



**Town Board Meeting
July 2, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

Present: Supervisor Neil Bettez, Councilwoman Alex Baer, Councilman Dan Torres, Councilwoman Julie Seyfert-Lillis, and Councilman David Brownstein

Also Present: Cara Lee, John Orfitelli, Christine Chale, John Gotto, and Ted Fink

At 7:36pm a motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to open the Town Board meeting with the pledge. Seconded by Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Agenda:

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to approve the agenda with the removal of Executive Session and addition of approval of 6/24/2020 minutes to the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Public Input:

Tanya Marquette: “it is disappointing to see how this mandated collaborative effort seems to be shaping up. First, this mandate clearly is to be collaborative between the Town and the community. Second, the mandate clearly list 7 stakeholder groups and does not allow for others to be added. Third, and critically, is the mandate is to include community stakeholders groups that clearly are the ones affected negatively by the police and should also have demonstrable history of dealing with racism and prejudice against People of Color. Fourth, the community needs to be self-identifying and self-selecting. It is not for the Board to pick the community groups. Fifth, several people in the community are already beginning to organize a public meeting for people who are true stakeholders on this issue as per the Exec Order 203.

I would ask that the Board clearly review the Order and correct the misunderstandings that seem evident. FYI, we have been in touch with the Civil Rights Attorney, Michael Sussman to corroborate our understanding. This mandate is a legal one and we hope the Town Board will abide by its intent as well as legal structure.”

Matteo Undici: “As a Town of New Paltz resident, property owner, tax payer, and concerned community member, I am respectfully requesting your attention and response to the following matters in addition to the previous comments below that I submitted via email on 06/24/2020.

1) The Town of New Paltz Dot Org website needs to immediately have a prominent prioritized highlighted posting on the home page regarding all Policing matters and related meetings. This timely info is imperative for community engagement. Failure to do so would reflect efforts of the Town Board and current Police Commission to suppress the voices and concerns of residents and visitors.

2) IMMEDIATE HIRING FREEZE for the Town of New Paltz Police Department and deferral of any budget requests or motions to hire part-time officers until such time that a comprehensive community review process is completed. Remember that schools and colleges are not in session, the numbers of visitors to town have drastically decreased due to Covid-19 pandemic, and there are still 4 overlapping policing systems in our small town.

3) Immediately implement an online accessible Police Commission "**Compliment/Complaint/Suggestion Form**" available in both English and Spanish that can be fully submitted from any computer or smartphone and does not require a printer or postage stamp.

4) Please announce what reputable validated community survey protocols will be implemented to ensure full participation and engagement in the discussion of Policing matters and community reinvestment efforts. What are research-based best practices and what are other municipalities doing?

5) I am sincerely willing and able to act as a liaison or consultant to the Town Board and Police Commission to effectively engage in meaningful process from my experience as a multilingual licensed mental health professional and community-based project organizer."

I look forward to your hearing and seeing your support of these imperative efforts.

-Edgar Rodriguez: "Your agenda design for tonight's New Paltz Town Board meeting is a discussion between Board and police which is not acceptable because the Governor's Executive Order 203 requires an immediate collaborative approach to policing with the community. It requires a two-way discussion among all stakeholders right from the start of the planning process which at this moment is the entire community, paying especial attention to the Voices of People of Color.

At the June 18 meeting there was no Board response to the many comments concerned with policing- this is one-way communication. To date the only Board response is agenda items 2 and 3 tonight for the Board, without the community input, to evaluate what was said on June 18.

Community members

were already upset with the one-way approach of June 18. We now demand that tonight you open up for a two-way discussion for agenda items 2 & 3. We further demand that items 5, 6 & 7 which are all police matters should be postponed until the Order 203 planning (?group, committee, commission, etc.) is established and sitting at the table and functioning collaboratively. This needs to start tonight! To not do this renders the Boards actions illegal and racist!. This entire Order 203 is about undoing the top down, white decision making for issues most impacting the community of color.

Agenda:

1. Executive Session to discuss personnel 2. Review of public comment questions from June 18 Town Hall forum 3. New Paltz Police Reform and Reinvention 4. Monthly Report 5. Update on Body Worn Camera Policy 134.0 6. Intimate Partner Violence Intervention Program review 7. Referral to hire part-time officer to Town Board"

-Maggie Veve: "Attached is my letter of June 26. I request it be included in the minutes of July 2, 2020 Town Board Meeting. Furthermore, I wish these comments to also be included.

I am a member of a historically underrepresented group. I am a person of color, whose great grandfather was born a slave in Puerto Rico. I am from a family of 7 boys and two girls, born in Farragut Housing Project in Brooklyn but raised from the age of 7 in Modena NY. I have been a resident of New Paltz since 1972 and raised my three children here. The combination of these experiences has led me to identify very personally and practically with the issues included in the Executive Order 203 and with the proponents of the Black Lives Matter agenda. I am most concerned about the process of decision-making for establishing the stakeholder groups for this Collaborative. There are six stakeholder groups stipulated in the Executive Order. How these stakeholders are identified is key in the formulation of the Collaborative. The list Mr. Torres proposed does not conform to guidelines of the stakeholders provided, as it is clear that focus of the Community Member stakeholder group are those who have been negatively impacted by police racism. The Community Stakeholder group should be self-identified and self selected.

The Community stakeholder group stakeholder group should be mainly members who have

actively been involved with the police and police reform work. To do otherwise would be another act of institutional racism. You would be the blind leading the blind. You act to over-include undermines the needed voices of color and necessarily whitewashes the process. My most immediate question is to identify t which category each member proposed belongs. There are six categories from which the members should belong. The Town does not have the right to include members that do not belong to one of these categories.”

