



SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING
April 10, 2014
7 P.M.

Special Meeting

The Special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Thursday, April 10, 2014 at 7 p.m.

Present

Mayor Daniel T. Drew and Council Members Mary A. Bartolotta, Hope Kasper, Grady L. Faulkner, Jr., Carl R. Chisem, Gerald E. Daley, James B. Streeto, Sebastian N. Giuliano, Sandra Russo Driska, Deborah Kleckowski and David Bauer; and Common Council Clerk Marie O. Norwood.

Absent

Council Members Thomas J. Serra, Robert P. Santangelo, and Sandra Russo Driska; Corporation Counsel Daniel B. Ryan.

Also Present

Two members of the public.

Meeting Called to Order

The Chair calls the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and leads the public in the Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomes everyone to the meeting

Call of Meeting Read

The Call of the meeting is read and accepted. The Acting Chair declares this call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

Public Comment Opens

The Chair opens public comment at 7:01 p.m., asking if there are any members of the public wishing to address the Council.

Umm Junaid Nur Moebius, 15 Green Street states this is my first meeting. She came here to represent people from her culture, where they cannot represent themselves. In the north end, there are drug dealers alcoholism vandalism and she sees people beating up on each other. I am here to start the process of starting Muslim Mothers Against Abuse. She is a member of the Chamber. She wants to stand up for those who can't. She would like to find resources to spearhead this to lead people in a better direction.

Bill Boylan, East Main Street states what drives him crazy is he can come into a meeting in the Chamber and he can't hear anything. We need a sound system that can be used at Council meetings and at town committee meetings. He spent time in the military and around power tools and his ears ring. There is hearing loss suffered by a lot of people and it makes it difficult to hear what is going on and have a better understanding of what is going on. He came here tonight to see what is going on. This is his first Council meeting and he asks if the Council is aware of financial discrepancies with the School Board. Board Member Lynda Szykowitz spoke at the Town Committee meeting and he asks if the Council is aware there are questionable aspects about the finances of the School Board. We pay property taxes whether landlord, homeowner or tenants. We=deserve to know where the money is going. He asks what the status is on the armored assault vehicle for a bargain price of \$10,000; are we still getting that. The Chair states he will respond; normally we don't. Mr. Boylan states the Deputy Director of Emergency Management states it is a difficult vehicle to maintain. It gets 2 miles to gallon, doesn't use normal diesel fuel and the tires cost \$2,000 apiece. Do we need an armored assault vehicle and can we afford the maintenance and is there anyone in Public Works who can maintain the vehicle. What on earth does a municipality need a vehicle like that.

The Chair states the vehicle is an armored personnel vehicle. It costs \$750,000 and we got for free; it cost \$10,000 to transport it. The reason that we have it is that the SWAT vehicle is inadequate. It is a hand-me-down and it was designed with imperfections in the brakes. The team has to replenish the brake fluid and if not done, the brakes don't work. It is not the safest vehicle. Due to fact we could acquire it for nothing from surplus and we do have staff that can handle maintenance, it made sense to get this vehicle. One of the benefits we get because it is armored plated and if they have to drive in under fire, our SWAT team will be protected.

Mr. Boylan asks when was the last time we used the SWAT team. The Chair states they use it all the time. Councilwoman Bartolotta states they are also part of the Tri-state SWAT and they are called to other towns.

The Chair asks if there was another question. Mr. Boylan asks about the impropriety of bookkeeping at the Board. The Chair asks what it is. Mr. Boylan states Lynda Szykowitz stated they were there and she could not get a grasp on it. The Chair states he will not listen to accusations of criminality without evidence. There is nothing going on to his knowledge and if you have specifics, we will be happy to look at it. The Chair states as a Board of Education member, she should come forward if she has concerns and he would be happy to hear if she has them.

Councilman Daley states as a Board of Education member, she should come before us and present information she has. The Board finances are audited every year by our auditors and there have been issues and they have been addressed but nothing that is outrageous. It is misunderstandings and maybe they are not diligent in their practices. Mr. Boylan states he was not suggesting fraud, but issues of bookkeeping. Councilman Daley states they are audited when the City is and the independent accountant certifies their statements.

Noted for the Record

Councilman Bauer takes his seat at 7:13 p.m.

The Chair states as to the audio, Bill Russo is looking into it; we have had some problems and it is being addressed.

Councilman Streeto, to the first speaker states the Health Department does do grants to organizations that file appropriate applications to them for broad based health care issues. It is past the deadline this year, but you could inquire for the procedures for next year.

Councilman Giuliano for Mr. Boylan's benefit, Mrs. Szykowitz and Vin Loffredo have been scrutinizing Board of Education budgets and for those of us who have served with Vin, if there is anything to find, they will find it. Budgeting and expending funds, the Board does it differently from the city and it is difficult to review.

Mr. Boylan states the City in all of its provisions uses generally accepted accounting practices. Councilman Giuliano responds it does. He continues there are nine people on the Board of Education and some are more diligently than others, but someone is always looking at what is going on.

Councilwoman Kasper made the point the Board is more transparent and more forthright than they have ever been; we share resources and we will be happy to hear from anyone who brings forward information.

Public Comment Closes

The Chair, seeing no further speakers, closes public comment at 7:17 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned

Councilman Chisem moves to adjourn and his motion is seconded by Councilwoman Bartolotta. The vote is called and it is unanimous to approve with nine aye votes. The Chair declares the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

ATTEST:

MARIE O NORWOOD
Common Council Clerk