartwarming to see the best of people coming out. Clearly, we've never seen a pandemic of this magnitude anywhere on earth, much less here in Netcong Borough. However, we have a long way to go.

I could go on and on. Without all of you we could not have made it through to the end of 2020, thank you.

James Blesson, Chief of Police

SELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT - Council Appointment

A motion was made by Councilman Sylvester nominated Councilman Still for Council President.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:

(Mayor's Recommendation with Advice & Consent of the Council)

Finance & Insurance: E. Still J. Sylvester

Economic Development: R. Hathaway E. Still

Public Safety: J. Sylvester E. Koster
(Police, Fire, Rescue)

Dept. of Public Works & Utilities: E. Koster R. Hathaway

Recreation: J. Albensi T. Laureys

Public Services: T. Laureys J. Albensi
(Human Services Recycling & Solid Waste Disposal)

A Motion to approve the above listed committee assignments was made by Councilman Koster and seconded by Councilman Albensi.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

MAYOR APPOINTMENTS (Requires Advice and Consent of the Council)

Zoning Officer/Code Enforcement Officer: Ralph Blakeslee (1 Year)

Deputy Code Enforcement Officer: James Arbolino (1Year term)

Deputy Borough Clerk: Ralph Blakeslee

Deputy Tax Collector: Diana Katzenstein

Sewer Collector: Ralph Blakeslee

Deputy Sewer Collector: Cynthia Eckert

Water Collector: Ralph Blakeslee

Deputy Water Collector: Cynthia Eckert

Assessment Searcher: Cynthia Eckert

Recycling Coordinator: Thomas Mendel

Clean Communities Coordinator: Michael Canfield

Assistant Public Works Superintendent: Timothy Hess

Special Police Officer (Class II) Harry Garlick

Police Matron: Shannon Fluke

School Crossing Guards: (N.J.S.A.40A40:9-154.1-1 yr. terms)

Benjamin Dalessandro
William Hart
Sandra Mendel
Ralph Simmerano
Melissa Sylvester
Steven Vervae

Alternates:

Wayne Benvenuto
Donna Crown
Robert DiBernard
Frank Schomp

Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board: Robert Hathaway Jr. (4 Year Term Exp. 12/31/2024)

Board of Health: Patricia Duckles - (3 Year Term Exp. 12/31/23)

A Motion to Approve the Above Listed Appointments was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Albensi.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Planning Board: Class 1 - Mayor Joseph Nametko (1 Year term-No Action Required)
(Mayor Appointments – No Vote Required)

Class 2 – Wayne Anthony (1 Year term)

Alternate #1- Michael Grogan (2 Year Term Exp. 12/31/22)

Alternate #2- Open Seat (2 Year Term Exp. 12/31/22)

(Council Appointment)

Class 3 – Joseph W. Albensi (1 Year term) Council Representative

A Motion to approve the Class 3 Appointment was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Recreation Commission: (Mayor Appt.-No vote required)

Todd Morton - 5 Year Term – Expires 12/31/2025

Kimberly Albensi - Alternate #1 – (to replace John Bauer)

Expires 12/31/2022.

Joseph W. Albensi - Council Liaison (1 Year term) (Council Appointment)

A Motion to approve Council Appointment was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Koster.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Municipal Alliance Committee:

Ralph Blakeslee (2 Year term) Expires 12/31/22

Joseph W. Albensi – Council Liaison (1 Year term)

A Motion to approve Council Appointment was made by Councilman Koster and seconded by Councilman Sylvester.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee Appointments for 2021:

Joseph W. Albensi - (Appointment by Mayor)

Ralph Blakeslee, Alternate - (Appointment by Mayor)

Joseph A. Nametko, Mayor - (Appointment by Governing Body)

A Motion to approve the above listed appointment was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Koster.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Animal Control
Officer: Thomas Mendel (1 Year term)

Alternate Animal
Control Officer: Joseph Fiorello (1 Year term)

A Motion to approve the above listed appointments was made by Councilman Koster and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.
Roll Call: 6 Yes

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT OF NETCONG BOROUGH, INC.