“June 24, 2020

To Members of the New Paltz Town Board,

I, like the hundreds of thousands of people protesting, was outraged by the callous murder of George Floyd and the pattern of continuing violence his murder represents. We all have borne witness that his death has unveiled and highlighted systemic failures of policing policy and procedures that are directly responsible for alarmingly disproportional rates of police intervention in communities of color and for a long string of abuses perpetuated against people of color. Unfortunately, the moral obligation to stop this brutality had historically been ignored by every level of government and empowered by the voting public, the majority of whom are white.

I write this letter because all municipalities with local police forces are now required by recent State Executive order to explore institutional racism that necessarily is inherent in the brutality we have seen locally and nationally. As the publicly-elected governing town board conferred with the responsibility of establishing and monitoring public agreements with the police, town boards and the supporting electorate should now support the efforts of leaders of the current protest movement such as those espoused in BlackLivesMatters.org and Campaignzero.org. To not do so in of itself would be an act of institutional racism and an act of white privilege.

Consequently; the following should immediately occur:

1. contact state and county and SUNY police contractual authorities to work with the town on developing a plan to consolidate, restructure and refocus policing efforts to eliminate the Town police department. As town residents, we pay for the personal safety and protection of property to the county and the state, so as our representatives you should push for getting our fair share of those sources of policing and assure they follow tenets of community policing;
2. establish budget priorities consistent with differentiation of the role of policing for safety versus that of the town, county and state to provide the social welfare security needs of the community (i.e. reduce police budgets and fund community security and wellness projects);
3. establish a Town Commission on Equity in Policing (TCEP via a self-selection process charged with the developing policies and procedures consistent with community policing tenets and town board policies;
4. share the current contractual agreement between the Town and the New Paltz Police Department and assure informed community consent prior to establishing future policing agreements with the county and state police;
5. share the nature of data collected and reports in the towns possession of the town police’s use of force;
6. make public body camera footage available;
7. end the use of military grade equipment in town policing;
8. prohibit the shooting of fleeing suspects;
9. push to ensure that police report every instance in which they stop someone who they suspect of a crime; they must also include that person's race, gender, and ethnicity; and
10. establish personal monetary liability for a police officer if they are found guilty of violating an individual’s civil rights.

I, as relatively light-skinned Puerto Rican, have both personally benefitted from and harmed by the effects of institutional racism. I send this letter because it is my moral responsibility to act to end the effects of institutional racism irrespective of how the benefits and harms may balance. I am a member of the town and a

regular voter for every level of political affiliation and governing bodies as many of you are. Consequently, I ask that you simply do the right thing, not just the politically correct and legally required thing to do. Work at every level of political affiliation to support ending the over-policing in our town. Work at the county and state level to improve the quality of policing that operates in our town. Realign policy and redirect local policing resources to prioritize addressing the local needs of our black and brown community. Let's not work to do the minimum and instead look at the possibilities as we reimagine policing within our community."

Consent Agenda:

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to authorize and/or approve the following items as part of the consent agenda. Seconded by Councilman Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

A. Approval of minutes: Town Board Meeting 6/18/2020, Special Meeting 6/24/20, and Special Meeting 6/29/20.

B. Acceptance of resignation: Joe Douso, ZBA

C. Establishment of Zoning Board of Appeals escrow for Homeland Towers/Verizon Wireless for ZBA 20-50 for \$4000.00 initial deposit /\$2000.00 replenishment level.

D. Escrow release PB#2006-26, Vaccaro/Birches subdivision in the amount of \$0.00

Community Preservation Plan:

Part 2 of the Community Preservation Plan and Real Estate Transfer Tax presentation was given by Cara Lee.

The purpose of the presentation is to protect the qualities that will attract buyers that choose to live in New Paltz. It also provides an exemption that will benefit the low end of the market, protecting affordability for first time home buyers. Buyers will invest in maintaining the value of their properties while benefiting the whole community.

Christine Chale, Ted Fink, John Orfitelli presented the resolutions/ local laws to be adopted.

Resolutions setting public hearings on Local Law B-- CPF, Local Law C-- Plan, and Local Law D --Transfer Tax:

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez approving the Resolution declaring Town as lead agency and classifying the action as a Type I action under SEQRA. Seconded by Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis, all aye votes cast, motion carried

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to set the public hearing for proposed Local Law B for the establishment of a community preservation fund and advisory board for July 16, 2020 at 7:00 pm. Seconded by Councilman Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to set the public hearing for proposed Local Law C for July 16, 2020 at 7:00 pm relating to the adoption of a community preservation project plan. Seconded by Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to set the public hearing for Local Law D for July 16, 2020 at 7:00 pm relating to a real estate transfer tax for the community preservation fund. Seconded by Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Employee Travel/Quarantine Policy:

Anyone arriving from high infection states must be self-quarantined for two weeks according to the Governor's Executive Order. Anyone who has already used their federal two-week leave will be subject to using personal or sick leave. Supervisor Bettez made a motion to implement the above as a town policy. Seconded by Councilman Brownstein, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Authorization to hire: Police Department:

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to hire part time police officer Michelle Yeager. Seconded by Councilman Brownstein, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

At 8:31 a motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to adjourn the Town Board Meeting. Seconded by Councilman Brownstein, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Supervisor Bettez announced the scheduling of a Special Town Board Meeting, Thursday July 9th at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie Mazzaccari
Deputy Town Clerk