



**New Paltz Town Hall- Community Forum
Town Board Meeting
July 9, 2020, 7 p.m.
Via Teleconference**

Present: Supervisor Neil Bettez, Councilwoman Alexandra Baer, Councilman Daniel Torres, Chief Robert Lucchesi

Absent: Councilman David Brownstein, Councilwoman Julie Seyfert-Lillis

At 7:01 pm a motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to open meeting with the pledge. Seconded by Councilman Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Agenda:

A motion was made by Supervisor Bettez to approve the agenda. Seconded by Councilman Torres, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Announcements:

After taking necessary safety precautions, Town Hall will open to the public on Monday, July 13, 2020. Visitors are required to wear masks and maintain a 6 ft distance when possible. A doorbell system has been installed and calling ahead to make an appointment is appreciated.

A new page has been added to the Town's website regarding police reform and reinvention.

At 7:07 p.m. Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis arrived.

Consent Agenda:

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

- A. Request authorization to increase the adopted 2020 budget for a transfer of Parkland Funds to pay the Kalleco Nursery bill from 2019 as follows:

Increase	A 510	Estimated Revenues	6,727.00
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Increase	A 960 2089	Other culture & Rec Income	6,727.00
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Increase A 960 Appropriations 6,727.00

Increase A 522 7150.460 NP Sports/Rec Park 6,727.00

- B. Request authorization to modify the adopted 2020 budget for a transfer of funds to purchase mulch for Moriello Playgrounds follows:

Debit	A 960	Appropriations	960.00
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Debit	A 522 7150.460	NP Sports/Rec Park	960.00
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Credit	A 960	Appropriations	960.00
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Credit	A 522 7150.430	Moriello Pool, CE	960.00
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- c. Acceptance of Resignation: Frank Kobes, Court Officer

- d. Acceptance of Resignation: Kristina Granieri, Building Dept/Water & Sewer

Public Input:

-Daniel Schniedewind: Thanked the Town and Village Boards for their help with statistics for his website. Believes that we shouldn't be limited to a checklist with regards to new police commission. Believes new collaborative should be comprised of people of color and those most impacted and/or people that have the most interaction with police. Believes we should redirect money from police budget to other areas within the community.

-Tom Jelliffe: Commented on the document circulated regarding proposed committee. Feels mission statement is weak. The issue at hand is racism within the police force. The mission statement should be reformulated to reflect this. Areas of focus need to be revisited.

-Tanya Marquette: White people don't realize they're racist. Mission statement is horrific and is whitewashed and does not meet the needs of the state mandate. 60% of the committee needs to be made up of people of color. Committee should also be comprised of people experienced with racism. Believes a community forum should determine who makes up the committee and subcommittees.

-Carol Nolan: Speaking as a member of UACT committee. Questioned when they should expect a complete response to their recent letter and through what medium will they be answered. Also wanted to know once this group of stakeholders is up and running how will we be able to provide input or feedback along the way.

-Harper Keehn: Would like to know when detailed police budget will be released? More money is spent on the police department than several other community areas combined. Offered an example of what a possible mission statement could include.

-Tanya Marquette: Member of UACT and Concerned parents. Believes the town should reach out to groups that have been doing this type of work and ask for suggestions on how to come up with members of the committees and suggestions regarding policing and structural racism. Feels racism is stemmed from social structures and power. We need to understand the history of racism, policing, etc.

-Joan Combellick: Would like to know how the police budget will be shown and in what newspaper?

-Juna ?: Commented about reinvention tab and mission statement. First three points rely on training. Believes putting more funding towards police training is the wrong direction and thinks we should be defunding the New Paltz Police Department. Believes there should be a hiring freeze.

-Margaret ?: By next April we need to come up with something positive that is accepted by the whole community. Believes ongoing conversation is key.

Emails Received:

-LeeAnne Bell and K Ravishanker: At this historic moment in New York State, every municipality has the opportunity to reassess policing practices and explore the best measures to reimagine public safety in the service of equitable treatment and justice for every member of our community, and to explore the many possible non-police measures that can contribute to such a vision. As long-time members of the New Paltz community, we urge the Town Board to take full advantage of this opportunity to make changes that can benefit everyone, including the police.

