

**BOROUGH OF NETCONG
MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
December 12, 2024**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG HELD December 12, 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 and Mayor Still. Also present was Mrs. Eckert, Borough Clerk and Mr. Blakeslee, Borough Administrator.

PROCLAMATIONS

Mayor Still read the proclamation for Mike Canfield.:

**COMMENDING MICHAEL CANFIELD UPON THE OCCASION OF HIS
RETIREMENT**

Whereas, Michael "Mike" Canfield has served the Borough of Netcong since his appointment as a Department of Public Works Laborer in August 1993; and

Whereas, Mike, in addition to all the various trainings required by today's modern DPW employees, Mike obtained his Certified Public Works Manager certification in 2004; and

Whereas, Mike would eventually be appointed as the Superintendent of Public Works and Clean Communities Coordinator; and

Whereas, Mike has decided, after a long career in local government to formally retire; and

Whereas, in addition to being a dedicated public servant, Mike is a devoted husband to Luanne and father to Sarah, Megan and Alyssa, as demonstrated by the fact that no matter how busy he was, he attended every softball, field hockey or basketball game and volunteered as a coach, often traveling up and down the east coast to attend tournaments; and

Whereas, in his spare time Mike enjoys golf, playing his guitar and attending live entertainment of local bands and discussing their performances; and

Whereas, Mike will be remembered as a calm, professional public servant who is now ready for the next chapter in his life which will include more music and golf.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong in the County of Morris and State of New Jersey that the Borough hereby offers its warmest thanks to Mike for his years of service and dedication and extends its very best wishes for continued success and happiness.

Mr. Canfield said a few words of thanks to the Mayor and Council.

Councilman Hathaway thanked Mike for his dedication and that he will be missed.

Councilman Nametko thanked Mike for his contributions to the Borough.

The mayor read the proclamation for Councilman Albensi.

**HONORING JOSEPH ALBENSI III FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE
BOROUGH OF NETCONG AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE**

Whereas, Joseph "JW" Albensi III, after five years will conclude his term of service as a member of the Borough Council; and,

Whereas, JW has been a life-long resident of the Borough of Netcong, raising, along with his wife Kim, their three children in the borough; and,

Whereas, JW has always displayed a strong sense of civic pride and dedication, which he inherited from his family, who have also served the borough over the years; and

Whereas, JW's service to the borough includes many years serving on the Netcong Borough Planning Board and Recreation Commission as well as the Lenape Valley Junior Football program; and,

Whereas, JW has served as a Councilman for the borough from December 2019 to present; and,

Whereas, JW's knowledge, diligence and hard work has greatly contributed to the safety of the borough, its' citizens, and businesses; and,

Whereas, JW also owns his own business located in Netcong and has served the residents in the borough and surrounding towns for years; and,

Whereas, it is right that dedicated public servants of JW Albensi's stature are recognized for their professional and volunteer work and that such recognition is noted in the borough's permanent records.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED, by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong in the County of Morris and State of New Jersey, Joseph Albensi III be recognized for his outstanding service to the community for his past and continuing service to the residents of the Borough and the State of New Jersey.

Councilman Albensi thanked everyone for the honor to sit in this position and serve.

Councilman Hathaway and Councilman Nametko said a few words to Councilman JW Albensi for his dedication.

Councilman Morton had the pleasure of working with JW for years. He is a hard worker. He will be missed on the Council. He knows JW will continue to serve the community.

Councilman Laureys thanked JW for his service to the town. He is grateful for his volunteer service to this town.

Councilman Sylvester gave a few words to Councilman Albensi and he has been an asset to this Council. He will be missed.

The mayor thanked them both for their service.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None presented.

PUBLIC PORTION OF MEETING

A Motion to Close the Meeting to the Public by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Morton.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

ORDINANCE ADOPTIONS

None presented.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Stephen Fredericks – The Growing Stage

The Borough Clerk Eckert read the letter for the Council.

Councilman Laureys had a comment on this letter. He wants to correct one of Mr. Fredericks' statements. He did not accuse the Growing Stage of "an act of stealing." He provided specific details with his comments. He felt he did not owe an apology as he did not direct his comments to the Growing Stage. The comments were directed to the State.

