

OPC Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2023 / Room 206

Attendance: First Selectman, Monica McNally; Board of Finance Chairman, Jim Palen; Planning and Zoning Chairman, Stephen Olvany; RTM Moderator, Seth Morton; and Board of Education Chairman, Duke Dineen. Also in Attendance: State Representative Tracy Marra and Town Administrator Kate Buch.

Ms. McNally called the meeting to order at 8:33 am.

Ms. McNally called for a motion to approve of the OPC Minutes of June 14, 2023. Mr. Dineen moved, Mr. Palen seconded and all voted in favor.

First Selectman Ms. McNally provided updates on:

- Events in town including: the Darien Road Race, the September 11th Memorial Observation Ceremony, and the Grove St./Tilley area flood presentation.
- Metro North has resumed service on the New Canaan branch line.
- Town Departments tasked with responsibilities related to emergency preparedness remain proactively informed and ready.
- George Logan of Aquarion will present at the 9/18/23 Board of Selectmen meeting on water priorities.
- A tour of the Hemlocks water treatment plant
- The Town is expected to go live with a new website on September 26th. The new site will have improved navigation and be ADA compliant.
- Bus tours of Great Island, for residents, are scheduled for Saturday, September 23rd.

Board of Finance Mr. Palen provided updates on:

- The Board of Finance will continue to watch overall spending and is gearing up for the FY24-25 budget season.

RTM Mr. Morton reviewed items before the RTM on September 18th:

- Mr. Adiletta will update the RTM on the Great Island Advisory Committee and Jack Davis will update on the ARPA Committee.
- Acceptance of a gift from Darien Little League to refurbish McGuane fields
- Adoption of a local ordinance allowing the Assessor to eliminate, with good cause, fines

Planning & Zoning Mr. Olvany provided updates on:

- The Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) opened an application to expand the beach at Weed Beach.
- Bird Code restaurant is still under construction

- Walmart in Norwalk will close in November and become a Target. Costco will be expanding into the Double Tree location and Wegmans is scheduled to be constructed in the same area of Norwalk.
- The PZC members have been issued Town ipads and will use OpenGov for applications.

Board of Education Mr. Dineen provided updates on:

- Convocation went well. The BOE welcomed 36 new teachers and staff.
- The overall school population decreased by 11 students. The student population is just under 4,600.
- Tracy Wurm resigned from the BOE.
- After reconciling the BOE FY23 budget, \$810,000 was returned to the Town
- Board of Finance members Jim Palen and Dan Bumgardner are participating in contract negotiations with administrators. There are 36 people in the administrators' union. Key components of negotiations include: retention, recruitment, work/life balance, and financial compensation.
- Phase II of the new Ox Ridge Elementary School (ORES) is now open. The entire school project was completed on time and under budget. All ELP students (approximately 90 students) are now located at ORES. A ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled for September 30th may be moved to a date in October.
- The Hindley, Holmes, Royal Building Committee (HHR) is planning to keep some submitted bids and re-bid others items.
- Dr. Addley has been reappointed to a three year term, expiring June 30, 2026.

State Representative Tracy Marra provided updates on:

- Norwalk and the State DOT are working on a traffic study for Post Road in the area of Costco. The study will include a review of bus stops and traffic flow.
- A bill has been proposed to allow college adjunct professors to be employed as high school teachers.
- The new Legislative Session starts in February. In the meantime, residents with solutions to propose should reach out to Ms. Marra.
- Ms. Marra is working on an invitation for Darien third graders to visit the State Capitol.
- At a one-day Special Session scheduled for September 26th, a proposal to move the presidential primary from the end of April to the beginning of April will be considered.

Ms. McNally called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Olvany moved. Mr. Palen seconded and all voted in favor.

Mrs. McNally adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary