

**BOROUGH OF NETCONG
MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
October 10, 2024**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG HELD OCTOBER 10, 2024 AT THE NETCONG MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 23 MAPLE AVENUE, NETCONG, NEW JERSEY COMMENCING AT 7:30 PM.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Still at 7:30 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 5, 2024.
2. Publishing a notice in the Daily Record, the official newspaper
of the Borough of Netcong on January 10, 2024 and emailing a
copy to the Star Ledger on January 5, 2024.

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Closed Session 2020-2024: This was tabled to the next meeting.

PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING

A Motion to Close the Meeting to the Public was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Nametko.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

ORDINANCE ADOPTIONS

None presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter – Growing Stage Theatre

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Blakeslee had one addition: Netcong will be going out to bid Hillside Ave. project at the same time as the Main St. project

September 2024 Report

290 rental inspections done during the month

1 COH resale inspections done

3 hoarding situations found and being remedied

Year-to-Date Report

861 rental units issued (243 non-apartment complex units issued)

173 rental units in-progress* (27 non-apartment complex units in-progress) (Most of this is Netcong Heights and the inspections are scheduled for September 17th - October 3rd)

6 rental units never responded to 3rd requests. (all non-apartment buildings) (4 may be owner occupied and have not yet clarified with us, letters sent again to confirm)

*in-progress means that they have either been inspected and correcting issues, missing information, currently scheduled, or are currently under construction/renovation and spoken to us on their status.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance & Insurance: J. Nametko J. Sylvester

For the month of September 2024, the Borough had a total income of \$609,488.69 as compared to \$632,287.07 in 2023.

For the month of September 2024:

Miscellaneous Revenue Not Anticipated (MRNA);

In 2024 the Borough received \$2,066.25 compared to \$2,075.50 in 2023.

Other Licenses/Borough Clerk's Fees:

The Borough received \$45,989.44 in 2024 compared to \$31,519.65 in 2023.

State Aid:

There was \$119,007.83 received in 2024 and \$130,967.65 in 2023.

Grants in Aid:

There was \$1,308.40 received in 2024 for Grants in Aid and \$3,141.62 in 2023.

Taxes Collected:

The Borough collected \$91,772.77 in 2024 compared to \$112,028.15 in 2023.

Water and Sewer Utility:

The Borough collected \$330,601.24 in 2024 compared to \$352,134.50 in 2023.

Solid Waste Utility:

There was \$18,742.76 collected this past month.

Total Current Fund Year to Date:

The total Current Fund Income Year to date for 2024 is \$9,579,401.30 as opposed to \$9,038,374.39 in 2023.

Total Water and Sewer Utility to Date:

The total Water and Sewer Utility Income Year to date for 2024 is \$1,239,387.91 as opposed to \$1,251,302.63 collected in 2023.

Total Solid Waste Utility to Date:

The Solid Waste Utility collected Year to date is \$211,494.13.

Total of all Funds to Date:

Total collected from all funds Year to date is \$11,030,283.34 in 2024 compared to \$10,293,467.02 in 2023.

Councilman Nametko had something else to address about a Facebook Book posting by Mr. Eddy. He was concerned that Mr. Eddy mentioned there was extra money which he named as a slush fund. This is not an accurate statement. Mr. Nametko mentioned the money was used to pay down debt and the more debt that is paid down is a benefit to our tax payers. He went on to read several entries made by Mr. Eddy and how they were inaccurate. Mr. Nametko went on to state he is responding to this entry and the inaccuracies of it.

Economic Development: R. Hathaway J. Nametko

Councilman Hathaway reported last week on the Rock-Solid project property line dispute. The developer had a surveyor out this week to do a survey of the property. Councilman Hathaway wanted to know if the developer had contacted Mr. Blakeslee. Mr. Blakeslee stated not yet. There is no further resolution at this time. He assumes the planning board will have to hold the resolution which will delay this project.

There is progress on obtaining the property on bank street to add a parking area in town.

Bud to Bloom has been delayed by the state, they should be opening sometime in November.

Dellamo Project Rt. 46 building: 2 houses to be demolished. Demolition should begin soon. Demo permits have been issued. There is a pre-construction meeting to be held next week on this project.

Public Safety: J. Sylvester T. Laureys
(Police, Fire, Rescue)

Fire Department

Total Calls: 7
General Alarms: 4
Motor Vehicle Fire: 1
Mutual Aid: 2
Total Members: 20
Time Volunteered: 27 Hours and 14 Minutes
Drills: 9
Total Members: 31
Time Volunteered: 224 Hours and 30 Minutes
Administrative Details: 3
Total Members: 38
Time Volunteered: 58 Hours
Monthly Total:
39 Members
309 Hours and 44 Minutes

Police Report

Total Calls for Service: 714
Motor Vehicle Check Or Stop: 123
Check Property: 137
Administrative: 85
Radar Detail: 77

Ambulance

Total Calls: 56
Total: 28 Patients
Total Hospital Trips: 20
Miles Traveled: 552 Miles
Hours Volunteered: 183 Hrs 09 Mins

Dept. of Public
Works & Utilities:

J. Albensi

R. Hathaway

Councilman Albensi read the DPW and water operator report. Councilman Nametko made a comment that the storm drains are rotting from the salt usage instead of grit.

Road Department: Helped lake commission move out old equipment and bring in new, Repaired storm water basins, had new storm drainage pipe installed on upper Center Street

Water Department: Cleared access to valves on each side of rt 80,

Sewer Department: working with H2M on I and I study

Buildings & Grounds: contractor installed remaining doors at Arbolino Park.