Appointment of Trustees:

Joseph A. Nametko, Mayor, Ex Officio

Robert Hathaway, Council Representative (Appointed by Council - 1year term)

A Motion to adopt the above referenced appointments was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Koster.
Roll Call: 5 Yes No: Councilman Laureys

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution #2021-1 To Honor Volunteers
2. Resolution #2021-2 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for the Borough Attorney, Anthony M. Bucco, Esq. for 2021.
3. Resolution #2021-3 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for Special Tax Counsel, Fred Semrau, Esq. for 2021.
4. Resolution #2021-4 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for Borough Auditor, Valerie Dolan of Nisivoccia LLP for 2021.
5. Resolution #2021-5 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for the Borough Engineer, John Ruschke of Mott McDonald for 2021.
6. Resolution #2021-6 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for the Bond Council to Steven Rogut of Rogut McCarthy, LLC

7. Resolution #2021-7 Depositories for 2021 as Follows:
Fulton Bank Inc.
Valley Bank
TD Bank
New Jersey Cash Management Fund
8. Resolution #2021-8 Official Newspapers as Follows:
Daily Record and The Star Ledger
9. Resolution #2021-9 Resolution Designating Newspapers to
Receive Notices and Fixing Charges.
10. Resolution #2021-10 Fixing Rates of Interest (8%) and Penalty on
Delinquent Taxes, (18%) Assessments and Other Municipal
Charges.
11. Resolution #2021-11 Authorizing Investments by the Borough in
Certain Bonds and Other Obligations.
12. Resolution #2021-12 Regular Public Meeting Dates and Work
Session Dates of the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong.
13. Resolution #2021-13 Authorizing Temporary Budgets for The Borough of
Netcong as Provided by N.J.S.A.40A:4-19.
14. Resolution #2021-14 To Appoint Ralph Blakeslee and Elmer Still,
As Commissioner and Alternate for the Morris County Joint
Municipal Insurance Fund.
15. Resolution #2021-15 To Appoint Ralph Blakeslee as Public
Agency Compliance Officer.
16. Resolution #2021-16 - To Appoint the Vozza Agency as the
Borough of Netcong's Risk Management Consultant.
17. Resolution #2021-17 - To Appoint Ralph Blakeslee as Housing Liason
Officer.
18. Resolution #2021-18 – Authorizing the Payment of Annual Stipends to
Certain Borough Employees
19. Resolution #2021-19 – To Appoint Christie Stachnick as Qualified
Purchasing Agent

20. Resolution 2021-20- Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement with Associated Appraisal Group to Conduct An Appraisal of a Portion of Wiltop Rd.

21. Resolution # 2021-21 – Authorizing the Execution of an Agreement with Chelbus Cleaning Co., Inc. for Janitorial Services

22. Resolution 2021-22- To Appoint Daniel J. Lamanna as Probationary Patrolman of the Netcong Borough Police Department

23. Resolution 2021-23 -To Appoint Daniel P. Rafferty as Class II Special for the Netcong Police Department

A Motion to Adopt Resolutions 2021-1 to 2021-23 (excluding 2021-20) was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Albensi.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

A Motion to adopt Resolution 2021-20 was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Albensi.

Roll Call: 5 Yes No: Councilman Laureys

OLD BUSINESS

No old business was presented.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was presented.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A Motion to close the meeting to the public was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Koster.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Councilman Still thanked the Chief of Police for assisting him with his father in law who fell in the house.

Councilman Hathaway felt we would be remiss to not mention what happened at our capital yesterday. There may be differences among the Council here but we always come to agreement without violence such as what was displayed in DC. He hopes this Council can continue to set a good example to the community.

Mr. Bucco presented his annual "Motions" award complete with candy bar distribution.

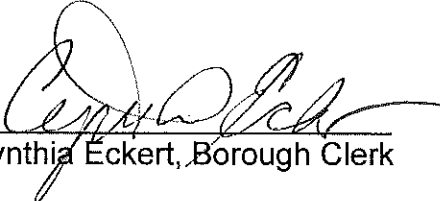
- Councilman Laureys had 1 (Must improve)
- Councilman Albensi most improved 25 last year, 50 this year.
- Councilman Still 162
- 2nd place -Councilman Sylvester – 164
- 1st place -Councilman Hathaway – 226 motions

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Hathaway to adjourn the meeting at 7:39PM.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Respectfully Submitted,



Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk