

## **BOROUGH OF NETCONG**

**MINUTES OF THE REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG HELD JANUARY 5, 2023 AT THE NETCONG MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 23 MAPLE AVENUE, NETCONG, NEW JERSEY COMMENCING AT 7:00 PM.**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nametko at 7:00 PM.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **STATEMENT OF OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT**

The Borough Clerk read the following 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 14, 2022.
2. Publishing a notice in the Daily Record, the official newspaper  
of the Borough of Netcong on January 19, 2022 and emailing a  
copy to the Star Ledger on January 14, 2022.

### **STATEMENT OF DETERMINATION**

Read by the Borough Clerk

### **SWEARING IN OF COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- Councilman Robert E. Hathaway Jr.
- Councilman Thomas A. Laureys

### **ROLL CALL**

Those in attendance this evening were Councilman Albensi, Councilman Hathaway, Councilman Laureys (arrived 7:06), Councilman Morton, Councilman Sylvester, Councilman Still and Mayor Nametko. Also present was Mr. Blakeslee, Borough Administrator and Mrs. Eckert, Borough Clerk

### **MAYOR COMMENTS**

The mayor thanked the audience for being here. He noted Heather Darling, Surrogate and several employees who are in attendance tonight. He thanked all the employees and members of our committees and provided many highlights from the year 2022.

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

Before I make my opening remarks, I would recognize several individuals who joined us this evening.

We are all tired of hearing about COVID-19 for the last 3 years. Whatever your opinion is of what our government and media is telling us, we have to recognize that variants continue to come and go.

Again, last year, every employee department and volunteer group were affected by COVID in one way or another. Through it all, we didn't miss a beat.

That being said, many thanks to our Council, Borough employees, Department of Public Works, our Police and Fire Departments and our Ambulance Squad for providing the high level of service our residents and businesses are accustomed to.

Netcong is fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who round out the services we provide. Thank you and congratulations to those volunteering on our Recreation Committee, Planning Board, Board of Health, the Municipal Alliance and the Netcong Community Partnership for all of the work they do for the borough.

## **POLICE**

- Last year we swore in Police Chief Russ VanHouten and Lieutenant Anthony Coppolella.

- Over the course of the year, this dynamic duo made major changes and upgrades to our police department.

- Under Chief VanHouten's guidance we swore in a new Sargent and created a new detective position.

- Throughout 2022 our police were called upon for their service 8,785 times. That is 1,564 more calls than the prior year.

- That included 2,180 motor vehicle stops, over 200 motor vehicle accidents and criminal investigations.

- Our police also assisted with 365 medical calls.

- We look forward to another successful year working with the police department in 2023.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

- Immediately after being sworn in as our Fire Chief, Duane Hartle hit the ground running.

- Under his guidance our fire department men and women responded to 125 calls for service in 2022.

- In total, our fire department members volunteered over 2,529 hours.

- While most of us were comfortable in our homes, our fire department was out there day and night supporting our residents. Thanks to all our firemen.

- Some good news, we were just notified we are receiving a \$41,000 grant for Fire Department SCBA from a American Rescue Plan Firefighters grant

## **FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU**

- We also had a change in the leadership of our Fire Prevention Bureau.