As you create the committee that will be responsible for developing this new vision we believe it is critically important that the committee represent the communities most impacted by overly punitive policing practices that have led to national demonstrations about police tactics. African American and Latinx representatives are in the best position to identify problems and make recommendations that will get to the heart of the matter, and that have the likelihood of generating widespread trust and support. Since municipalities all over New York State, and indeed all over the country, will be undergoing similar discussions, this is an opportune time to draw upon the very best ideas for developing and tailoring a plan for New Paltz. Such ideas should include looking at funding practices that balance all community needs fairly, tailoring recruitment and training of police to focus on protecting and serving all communities, creating alternative programs that address conflict and harm and involve other community partners, and regularly inviting feedback from all sectors of New Paltz to continually improve the plan.

We believe this is a very hopeful and promising time to address these issues in our community and we look forward to opportunities to learn about and respond to proposals under consideration as the plan evolves.

-Aleah Speller: My name is Aleah Speller, I am a student at SUNY New Paltz and resident of Rosendale. I work and go to school in the town of New Paltz and since I cannot make the zoom meeting today it is important that I let you know that the composition of this committee is EXTREMELY important. The people who have been most effected by New Paltz policing are in the best position to make decisions about it's defunding. EVERYTHING should be on the table, including: taking funding from the New Paltz police to fund non-police programs that address conflict instead!

I hope that the proper action/steps are taken therefore leading to the defunding of our town police as it is overriding other necessities in this town's funding. Thank you.

-Zachary Rousseas: Hello, my name is Zachary Rousseas I am a former member of the NP community. In regard to the meeting today about policing I had two statements I would like to be submitted.

1. New Paltz town board must freeze hiring police and freeze additional police expenditures
2. The committee being formed to make recommendations about police in New Paltz needs to be led and comprised by those who are most impacted by police (ex: black, poc, trans, homeless, queer, young)

Thank you!

-Kate Fishman: I'm writing to you because (while I can't make tomorrow's meeting) I want to express my opinion as a New Paltz resident about the committee making recommendations for the future of our town's budgeting and police spending.

It is my hope, firstly, that this committee will take action leading to heavily reduced police spending in New Paltz as well as more intentional allocation of funds to community programming and resources. I want to urge you to use this moment to rethink policing in our town — its scope, its role, and how we can make this town a better place for the communities most vulnerable to policing. We can't just make minor reforms — New Paltz's police department needs to be fundamentally reworked, at a level beyond just creating a committee. I hope that this board is committed to the ongoing work of reducing policing in our town, and investing funds where they will make meaningful change for New Paltz residents.

Additionally, I want to register a desire (that I think many residents share) that this committee on policing reflect the goals and desires of the New Paltz residents most impacted by policing — Black residents and residents of color, low-income residents, disabled residents, queer residents, and more. New Paltz is a town known for progressive ideals, and the make-up of this committee should reflect the needs of its most marginalized residents.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email! I am optimistic about the ways that our town can change for the better, and heavily reducing funding to our police department seems a great way to start.

Councilman Torres commented on the Executive Order that was put into place. He stated that the plan in place is a good starting point. He doesn't believe the system is perfect but will be open to working with neighboring communities and residents for input to improve. He agreed with comprising committee of people directly impacted by policing.

Supervisor Bettez commented that all questions being asked are being answered and responses will be posted on the Town's Website.

Councilman Torres reminded everyone that a group of 21 people would be broken off into subcommittees addressing the needs of the Governor's Executive Order. Meetings would be held similar to what we are doing now where community can engage in the meeting.

Supervisor Bettez would like meetings to reflect the wants of the community not just wants of a small group. He stated that a FOIL was submitted recently regarding police expenditures and we are waiting on guidance from Town Attorney. Once guidance is received it will be published in local newspaper.

Councilwoman Seyfert-Lillis called into the meeting at 7:35pm. She thanked everyone that has spoken and made a comment stating that the board is fully willing to disclose the information regardless of the recent FOIL request.

Councilwoman Baer gave her perspective as a Latino woman who has previously ran outreach programs in Poughkeepsie. The root of racism is the big picture. Wants to talk to various groups to get their perspectives.

Supervisor Bettez commented on wanting positive change to happen without arguing. Agreed with conversation being key.

Chief Lucchesi announced gatherings that he is hosting to encourage dialogue on the third Thursday of every month varying times and locations to accommodate members of the community. The goal is to answer questions and address public concerns.

A motion made by Supervisor Bettez to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 pm. Seconded by Councilwoman Baer, all aye votes cast, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristie Mazzaccari
Deputy Town Clerk