



Watertown Town Council
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris
Council President

Stephen P. Corbett
Vice President

John A. Donohue
Councilor At Large

Susan G. Falkoff
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba
Councilor At Large

Angeline B. Kounelis
District A Councilor

Cecilia Lenk
District B Councilor

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.
District C Councilor

John J. Lawn, Jr.
District D Councilor

Town Council Meeting
Tuesday, November 22, 2011 at 6:00pm
Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber
Administration Building

MINUTES

1. **ROLL CALL:** A regular meeting of the Town Council was called to order at 6:00 pm, in the Richard E. Mastrangelo Council Chamber, Administration Building. Present for the meeting were Councilors Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris. Also present were the Town Manager Michael J. Driscoll and Council Clerk Valerie Papas. Councilors Donohue and Lawn arrived shortly after the call of the roll.
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION - 6:00 pm:** to consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate. Vice President Corbett moved to go into executive session for the above stated purpose and returning to open session following its adjournment, seconded by Councilor Piccirilli and adopted by unanimous roll call vote with Councilors Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.
3. **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION – 7:15 pm:** All Councilors are present.
4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
5. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** [November 1st](#) and [9th](#). Councilor Falkoff moved to accept the minutes of November 1st, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

Councilor Falkoff moved the minutes of November 9th, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice

President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

6. PUBLIC FORUM:

1. Kathy Felgran, Realtor and condominium owner at 32 Whites Avenue – spoke against the new parking meters on Whites Avenue stating that they will lower property values and quality of life for the residents of the condominiums on Whites Avenue.
2. Said Nagarazian, 32 Whites Avenue – concurred with Ms. Feldon and noted that Watertown is an undiscovered jewel at risk with the meters along this street which would change the quality of life for the abutters.

7. PRESIDENT’S REPORT: The Chair stated that the School Committee met last Monday and discussed the process for a new superintendent and a screening committee.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND VOTES:

- a) Public hearing and vote on a proposed [Amendment](#) to the Fiscal Year 2012 Budget. The Manager provided an overview of the budget amendment which would increase revenues and expenditures by \$1,210,000; the revised revenues and expenditures would be \$100,196,000. Following the overview, the Chair opened up the hearing to the public. There being no comments, the hearing was closed. Councilor Piccirilli moved the amendment to the Fiscal Year 2012 budget, seconded by Councilor Kounelis and adopted by unanimous roll call vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.
- b) Public hearing and vote on a proposed [Order](#) allocating the property tax levy among or between property classes for Fiscal Year 2012.

The Chair recognized Mr. Frank Golden who provided an in-depth power point presentation regarding the property tax levy. Following the presentation, the Chair opened up the hearing to the public. There being no comments, the hearing was closed.

Councilor Kounelis spoke in favor of raising the shift from the current 20% to 25% in order to give a break to the owner occupied taxpayers.

Councilor Donohue spoke in support of improving the Town’s commercial base which is stable but needs to grow in a positive way.

Councilor Palomba asked who will bear the burden of a 25% tax shift. Mr. Golden stated that a 25% shift is completely born by all residential property owners whose properties are assessed above \$650,000 as well as an 8.3% tax increase by non-occupied three family owners.

Councilor Falkoff asked Mr. Golden if he could make the argument for a 20% shift.

Mr. Golden stated that the 175% - 20% shift has been in place for a number of years and is recommended again by the Board of Assessors. He indicated that the commercial/industrial base is stable and will even itself out. The base, he noted, is expected to get tighter after the revaluation.

The Manager stated that pages 8 and 9 of the materials provide detailed explanation of the shifts. He further indicated that he hopes folks realize the average tax bill in Watertown is a lot lower than surrounding communities.

Councilor Piccirilli spoke in support of the current 175%-20% shift.

Councilor Lawn concurred and stated that a 25% shift will be a very significant increase for some people.

Mr. Golden agreed that the increase would be extreme and stated that the Board of Assessors are recommending a 20% shift but that it is a policy decision for the Council to make.