Councilman Sylvester stated last week Councilman Laureys did include the Growing Stage in his comments last week. He stated the Growing Stage has Netcong as a

destination. They have had over 8000 people attend their programs this year. He wants to go on record to say the Council needs to support the Growing Stage in getting grants. Councilman Laureys stated he said the state is doing something wrong, not the Growing Stage. He is receiving this money from the state. The mayor asked that we move on.

Councilman Hathaway made a comment and stated he spoke with Councilman Laureys after the meeting last week with detail on the state budget. He stated we send money to the federal government and it does not come back to the community. He said Councilman Laureys may want to redirect his opinions to the proper place. Councilman Laureys had further comments regarding his feelings on this issue.

The mayor wanted to go on the record that Netcong will always back the Growing Stage.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Councilman Albensi had a question about Jenny Lind. There are several unfinished issues with this project. Our DPW superintendent stated he is following up on this issue.

Rental Registration Report 12/3/24

November 2024 Report

5 rental inspections done during the month
5 COH resale inspections done
19 tenant change inspections done in 34 Bank & Netcong Heights

Year-to-Date Report

- 976 rental units issued (259 non-apartment complex units issued)
- 15 rental units in-progress* (15 non-apartment complex units in-progress)
- 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 fourth time 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

Councilman Nametko read his report.

For the month of November 2024, the Borough had a total income of \$2,145,675.85 as compared to \$2,733,944.73 in 2023. For the month of November 2024:

Miscellaneous Revenue Not Anticipated (MRNA):

In 2024 the Borough received \$2,525.50 compared to \$4,905.50 in 2023.

Other Licenses/Borough Clerk's Fees:

The Borough received \$28,804.37 in 2024 compared to \$34,687.13 in 2023.

State Aid:

There was \$23,942.80 received in 2024 and \$37,886.50 in 2023.

Grants in Aid:

There was nothing received in 2023 or 2024 for Grants in Aid.

Taxes Collected:

The Borough collected \$2,040,776.93 in 2024 compared to \$2,629,597.98 in 2023.

Water and Sewer Utility:

The Borough collected \$33,828.43 in 2024 compared to \$26,507.62 in 2023.

Solid Waste Utility:

There was \$15,797.82 collected this past month.

Total Current Fund Year to Date:

The total Current Fund Income Year to date for 2024 is \$12,426,256.07 as opposed to \$12,483,296.81 in 2023.

Total Water and Sewer Utility to Date:

The total Water and Sewer Utility Income Year to date for 2024 is \$1,358,680.05 as opposed to \$1,376,978.60 collected in 2023.

Total Solid Waste Utility to Date:

The Solid Waste Utility collected Year to date is \$248,582.70.

Total of all Funds to Date:

Total collected from all funds Year to date is \$14,033,518.82 in 2024 compared to \$13,864,965.41 in 2023.

Economic Development: R. Hathaway J. Nametko

Councilman Hathaway reported that the Bud to Bloom will have their soft opening this Saturday. They will have their grand opening on New Year's Eve.

He wanted to tell everyone that the VFW went up for tax sale and was struck off to the municipality. The borough may have the possibility of foreclosing on this property. The Patamia (Allen House) project has all its approvals and is set to move forward. The Dellamo project is moving forward, all systems are a go now.

There was a meeting with Shop Rite this week. There may be some changes to this project as they may need to file an extension for doing the construction. Councilman Hathaway feels this is feasible. The PILOT may have to be changed if the project details change. There was discussion among the Council on this issue. Councilman Hathaway provided additional detail on this subject. Councilman Hathaway had several comments

on the presentation made by Shop Rite. He gave further detail on the possible PILOT change. Councilman Nametko said ShopRite will not be closing now for construction.

Rock Solid: the committee was told that the property line issues have been solved and the building has been revised to work within the correct property lines. It was requested by the committee that the property lines be memorialized. Mr. Blakeslee stated he has asked for the amended survey. Mr. Bucco asked if they were going to record a corrected deed. A corrected deed would show the new metes and bounds. Mr. Bucco gave further detail on this subject. Councilman Hathaway suggested we have our attorney review before the project can move forward.

Economic Development has accomplished a lot this year.

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

Police Department:

Total Calls: 734

Motor Vehicle Check Or Stop: 155

Check Property: 113

Administrative: 68

Check Schools: 27

There is a resolution tonight to hire a new patrolman.

