

Town of East Haven, CT
Recreation & Athletic Complex Commission Minutes
Monday August 10, 2015, 7:00 P.M., East Haven Sr. Center
91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512

MINUTES

Meeting was called to order at 7pm

Roll Call

Judy Esposito, Lou Anastasio, William Porto, Joan Adamczyk, and Barry Morganti – All Present. Ken McKay, Lou Pane, Paul Thompson, David Esposito – All Absent. Also in attendance was Sal Maltese - Board of Finance, Bob Sands and Beverly Gravino - Town Council Members, Stacey Gravino - Town Clerk, and Carl Ruggiero - RTC Member

Approval of Minutes

Joan Adamczyk stated that they do not have the minutes from the last meeting therefore they cannot be approved.

Correspondence Received

None

Correspondence Sent

None

Public Session

None

Director's Report

Joan Adamczyk stated that this portion will be tabled until Lou Pane is present. (By the end of the meeting Lou Pane was not in attendance this evening)

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Old Business

Judy Esposito stated that last time they had a meeting Lou Pane he wanted her to find out about the benches on the beach. She stated that whoever orders a bench pays for the bench. The bill goes to Paul Rizza in the in the finance department and the family pays the exact amount billed which is \$500. Joan stated that she thinks Lou's concern was why it does not come before this board. Lou Anastasio stated that the concern was answered and he quotes from the Town Council minutes from Paul Rizza, that the bill comes into the finance department and it's paid and there is no profit involved, installation done by Public Works, but it's stated that the Parks and Rec department wanted to keep the money. Lou Anastasio states that we never said that. Lou Pane's concern was who gives the right to do this. Town Clerk Stacey Gravino states that it's always been the Mayor's office; you go to the Mayor's office to order the bench because they have a company that does the benches and they tell Public Works when it comes in. It's never gone before the commission even since April's term. Joan states that we should wait until Lou Pane is present to clarify his concerns.

Lou Anastasio states he has some concerns regarding the last Town Council meeting. He quotes the last meeting minutes on August 4th:

"Councilman Parente says here we have a Town owned building again and all we hear from the public are disenchanting comments as to what is going on over there. The people who play hockey pay \$250 for ice time, there are coaches paying hundreds of thousands of dollars that goes to the Town for rental. (*Lou Anastasio stated he does not know about that*) As a high figure there is about \$8,000 that comes into the Town for events at the pool (*Lou Anastasio states he does not know about that either*) such as pool parties, Frank Butler gave that estimate today and said it is not more than \$10,000. That leaves \$100,000 that someone is collecting on our facility that is not going into the Town's pocket. (*Lou Anastasio stated that he does not know where Mr. Parente got that figure from either.*) Councilwoman Esposito says the fees are done by the Director and approved by the Commission. Councilman Parente says that commission has tabled the fees for the pool; there is someone on the Commission that is gaining the \$100,000 income."

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Lou Anastasio states no one pays a fee except a hockey team for baseball; basketball all the programs that are run in Connecticut, in East Haven, no one pays a fee except hockey. Even the swimming team for the high school does not pay a fee to use the pool. As far as I know, the only team that pays a fee to use a facility is the hockey team. I do not know why I was not here when they approved those fees.

(Quoting from minutes)

“Councilman Butler III says they should draft a letter to the ethics Committee because this person is financially benefiting by monies that should be coming to the Town and he is also to Vice Chairman of that Commission. That is definitely an ethical problem, if not a legal problem. Chairman Anania asks the Town Attorney his legal opinion on this before they jump into anything. Town Attorney Joseph Zullo says this is not the kind of legal opinion he is prepared to write from the hip but his instinct is to advise this board itself not to file an ethics complaint. If there is something to be investigated a letter could probably be sent to the proper authority whether it be HR at Town Hall or somebody else but he wouldn’t want this board itself to file a complaint because it could get very gray very quickly. Councilman Palladino says he is going to base this on his 27 years as a Police Officer; this is a crime being committed. This is a theft of municipal services by using this pool without paying for it. He thinks this should either be turned over to our Police Department, the State’s Attorney Office, State Police or the Justice Department. This is an ongoing crime that has been going on for what he is told is 20 years; an individual has been robbing this Town for 20 years. This person needs to be arrested or the Town needs to receive restitution. This isn’t just a little crime, there is no question this is a theft of municipal services. It is no different than Public Works coming to his driveway and paving it and saying they’ll pay for it because he is on the Council. A fee is supposed to be charged. When the Police Department/Union used the rink they paid every single week. *(Lou Anastasio states because that is the only place that charges a fee)* They paid the youth hockey discount rate but they used it at 10pm”