- Under the leadership of our new Fire Official, Mark Sylvester, our fire prevention bureau had a very successful year.
- 375 fire inspections were performed, citing 892 fire code violations.
- Inspectors issued 43 Fire Safety Permits, handled 14 complaints, had 22 Fire Dept assists and investigated the cause of 2 fires.
- Since their reorganization, our fire prevention bureau performed 4 fire safety class training for almost 400 men and women.
- Thank-you Mark and team.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- The 86-unit Crown Walk project is nearly complete and we expect it to be fully occupied this year.
- Since the completion of 34 Bank Street, we continue to see an interest in redevelopment in Netcong.
- In 2022, the Economic Development Committee entertained several proposals for redevelopment in Netcong.
- At least 2 of those proposals never made it past a couple of meetings.
- As we all remember, the Koch property was lost to a fire in December 2019. The EDC has been working with a developer to come up with a design that is fitting for our downtown. I expect the Council will hear more about that project in the first quarter of this year.
- The ECD continues to work with the company interested in developing the St. Michaels property.
- We recently saw a downsized version of the housing units, a traffic flow that eliminates any new traffic on Church Street and provides a much-improved parking plan for St. Michael's Church parishioners.
- The changes to the proposal were made to address issues brought up by the local residents and our Council.
- The Council will hear much more about the 'St Mikes' project in the next month or two.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Our Department of Public Works Supervisor Michael Canfield and his team had another busy year.
- The DPW is involved in every project in the borough as well as the maintenance of our buildings, water infrastructure, streets, parks, vehicle maintenance and snow and ice control.
- Last year, we saw the completion of our outdoor ADA/Senior compliant exercise equipment section, and the completion of our Pickle Ball Court
- Thanks to a CDBG for \$125,000, our final upgrade to Arbolino Park will bring the bathroom facilities into compliance with the American Disabilities Act, and will be COMPLETED THIS YEAR.
- With the completion of the Arbolino Park upgrades, we can turn our eyes and work efforts to making improvements to DiRenzo Park.
- Phase 1 of the DiRenzo Park upgrade will concentrate on the replacement of the 20-year-old playground infrastructure.
- We are applying for a CDBG and DCA Local Recreation grant to cover the estimated \$300,000 cost to replace the playground equipment.

- Helen Way, Brookside Rd, Locust St. and Dogwood Rd. were resurfaced last year thanks to over \$275,00 in NJDOT grants.
- Elm Street water main improvement was completed in 2022 at the cost of \$132,000. \$80,000 of that project was offset by a CDBG.
- Also, we replaced the water main and roadway improvement to Allen Terrace. The \$262,500 project was funded with a \$141,200 NJDOT Local Aid Grant, and \$125,000 from the American Rescue Plan
- Besides their daily routine, our DPW participated in each of the projects above.
- I am proud to announce the Borough was approved for a NJDOT Transit Village grant for \$800,000 to make improvements to Main Street
- And we will also be receiving \$600,000 from a Federal State and Tribal Assistance Grant for Netcong Water Service Line Replacement Project
- Last year, in the heat of the summer, our new assistant to the administrator spent days measuring and mapping every street in Netcong. Thanks to the efforts of Ricky Proctor, we will put a plan in place to maintain our roads for years to come.
- Ricky also played the key role in performing our lead water line survey. Thanks Ricky. Nice job.

## **WRAP UP**

In March 2007, after being a Councilman for 7 years, I took over as Mayor to fill the unexpired term of Nick Pompilio and was elected Mayor in November 2007. When I look back over the last 16 years, I am proud of all the accomplishments the Council, our staff, professionals and I completed in my time as Mayor.

- Netcong has over 10 miles of roads and highways. We maintain over 8 miles of those roads. Since I took over the mayor's office, we have replaced many water lines and resurfaced almost every borough street. I can only name a few streets that we have not resurfaced yet.

- This year we will replace the water main and resurface Hillside Ave and repair the drainage and resurface Koclas Drive.

- We made over \$3,000,000 in investments to our water infrastructure including refurbishing our 1.5 million gallons of water storage tanks and rehabilitating our wells.

- We invested over \$2,000,000 in fire fighting vehicles, equipment and the maintenance of each fire house.

- We purchased well over \$1,000,000 in police and DPW vehicles.

- We increased the head count in our police department, our DPW and our office staff. All while remaining within the State imposed 2 percent spending cap.

- None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the help and support of our Council. Thank-you very much.

- At this point, I believe it is a good time for me to step down as your mayor at the end of this year. As some of you know, this is the last Reorganization meeting that I am addressing the Council and the public as your mayor.