Parks and Recreation: Aided rec committee with Netcong day. Donated remaining books to goodwill

Recycling: Moved old recycling shed, placed new one had power run and working on getting it insulated and drywalled

Other: Joe Fiorello started water classes to obtain water licenses. DPW attended safety training classes

Well report: 5,024,700 less pumped than last year.

Recreation:

T. Morton

J. Albensi

Councilman Morton reported:

- There will be a make-up concert on Oct. 14th from 5-7 pm. A donut truck will be there.
- Oct. 20th is Trunk or Treat
- Halloween judging will be on Oct. 29th
- Nov. 7th Devils Hockey night discounted tickets
- Dec. 1 Holiday Parade
- Beginning stages of toy drive for the holidays in conjunction with food bank run by Councilman Nametko

Public Services:
(Human Services
Recycling & Solid
Waste Disposal

T. Laureys

T. Morton

Dial A Ride Report for September

Days of Service: 18

Miles: 763

Of Stops :57

Nutrition: for 1 : 10

Food Shopping: 27

of Meals on Wheels: 10

Medical Appointments: 28

Other Appointments: 26

People Using Services: 25

Cancels: 8

Denials: 0

Units:164

Hours: 72.75

For the month of September there was 73.84 tons of Garbage picked up in town. That also included 39 bulk items also picked up during the month.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Decorum Policy

Councilman Laureys had questions on this subject. He wanted to make sure we support free speech. His other concern is generating a lawsuit. He asked for input from the borough attorney, Mr. Bucco. Mr. Bucco is not concerned about the wording of this resolution. He detailed examples about why he is not concerned. We will not be limited to free speech, but keeping control in a meeting. He included more details on this. He stated this policy is a tool to keep order during the meeting. He is concerned a formal resolution passed might cause issues. Councilman Hathaway feels having a policy gives a point of reference to have residents follow which will avoid personal conflict. Mr. Bucco stated not having a policy and taking action at a meeting leaves the borough open to a lawsuit. Having a policy gives a judge some guidelines to go by and a policy should be in writing. Mr. Bucco stated this policy is similar to policies all over the state.

A Motion to approve Resolution 2024-104-as amended last week Decorum Policy was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Nametko.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

NEW BUSINESS

1. Best Practices

Mr. Blakeslee stated we scored 46.5 out of 54 and we will get all of our state aid. They added affordable housing and lead paint. No action needed just needs to be noted in minutes.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR TO THE COUNCIL

Councilman Laureys wanted to address the Police FOP report. He had several comments on the number of calls that the police have each year. They are expecting around 10,000 calls by the end of the year due to the growth of the borough. He is concerned that the additional apartments are the cause of this. Councilman Sylvester stated the workload is only a small portion of the issues. The state is requiring more paperwork and inside work that is keeping them from being on the street. Body cam review is a main reason for the need for additional police officers. Councilman Laureys is concerned that there will be higher costs to the borough as we have additional residents moving into the area. He feels this was not taken into consideration when decisions were made to add the apartments and townhome developments. He pointed out there are additional costs with these developments coming in. Councilman Hathaway asked Councilman Sylvester about several years ago when the changes in the police department needed 13 officers with a possibility of additional officers in the future. Councilman Sylvester stated that the police department is now being called for incidents that would have not been called on in the past.

Councilman Morton asked about the old firehouse building and if Mr. Downing will be having the repairs done on this building. Councilman Hathaway stated Mr. Downing is in the process of interviewing contractors for multiple items for this project.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Still wanted to thank the police department for the respect he gave his family this morning.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 2024-107- Resolution Authorizing Settlement of a Netcong Borough Tax Appeal Litigation Matter for Block 36.01, Lot 13

Councilman Nametko commented that the new assessor is doing a great job.

A Motion was made by Councilman Nametko and seconded by Councilman Hathaway to approve this resolution.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

REPORTS

A Motion to Incorporate All Reports into the Minutes was made by Councilman Laureys and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

BILLS

A Motion to Pay All Bills When Funds are Available was made by Councilman Nametko and seconded by Councilman Sylvester.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING

A Motion to Close the Meeting to the Public was made by Councilman Laureys and seconded by Councilman Hathaway.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

CLOSED SESSION

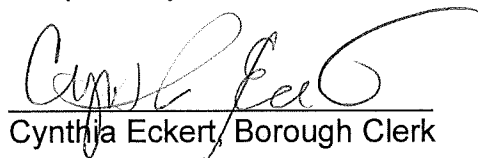
None presented this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion to Adjourn the Meeting was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Albensi at 8:09PM

Roll Call: 6 Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Cynthia Eckert', is written over a horizontal line.

Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT OF A NETCONG BOROUGH
TAX APPEAL LITIGATION MATTER FOR BLOCK 36.01, LOT 13**

WHEREAS, an appeal of the 2019 real property tax assessments has been filed in the Tax Court of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, settlement of this appeal is in the best interest of the Borough.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong, in the County of Morris, and State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. Settlement of the tax appeals filed with the Tax Court of New Jersey challenging the assessed valuation of the following matters is hereby authorized as follows:

CASE	BLOCK/ LOT/ ADDRESS	DOCKET NO.	ORIGINAL ASSESSMENT	PROPOSED ASSESSMENT
CERVAS	B 36.01, L 13 41 AMENDOLA DR	010604-2019	\$335,200	\$295,000

3. All municipal officials are hereby authorized to take whatever actions may be necessary, including the refunding of taxes, to implement the terms of this Resolution.

4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

BOROUGH OF NETCONG

BY: _____

Elmer Still, Mayor

Dated: 10/11/24

CERTIFICATION

I, Cynthia L. Eckert, Clerk of the Borough of Netcong, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Borough at a meeting held on October 10, 2024.

Dated: 10/11/24

Cynthia L. Eckert, Clerk