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Lou Anastasio states that when the police department was using the pool for the underwater thing they were charged. No one is charged anything except to use the rink.

(Quoting from minutes)

“Chairman Anania says he knows he has made some sort of contribution to the Town, he asks Mr. Rizza how much was given to the Town.”

Lou Anastasio states that Mr. Rizza who does not get any of these monies that I give it's not hundreds of dollars its thousands of dollars I give the town every year. It is a very little amount one check was \$120 he saw and seen one for \$38 – with the money I have given to the town they have repaired the furnace, we bought lane markers for several thousand dollars, I am the only program in town that gives money back to the town they don't get it from anyone else.

(Quoting from minutes)

“Councilman Parente says they have to remember that they did ask Mr. Rizza to send letters to all organizations who receive a stipend. They need to look into this situation, inclusive of the pool and Biddy Basketball. (*Lou Anastasio states that is wrong too because I gave Mr. Rizza my tax receipts twice and he said that's beautiful*) Biddy Basketball acknowledges they have \$100,000 in a bond that is for a building committee that someday they may need to use to build a building. They asked for some accountability with income and expenses. A lot of the non-profit organizations keep building their funds up at the Town's/taxpayer's expense. Stipends are given to offset expenses, we need to address everyone out there and fix the general problem in addition to the specifics with this pool. (*Lou Anastasio states how about the basketball court?*) We need to look into where the money is going; are accounts supposed to be zeroed out as non-profits are supposed to according to the bylaws. Not all of them do, they keep surpluses and add to them every year. The East Haven Cemetery has \$9,000 in their account and we are giving another \$9,000; why didn't they use last year's why are we just adding to this. (*Lou Anastasio stated that East Haven Aquatics is not a non-profit organization it is an LLC for insurance purposes if someone gets hurt in the pool I do not want them to sue me, and the other thing is EH Aquatics is 2 programs – one the stipend program which is*

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basically like Biddy Basketball and the other one is the instructional program that has a contact with the town. I have a contract with the town to run these programs, no you don't know how angry I am)

(Quoting from minutes)

“Police Chief Brent Larrabee addresses the Council and indicates that a formal complaint has been lodged with him, it just came to their attention within the last several days” “Chairman Anania asks if he will get back to them on the solution. Chief Larrabee says probably not because if it is an issue of theft of funding/services it will probably take a while. They just got this detailed complaint and will be following up on it. Councilman Parlato says he doesn't like anyone being accused of anything without due process. We have had more mom and pop operations in this Town” *(Lou states that basically Parlato defends EH Aquatics and what these people are doing is wrong, you should read the whole thing it's pretty good – He said due process and all that stuff. Joan Adamczyk begins to speak, listen though. Lou Anastasio interjects...nope...nope...nope – Lou continues reading minutes.)*

(Quoting from minutes)

“Chairman Anania says he believes it is now out of the Council's hands because the Chief has received a formal complaint so it is in their hands now. Councilman Palladino says so that there is no misunderstanding, he is a former Police Officer so he has a little more knowledge of the law than Councilman Parlato which is why he wants this investigated by the Police Department. The swimming program is an LLC, *(Lou Anastasio states it is I cannot be a non-profit it's impossible)* East Haven Youth Hockey and all of the other ones are registered non-profits.”