Ambulance Corps:

Total Calls: 54

Total Patients: 30

Total Hospital Trips: 21

Miles Travelled: 784

Hours Volunteered: 272 hrs, 42 mins

Fire Department:

Total Calls: 16

General Alarms: 9

Motor Vehicle Fire: 1

Mutual Aid: 6

Total Members: 16

Time Volunteered: 94 Hours and 2 Minutes

Drills: 6

Total Members: 34

Time Volunteered: 194 Hours

Administrative Details: 4

Total Members: 32

Time Volunteered: 81 Hours

Monthly Total: 36 Members, 369 Hours and 42 Minutes

Netcong Fire Prevention Bureau

Total Inspections:27

Total Violations Found: 29

Permits Issued: 2

Fire Department FollowUps:4

Bureau Monthly Hours: 31

Additional: Assisted the fire department with four new follow ups. Submitted 2025
Operating and Capital Budget requests.

Dept. of Public

Works & Utilities:

J. Albensi

R. Hathaway

Road Department:

Performed multiple leaf clean ups at Boro properties and curblines....Picked up 16 cy of brush and 64 cy yds of leaf bags....Coastal clock and chime was in to service the main st clock.... All Christmas decorations installed around town in preparation for holiday parade, also prepped the stage and picked up light towers from the County and organized traffic control items for the PD....Installed new Togno St sign and No Parking Here to Corner on North St....

Water Department:

Performed Nov water meter readings.....

Snow:

Received delivery of 50 tons of salt....

Buildings & Grounds:

Set up Borough hall for election day.....New energy saving boilers and air conditioning units installed at Borough Hall, Firehouse 1, and Firehouse 2....PMZ installed a new retaining wall at FH 2...Closed and winterized DiRenzo and Arbolino Park....

Other:

Andy Pavlov attended 3 safety classes through our joint insurance fund.....

Water Pumped: 5,569,300 gallons

Recreation:

T. Morton

J. Albensi

Council Morton stated that the Holiday Parade was very successful but the coldest and well attended. There were 9 fire companies, 3 youth organizations, and 3 commercial businesses. He thanked the recreation commission and office staff for all their work, as well as the DPW, Fire Dept. and Police Dept. He thanked the NCP for donating funds for the Carolers. Crumble Cookie, McDonalds. Butch Henderson was the special guest (Santa). Councilman Albensi thanked student volunteers who provided hot chocolate and

cookies. Councilman Morton also thanked the Council, the judges for the holiday parade, Mrs. Still and Mr. Skillen.

- The Parade will be Dec. 7th next year.
- Holiday decoration judging will be this Sunday night.

Public Services: T. Laureys T. Morton
(Human Services
Recycling & Solid
Waste Disposal

Dial A Ride Report for November

Days of Service:18

Miles:1050

Of Stops:61

Nutrition: for 1 : 12

Food Shopping: 28

of Meals on Wheels: 10

Medical Appointments: 35

Other Appointments:26

People Using Services:30

Cancels:7

Denials:0

Units:184

Hours:81.25

Solid Waste:

For the month of November there were 75.29 tons of Garbage picked up in town. That also included 36 bulk items also picked up during the month.

OLD BUSINESS

None presented.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Introduction of new Borough Engineer – Denis Keenan – French & Parrello Associates

Mr. Keenan stepped forward to introduce himself to the Council. He stated he has appreciated the opportunity to work with Netcong. He grew up in Stanhope and knows Netcong well. He has worked with French and Parello for 18 years. They have offices in Wall and Hackettstown. He gave detail on some of the municipalities they serve. He offered details on what he will be doing for Netcong. He lives nearby and will be available. Councilman Nametko stated we have always been concerned about our water firm capacity. He gave further detail on this. Councilman Hathaway added that it would be helpful to have an understanding of the sewer flow as well. Mr. Keenan stated he can

inform his team about this. Councilman Hathaway gave further comments on this issue. He is hoping we will have better engineering oversight on this issue. Mr. Blakeslee stated we had a very productive meeting with our current engineer and new one to go over all the current projects. He gave detail and anticipates a smooth transition. The mayor thanked him for attending the meeting.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR TO THE COUNCIL

The Council President had nothing to report at this time.