We have a lot more to accomplish this year and I promise to give it my all. Depending on the will of our registered voters, I MIGHT be back sitting in a different chair on this dais next year. Thank-you and I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

**Message from the Desk of Assemblywoman, Aura K. Dunn**

*I regret that I am unable to attend and witness your Reorganization Meeting in person. By way of this letter, I extend my sincere congratulations to the newly elected officials who take their oath of office this evening.*

*As your Assemblywoman, I have the privilege and honor to represent 21 towns within the state. A night like tonight, with several swearing-in ceremonies conducted simultaneously, has its challenges. I must admit that I possess a tinge of jealousy, albeit fleeting, as many of my colleagues in the legislature represent districts composed of fewer municipalities. In some cases, a single town, often within walking distance. Not for a second, however, would I trade places.*

*From Bernardsville to Wharton, from the fourth smallest town in the state, Victory Gardens, to what's being referred to as an emerging city, Morristown, we are blessed to call this Northwestern region of the Garden State home. The richness of our industrial, cultural, and environmental diversity belies public perception in the statehouse that we are just one big open green space with few struggles.*

*As you raise your right hand and promise to uphold the constitution, the public is reassured in knowing you will serve, with honor and integrity, as the overseers of these trials, leading us to a better tomorrow.*

*As a partner in public service, I look forward to working alongside each and every one of you to fulfill our common goals. I hope you will not hesitate to call upon me at any moment to work together for our constituents.*

*In closing, I would like to thank the town officials who enable us to be active participants in our system of democracy by facilitating this meeting. Praise and gratitude are also due for all of the elected officials' family members. You, too, have been called to serve and enter public life, making many sacrifices along the way. Once again, congratulations on this auspicious occasion. I wish you a productive and successful year ahead.*

**SELECTION OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT - Council Appointment**

A Motion to appoint Elmer Still Council President was made by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
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            T. Laureys

(Police, Fire, Rescue)

Dept. of Public Works & Utilities:	J. Albensi	R. Hathaway
Recreation:	T. Morton	J. Albensi
Public Services: (Human Services Recycling & Solid Waste Disposal)	T. Laureys	T. Morton

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

Roll Call: 6 Yes

**MAYOR APPOINTMENTS** (Requires Advice and Consent of the Council)

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

Assistant Administrator/Deputy Zoning Officer: Richard Proctor (1 Year)

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

Deputy Borough Clerk: Ralph Blakeslee

Deputy Tax Collector: None

Sewer Collector: Ralph Blakeslee

Deputy Sewer Collector: Cynthia Eckert

Water Collector: Ralph Blakeslee

Deputy Water Collector: Cynthia Eckert

Water/Sewer Clerk: Linda Medina

Assessment Searcher: Cynthia Eckert

Recycling Coordinator: Joseph Fiorello

Clean Communities Coordinator: Michael Canfield

Assistant Public Works Superintendent: Timothy Hess

Fire Official: Mark Sylvester – Cert. #177302 (1 Year term)

Fire Prevention Inspector/Fire Investigator: Michael Pellek – Cert. #101410 (1 Year term)

Fire Prevention Inspector: Kyle Boylan -Cert. #184010 (1 Year term)

Special Police: None

Police Matron: Shannon Bock

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

Donna Crawn  
Benjamin Dalessandro  
Sandra Mendel  
Tom Patamia  
Ralph Simmerano  
Melissa Sylvester  
Steven Vervaet  
Alternates:

Ken Post  
Frank Schomp  
Will Stark

A Motion to Approve the Above Listed Appointments Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
Roll Call: 6 Yes

Lake Musconetcong  
Regional Planning Board: Joseph Keenan (4 Year Term Exp. 12/31/2026)

Board of Health: Olivia Nametko -(3 Year Term Exp. 12/31/2025)

A Motion to Approve the Above Listed Appointments was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.  
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)

Class 4- David Benson (4 Year Term Exp. 12/31/26)

Class 4- Frank Cautero (4 Year Term Exp. 12/31/26)

(Council Appointment)

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

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

Roll Call: 6 Yes

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

Kristin Polster –Alternate 1- 4 Year Term – Expires 12/31/2026

Mary Weaver - Alternate 2 – 4 Year Term – Expires 12/31/2026

Todd Morton - Council Liaison (1 Year term) (Council Appointment)

A Motion to approve Council Appointment was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Morton.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Municipal Alliance Committee:

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

Ralph Blakeslee-(2 Year Term Exp. 12/31/2024)

Cie DiRenzo (4 Year Term Exp. 12/31/2026)

Officer Tom Borgia (3 Year Term Exp. 12/31/25)

A Motion to approve Council Appointment was made by Councilman Morton and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee Appointments for 2023:

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 Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Animal Control Officer: Gianna DiMatteo (1 Year term)

Alternate Animal

Control Officer:

Joseph Fiorello (1 Year term)

A Motion to approve the above listed appointments was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Albensi.