Lou Anastasio states that they even blame the Recreation council people for being thieves and they want to bring the members of council up for stealing money. Joan Adamczyk states listen they can say whatever they want in here if you have nothing to hide or be afraid of... Lou Anastasio states no, no, no that's not good enough, that is not good enough! Joan states then you get your own attorney...Lou states no, no. no listen to me...Joan states I am listening to you if this is under criminal investigation we are not going to talk about it anymore. Lou states I don't know if it is. I just wanted to bring this issue before the commission to get their input, if your input is that you being called a thief or member of this commission is

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being called a thief I really don't have...Joan states if they are calling us crooks that's an issue. Lou states what he plans to do is number one will always assume that the council members are uninformed but they are defaming you, me, and EH Aquatics, our commissioners they are not informed about what is going on, if there is \$200,000 or \$50,000 taken in I run a 12 month program there are 11 employees, 90% is salary you don't get a person to put his butt in the water 2 hours a day 5 days a week to volunteer their time, so when they through this figure out \$100, or \$50,000 dollars what are the expenses? I assuming that these council members are uninformed OR they have an agenda. Joan states then you have to inform them Lou. Lou states NO, I am not going to inform them I am going to call Joe Zullo and discuss my concerns and explain everything to him and get a written answer and depending on Joes written answer in response I will take action with asking for a special session of this commission OR seek legal counsel because I am not going to have anyone defame me, the commission, EH Aquatics in all these years I put into this program, for what, for what? I don't get a dime out of this thing at all and I have the tax records back from how many years. Joan states people start a lot of gossip in this town about who has what money, it talk Lou, just talk. Lou states no this isn't talk this is in print this is not talk.

Joan states now listen, you met on many occasions with the director Lou Pane. Lou states, no I don't meet with Lou Pane that much, I meet with Frank Butler. Joan states well when you did that is why everything was tabled last time and we did not give you a fee for the use of the pool because it was under the recommendation of the director Lou Pane. He saw your books he saw you were paying out money to coaches. Lou Anastasio stated and the other reason why was because no one is charged why should you pick out EH Aquatics? Joan states well no one is charged because nobody receives a salary, Biddy, Foxon they are all volunteer. Lou states they only run for 3 months, they are all volunteers. Joan responds, right but you're different. Lou states yes, that is why I wrote the contract with the town and give them a certain percentage back. Joan asks when the contract was written. Lou states Maturo with his first administration. Joan states maybe it should be re-visited. Lou ask why, why? Joan states people don't know you give money back. I was unaware you gave money back. Lou stated Rizza did, Judy does.

Lou states whenever they run clinics in the town they give 5% back to Lou Pane, minus expenses. If I gave 5% of my profit back at the end of each month it would be about \$5-10 dollars. What I have been doing , we have a registration at the end

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of every month, what I have been doing is giving the town from \$900 - \$1500 back every year and I run a 12 month program I get the least stipend from all the programs... \$7,500 all the other programs run three month I run 12 months it's just not fair that these people are getting more, and I explained this to this commission how many times that this is being done. There is nothing under the table, but I resent the fact that I work my ass off trying to get this pool built in the first place, and then developing probably the best instructional and competitive program in the area and getting pissed on by these people who are not informed. This is the third time I have been requested to see my books, I say Paul Rizza here are my books, and last time he said not I don't want to see them you're alright. Joan states there is a breakdown in communication somewhere. Lou stated to Joan what are you talking about a breakdown these people are calling me a thief! Joan states I am not talking about that there should be guideline showing your books and at the end of the year...Lou interrupts Why Me! Everyone then! Joan states yes everyone not just you. Lou stated, no you're saying EH Aquatics with what's going on. Joan states listen, listen, ...Lou states this is not going to end, I have worked too hard in this town to develop these program to go through this.

Joan states firmly it's going to end because there is a criminal investigation and then you have recourse if they are slandering your name, or anyone in the commission, they have to really tread water here, and in lieu of that there are other council people here if they would like to speak. Lou states yes let them speak.