Councilman Albensi stated the Village Place now has electrical installed and he wants to know if the inspectors are aware. Mr. Blakeslee provided additional information and noted that they will be going to trial

Councilman Morton stated it takes a lot of coordination to put on the parade. It could not be done without everyone's help. He thanked everyone for the honor and privilege to sit in this seat.

Councilman Hathaway reiterated Councilman Morton's statement thanking all those who were involved in preparing for the parade. He had a special thank you to the DPW for prepping the Main St. for the parade.

He stated the ordinance for the park expansion will take place in the first quarter of 2025. There will be coordination with Roxbury to accomplish this. Mr. Blakeslee stated it may take a bit longer to get this going because of the changes. Councilman Hathaway stated there will be survey work done by the Verizon and Crown Point properties for the trail path. Mr. Hansen will be moving forward with this.

Councilman Laureys read a statement as we reflect on this year. He again thanked Councilman Albensi for his time on the Council and continued with his statement that touched upon the election and Councilman Albensi. Councilman Albensi quickly stated his vote was not a mistake. The mayor was not happy with Councilman Laureys' comments. He further read his opinions. He feels we need to start listening to the people. Councilman Nametko discussed why he disagrees with Councilman Laurey's statements. He stated growth is necessary. He stated if we don't keep growing, we will be taken over by a larger town. Councilman Laureys stated the voters should always get the final say.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

The mayor had no comment at this time.

RESOLUTIONS

1. **Resolution 2024-126** – Transfer Resolution for Current Fund
2. **Resolution 2024-127**- Authorizing a Final Change Order to the Contract with American Asphalt & Trucking, LLC for the Center Street Road Improvement Project

3. Resolution 2024-128 – Proposal to Fully Restore the Municipal Relief Fund in the State Budget

Councilman Laureys had a comment on this. He feels the granting system is unfair. He provided details on why he held this opinion. Mr. Bucco explained to Councilman Laureys what this money is and that it is not grant money.

4. Resolution 2024-129- To Approve 2025 Salary for Police Chief Van Houten

5. Resolution 2024-130 – To Appoint Paul J. Caruso as Probationary Patrolman for Netcong Borough Police Department

6. Resolution 2024-131 – To Approve a Tax Overpayment Refund for Block 36.01 Lot 13- 41 Amendola Drive

A Motion was made by Councilman Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Albensi to approve the six resolutions noted above.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

ORDINANCE INTRODUCTIONS

None presented.

REPORTS

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

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 Hathaway and seconded by Councilman Albensi.

Roll Call: 6 Yes

CLOSED SESSION

No closed session was held this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

A Motion to Adjourn the Meeting was made by Councilman Albensi and seconded by Councilman Hathaway at 8:36PM.
Roll Call: 6 Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk

TRANSFER RESOLUTION FOR CURRENT FUND

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG IN THE COUNTY OF MORRIS, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, TO TRANSFER ITEMS OF APPROPRIATION IN TH 2024 CURRENT FUND BUDGET IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.J.S.A 40:4-58.

CURRENT FUND					
ACCOUNT NAME	ACCOUNT #		TYPE	TO	FROM
SOCIAL SECURITY/FICA GROUP INSURANCE	4-01-36-472-000		OE	\$ 15,000	
	4-01-23-220-046		OE		\$ 15,000
				\$15,000	\$15,000


NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Netcong in the County of Morris, State of New Jersey, that in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A 40:4-58, that the following budget transfers be made by the Chief Financial Officer:

BE IT FURHTER RESOLVED, that the Treasurer is herby authorized to make the following transfers in the 2024 budget;

\$ 15,000.00 CURRENT FUND

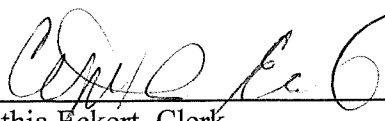
A certified copy of the Resolution shall be forwarded by the Borough Clerk to the Treasurer.
This resolution shall take effect upon adoption.

BOROUGH OF NETCONG

By: 
Elmer Still, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I, Cynthia 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 December 12, 2024.