Vice President Corbett moved to maintain the current 175% in residential/commercial properties and 20% in owner occupied exemption, seconded by Councilor Falkoff and adopted by a 8-1 roll call vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative and Councilor Kounelis voting no.

c) Public hearing and vote on a proposed [Order](#) setting optional tax exemptions for Fiscal Year 2012. Councilor Kounelis recused herself and left the room. The Manager reviewed the exemptions for fiscal year 2012. The Chair opened up the hearing to the public. There being no comments the hearing was closed. Councilor Piccirilli moved to maintain the optional tax exemptions as in the previous years, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by unanimous voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a) Committee on Public Works [report](#) on a Recycling Center; Updates on Coolidge Square Study; Mt. Auburn Street Study and the Roads Program – Susan G. Falkoff, Chair. Councilor Falkoff read the report. Councilor Lawn moved the report, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Anthony Palomba, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

b) Committee on Personnel and Town Organization [report](#) on the recently completed Fiscal Year 2011 Performance Evaluation of the Town Manager and related matters – John J. Lawn, Jr., Chair. Councilor Lawn read the report and noted that an executive session on the matter has been scheduled at the end of the meeting tonight.

The Chair noted that the matter will come before the public for a first reading and subsequent public hearing.

Vice President Corbett moved to accept the report. Councilor Falkoff seconded the motion with a friendly amendment that the Manager's comments be placed in quotation marks and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

Councilor Palomba stated that he wrongly rated the Manager with low marks on a matter rating his ethics, honesty and integrity and he apologized for that.

Councilor Lawn moved to refer the matter to the Town Council to be discussed in executive session tonight, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by unanimous voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

10. NEW BUSINESS

a) Request regarding the granting of additional new liquor licenses and referral to Committees. The Chair indicated that this matter will be referred to Public Safety, Rules and Ordinances and Economic Development and Planning. Councilor Donohue noted that he has filled out a disclosure of conflict of interest form with the Town Clerk. Councilor Donohue moved the referral, seconded by Councilor Lenk and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

b) Request to have a modification of MBTA bus line #558 and referral to State, Federal and Regional Subcommittee. Vice President Corbett moved the referral, seconded by Councilor Falkoff. Councilor Donohue made a friendly amendment to refer the matter to Economic Development and Planning Subcommittee as well for a joint meeting. Vice President Corbett concurred and stated that this matter was discussed in the Economic Development and Planning Committee as part of the Pleasant Street Corridor subject matter. The matter was referred jointly by unanimous voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J.

Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

c) Request to refer the issue of parking meter signs to the Committee of Public Works. Councilor Piccirilli moved the matter, seconded by Councilor Lenk and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

d) Councilor Piccirilli requested that a matter regarding the Budget & Policy Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2013 related to a [request by Councilor Palomba](#) to fund a full time social services coordinator that would require the town to expend certain funds; be referred to the Human Services Committee. Councilor Piccirilli moved the matter, seconded by Vice President Corbett and adopted by voice vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

11. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER:

- a. In observance of Thanksgiving Holiday the Administration Building will be closed on Thursday and Friday.
- b. On street parking restrictions begin on November 27th and continue up until the beginning of April.
- c. Yard Waste pickup on Friday, December 2nd.
- d. Last Flu shot clinic on December 8th, 5-7 pm at the Library.

12. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:

Councilor Falkoff asked that a non-functional meter sign be removed from behind Tresca's Restaurant.

13. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Lenk invited the public to opening day at Victory Field on Thanksgiving. A more formal ceremony will take place in May when the field turns 100 years old.

The Chair congratulated the Watertown Girls Field Hockey Team for winning their 12th State Championship.

The Chair reminded residents that the December Town Council meeting has been moved up and will take place on the 6th.

14. PUBLIC FORUM – none noted.

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION – There being no further business to come before the Town Council, Vice President Corbett moved to go into executive session at 8:45 pm in order to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel – Town Manager, seconded by Councilor Lawn and adopted by unanimous roll call vote with Councilors John A. Donohue, Susan G. Falkoff, Angeline B. Kounelis, Anthony Palomba, Cecilia Lenk, John J. Lawn, Jr., Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr., Vice President Stephen P. Corbett and Council President Mark S. Sideris voting in the affirmative.

[Addendum](#)

I hereby certify that at a regular meeting of the Town Council for which a quorum was present, the above minutes were adopted on December 6, 2011 by unanimous voice vote.

Mark S. Sideris, Council President