Councilman Bob Sands states first of all when Chief Larrabee stepped up and sat at the table and told us that there was a complaint and investigation being started the conversation stopped right there. Anything up to that point the Chief could have stepped up but he didn't, and said there was a complaint lodged, again we stopped discussion. Now it's out of our hands and have to wait for the investigation. Lou Anastasio states, but you think they can talk like that without knowing anything, and who filed the complaint? Bob Sand states we do not know who filed the complaint the Chief did not say or explain. Each council member speaks as an individual, and the chairman did not stop any discussion. Lou states that's disgusting. Councilman Bob Sands states I realize that, and it's all in the minutes, and it did not help until Chief stepped up and said hold on a second, so the council stopped discussion. Lou stated it was said and it came out of their mouths and I will seek legal counsel unless I get a damn apology from either the Mayor or whoever. The mayor reads this stuff he could have said you're out of line. Joan states the Mayor was not there though. Lou states he could have picked up the

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phone and said these guys are out of line Lou I will take care of it and that would have been it. Joan states I don't think he can Lou a complaint was lodged.

Judy Esposito states Lou your name was never mentioned. Lou states back what are you talking about the Vice Chairman said EH Aquatics that bullshit. Judy said but Lou you have your books, you have nothing to worry about. Lou states I don't want this crap said about me. Joan tells Lou's don't yell at her calm down, they would just have to do a retraction and apologize or whatever. Lou states but it's right here. Joan said I know it's there, then you can take legal recourse and don't worry about it, and let the criminal investigation go on. Lou states, but I am hurt and you got these couple of pin heads in there saying this. I will say again, I will give them the benefit of the doubt that they have been pumped full of information, and Rizza could have settled the whole thing; I don't know how many times he has seen my books they are perfect. Joan states there are rumors in this town, hearsay, etc. and a little story turns into a big story so it's crazy if you have nothing to worry about then... Lou states that's an excuse! Joan states it's not an excuse. Lou states I don't care if they do away with these programs, I don't give a shit about anything, I don't need... I don't make any money, but I will let the people know what is going on, this has angered me and I will get even! Joan interrupts and said no, listen, listen, and calm down. Lou states no you don't get it 50 – 60 years at that pool! Joan states calm down. Lou states you try to do something good and these people just.....

Councilman Gravino asks to speak she states one issue the council has is that year after year we have asked for an accounting, a very exact accounting, how many employees you have, what you pay, expenses very detailed, we do not get it. Lou states I was never asked. Councilman Gravino state oh come on Lou. Lou states I was asked twice and I gave Rizza my accounts and everything and you can have a copy of that letter I will give it to you. Councilman Gravino states this is a double sided story don't blame the whole council for this and don't blame the council for being concerned for not just you but other organization who do not hand in information. Lou states I fully agree with you. I'd be happy to give you everything you need it's all there even up to this years. Once 3 or 4 years ago they did, and the 2nd year I gave it to Rizza and he said nahhh I don't need it.

Councilman Gravino states we were blindsided by this, we did not know this was coming up. We never knew this was going to be brought up. Joan Adamczyk stated that every year there is talk. Lou stated there is always talk. Councilman

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Gravino stated we never knew that this was going to be brought up. Lou Anastasio states then why doesn't someone at the next council say hey call him up and I will explain everything. Joan states at this point you cannot say anything. Lou explains at this point these people cannot just go free now. Joan states they won't go free. Lou states once it's said in the paper under investigation no matter what they find out oh there's no problem there I'm still screwed! Joan states no you're not. Lou states oh bullshit. Joan states then you can issue your own legal action.

Lou asks Joan if she accepts what they are saying about these commissioners here that you're guilty. Joan states no, but Lou I know I am not guilty, so this does not bother me, I have nothing to hide, I did not do anything wrong, this does not affect me. These are only words to me. Lou states well you're not being investigated. Joan states if you have nothing to worry about..... Lou interjects I don't give a shit nothing to worry about, I should not be investigated. Joan states to Lou to calm down. Lou states know one knows how mad I am to have to go through all this bullshit...go see Joe..another attorney..sue against the people.

Board of Finance member Sal Maltese asks to speak. He asks Lou how long has he been running this. Lou states 35-40 years. Sal Maltese states so then we have 35-40 years of Town Council where we have allowed him to run the pool as is. How many times have you been audited? Lou states he only gives an accounting when he is asked he has only given it twice. Sal Maltese states that he is trying to figure this out, so if you have been doing this for 35 years so you are telling me that the Town Council has only asked you for an accounting twice? Lou states no the 1st 20 years it was an organization called the East Haven Big Blues Swim team and I only took this over 15 years ago. Sal Maltese asks so in 15 years how many times has the Town Council asked you for an accounting? Lou states that I know of, twice but I use to show Lou Pane the records and twice to Paul Rizza. Sal Maltese states so the Town Council never really asked you for anything right? Lou Anastasio states well they asked me, I got the letter from the Town Council the past couple of years to give these things. Sal Maltese states ok so why is this all of a sudden and who lodged this complaint. Joan states no one knows. Sal states I understand where he is coming from and I understand where the Town Council is coming from but basically you have some stuff in here that is damaging to either him or the committee. Joan states she understands that. Sal Maltese states so because it's under investigations just table it and forget about it for now and let it

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takes its course because they are under the gun here because they really don't know. Lou states he is not knowledgeable about this stuff.

William Porto states what if he's right and the Town Council is wrong then what happens. Sal Maltese states it's basically who ever lodged the complaint and its deformation of character of what you're doing here so let it takes its course. Let Zullo do what he's doing because you're blaming the whole Town Council. Lou states no, no, no I only mentioned those two people and I praised Parlato. William Porto asks why the commission is being investigated as a whole. Lou states yeah the commission are crooks. Joan states right here "that if the members of the commission need to brought then so be it" Town Clerk Stacy Gravino states the commissioners are not being investigated its East Haven Aquatics" Joan said yes right here it says:

(quoting minutes)

"Officers/Firefighters of the Town using it to stay in shape. This is a crime and for us to look the other way and the Commission to look the other way, if the members of the Commission need to be brought to justice also then so be it."

Town Clerk Stacy Gravino states yes brought to justice not that they are investigating you. Lou laughs and states that's bullshit. William Porto states it's the commission against the Town Council. Joan states no it's not us against them. Sal Maltese states just table it let it take its course because they have to do their thing. Lou asks so what's the complaint anyway? Judy Esposito states he did not say they did not mention names or who was being investigated. Lou states of course they did the Vice Chairman of the commission. Joan states that's it, it's done we will table it until the investigation is over. William Porto states you got your piece in Louie. Lou states anyway I only picked this up today because I did not realize it was being investigated it's all bullshit, but maybe we should get copies of the Town Council whatever they say as it refers to the commission, the minutes. I am saying maybe we should get it every month. Joan states its right online or you can go to Town Hall. Joan states listen we really have to table this right now it's under investigation. Listen your upset, I'm upset. William Porto state well I am upset too. Lou states that's really putting it mild.

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New Business

Joan asks if the water fountain got fixed. Lou stated not fixed, I asked Mr. Parente, and Mr. White, I asked Mr. ummm, to get me a price, just a price and East Haven Aquatic would pay for it, I cannot even get a price to pay for it like we pay for everything else that needs fixed at that pool. Joan states so then it's not cooling the water. You want to replace it? Lou stated I need a price we are willing to replace it. Joan states she will speak with Mr. Parente tomorrow regarding it. Were the lane markers taken care of? Lou states the lane markers have not been paid for yet that East Haven Aquatics purchased with the money because there is a defect with the lane markers and they have to repair them so I talked to the assistant treasurer I said hold the check up till the repair is made so as far as I know the repair has not been made so the check should not have been written. Joan states so the company was sending someone out to repair them? Lou states supposedly. Joan states she will touch base with Lou Pane regarding that. Lou states no Frank Butler, you have to talk to Frank Butler I deal with Frank Butler not Lou Pane with the pool ok? He's the one in charge of the pool.

Adjournment

Lou makes a motion to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. William Porto seconds the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Temple Smith
Sub-Clerk