Cynthia Eckert, Clerk

RESOLUTION 2024-127

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF NETCONG
AUTHORIZING A FINAL CHANGE ORDER TO THE CONTRACT WITH
AMERICAN ASPHALT & TRUCKING LLC FOR THE CENTER STREET ROAD
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong awarded a contract to American Asphalt & Trucking LLC. for the Center Street Road Improvement Project in the amount of \$172,470.90 on January 11, 2024; and

WHEREAS, during construction, it was observed that Center Street was impacted by groundwater, which was flowing up through the existing pavement. It was more apparent following milling that base repairs alone would not address the groundwater issue. A test pit was performed at points along the watermain to confirm the watermain had no leaks and no services were leaking. During the test pits, it was observed that groundwater was flowing along the stone bedding surrounding the watermain. Therefore, to address this prior to paving, the contractor was instructed to install of a 6-inch perforated pipe above the watermain and tie that into the existing Type 'A' basin, as well as the installation of impervious dams which would support the redirection and infiltration of the groundwater within the surrounding soil; and

WHEREAS, additional items were added to the contract scope, as described above, under Change Order No. 1 (items CO-1a through CO-1d); and

WHEREAS, the Center Street Road Improvement Project was performed and completed by American Asphalt & Trucking LLC in October of 2024;

WHEREAS, the as-built amount completed and billed by American Asphalt & Trucking LLC is \$211,440.28, a increase of \$38,969.18 from the contract of \$172,471.10;


WHEREAS, the increase is also based on as-built field measurements and quantities for

the completed project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong, County of Morris, State of New Jersey that it hereby approves the Change Order amending the final Contract amount to \$211,440.28.

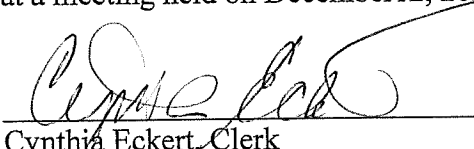
BOROUGH OF NETCONG

By: _____


Elmer Still, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I, Cynthia 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 December 12, 2024.


Cynthia Eckert, Clerk

Resolution 2024-128

“WHEREAS, the State FY 2025 Appropriations Act eliminated a \$150 million municipalities category known as the “Municipal Relief Fund;” and

WHEREAS, the elimination of the Municipal Relief Fund would otherwise be reflected in municipal budgets in the Spring of 2025; and

WHEREAS, State aid reductions will exacerbate the impact of inflation and State mandates as more particularly set forth in the attached letter from Senator Bucco to Governor Murphy:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF Netcong Borough, that the Governor is requested to propose fully restoring \$150 million of aid for the Municipal Relief Fund in the State budget he next presents to the Legislature and allow municipalities to anticipate the aid as part of their CY 2025 budgets.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; the Municipal Clerk shall immediately transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor.

BOROUGH OF NETCONG

Dated: 12/13/24

By: 

Elmer M. Still, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I, Cynthia 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 December 12, 2024.


Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong, in the County of Morris and State of New Jersey, that the following named persons be paid salaries in 2025:

		Proposed
EMPLOYEE	TITLE	Salary/Rate
	Police	
Van Houten, Russ	Chief of Police	\$155,000
	Deputy Emergency Manager Coordinator	\$ 5,000

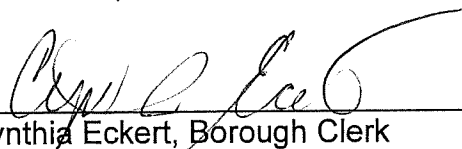
This resolution shall take effect immediately.



Elmer Still, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I, Cynthia Eckert, Clerk of the Borough of Netcong, do hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Netcong at a regular meeting held on December 12, 2024.



Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk

Resolution #2024-130

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Netcong, in the County of Morris and State of New Jersey, that the following appointment is hereby made:

1. Paul J. Caruso as Probationary Patrolman of the Netcong Police Department, effective December 18, 2024, pending appropriate screening.
2. Patrolman Caruso shall be paid a salary of \$49,581.00 in recognition of his previous two years of law enforcement experience.
3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.

BOROUGH OF NETCONG

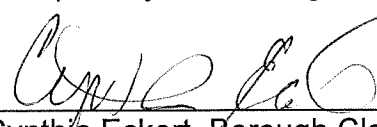
By: 

Elmer Still, Mayor

Dated:

CERTIFICATION

I, Cynthia 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 December 12, 2024.


Cynthia Eckert, Borough Clerk