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 - 1 year term)

A Motion to adopt the above referenced appointments was made by Councilman Albensi and seconded by Councilman Morton.

Roll Call: 5 Yes      No: Councilman Laureys

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution #2023-1 To Honor Volunteers
2. Resolution #2023-2 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for the Borough Attorney, Anthony M. Bucco, Esq. for 2023.
3. Resolution #2023-3 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for Special Tax Counsel, Fred Semrau, Esq. for 2023.
4. Resolution #2023-4 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for Borough Auditor, Valerie Dolan of Nisivoccia LLP for 2023.
5. Resolution #2023-5 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for the Borough Engineer, John Ruschke of Mott McDonald for 2023.
6. Resolution #2023-6 Authorizing the Award of a Contract for Professional Services for the Bond Council to Steven Rogut of

Rogut McCarthy, LLC

7. Resolution #2023-7 Depositories for 2023 as Follows:
  - Valley Bank
  - TD Bank
  - New Jersey Cash Management Fund
8. Resolution #2023-8 Official Newspapers as Follows:
  - Daily Record and The Star Ledger
9. Resolution #2023-9 Resolution Designating Newspapers to Receive Notices and Fixing Charges.
10. Resolution #2023-10 Fixing Rates of Interest (8%) and Penalty on Delinquent Taxes, (18%) Assessments and Other Municipal Charges.
11. Resolution #2023-11 Authorizing Investments by the Borough in Certain Bonds and Other Obligations.
12. Resolution #2023-12 Regular Public Meeting Dates and Work Session Dates of the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong.
13. Resolution #2023-13 Authorizing Temporary Budgets for The Borough of Netcong as Provided by N.J.S.A.40A:4-19.
14. Resolution #2023-14 To Appoint Ralph Blakeslee and Elmer Still, As Commissioner and Alternate for the Morris County Joint Municipal Insurance Fund.
15. Resolution #2023-15 To Appoint Ralph Blakeslee as Public Agency Compliance Officer.
16. Resolution #2023-16 - To Appoint the Vozza Agency as the Borough of Netcong's Risk Management Consultant.
17. Resolution #2023-17 - To Appoint Ralph Blakeslee as Housing Liaison Officer.
18. Resolution #2023-18 – Governing Body Certification of Compliance with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions "Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964"
19. Resolution #2023-19 – To Appoint Robyn Esposito as Interim Qualified Purchasing Agent
20. Resolution 2023-20- Consenting to the Appointment of Jack Sylvester as the Borough's Representative to the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority.

21. Resolution 2023-21 – For the “Waiving” of the Claimant Certification as Allowable in Certain Circumstances Based Upon N.J.A.C. 5:30-9A.6 (c) and N.J.A.C. 5-31-4.1

A Motion to Adopt Resolutions 2023-1 to 2023-21 and decision to Amend Motion to table resolution 2023-5 was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

The mayor asked the Council president for comments.

Councilman Hathaway would like a decision on the chairs

A Motion by Councilman Sylvester and Second by Councilman Hathaway to approve the purchase of new chairs for the dais. (Chair #2) (Similar to current)

Roll Call: 6 Yes

The mayor again thanked everyone for their service.

Mr. Bucco stated he has been the borough attorney for 30 years and it has been a pleasure to serve the Mayor and Council. The Mayor and Council have always been focused on the best for Netcong. He also thanked the mayor for his service. He then continued to give the tally of the motions made by the Council for the year. Councilman Morton received ‘rookie of the year’ with 39 motions for 2022. The most points go to Councilman Hathaway at 132 (receives candy bar). Councilman Still with 109 points (receives candy bar). Mr. Bucco stated he was looking forward to another great year.

The mayor stated he will step down as Mayor but he may run for Council.

The mayor thanked Commission Shaw and Selen for attending.

A Motion to Close the Public portion of the meeting by Councilman Sylvester and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.


Roll Call: 6 Yes

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A Motion to Adjourn the Meeting was made by Councilman Still and seconded by Councilman Hathaway at 7:36PM.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk