

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
JANUARY 5, 2022  
7:00 P.M.  
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT  
Hybrid Meeting**

**Selectmen present:** Colin Moll, Kathleen Harrington, Peter Hill, Jerry Mahoney and Mel Chafetz

**Present in person or via Zoom teleconference:** Town Attorney Derek Donnelly, Director of Planning and Development Bill Hawkins, Suffield Housing Authority Director Kerry O'Brien and Human Resource Director Karin Ziemba

**First Selectman Moll** wished all a Happy New Year, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Moment of Silence – Bruce Remington**

**First Selectman Moll** asked for a moment of silence to honor town resident **Bruce Remington** who passed away on Saturday, December 11th at the age of 84. He noted that Bruce, a U.S. Army Veteran, served his community in a number of ways during his lifetime. He was elected to serve on the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance and the WPCA, where he proudly served as the Chairman for 31 years. **First Selectman Moll** extended sincere condolences on behalf of the Town of Suffield to his wife of 56 years, Kathleen, his children Eric, Kris and Tara, and the entire Remington family and expressed his thanks for Mr. Remington's dedicated service to our community.

**Public Comment**

**Bob White, 995 Newgate Road** – Mr. White spoke on the subject of the Library Commission and gave his thoughts on what the Library Commission does and does not need in regard to its members. He also discussed concerns he had with town government and the decision that was made to request resumes for any candidates interested in a position on the commission whether they were current members looking to be reappointed or potential newcomers to the Commission. He strongly feels that this recent and "unprecedented" request "smacks of political gamesmanship." His wrapped up his commentary by noting that common sense suggests that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" and "don't mess with success." He feels interference by the previous administration caused high-level employees to leave their positions within the Library. He urged the new administration to "start off on the right foot" and appoint the most qualified candidate to fill the one open position and not remove any of the current members.

**Kerry White, 995 Newgate Road** – Ms. White, a board member of the Friends of the Library for over 40 years, wished to express her concerns at the prospect of any of the current Library Commission members not having their terms renewed. Ms. White urged the selectmen to make their decisions based on what is best for the library and not allow political party affiliations to guide them. Ms. White expressed her support for the five current members who are up for reappointment and outlined each member's specific skill set. She also expressed support for commission candidate Jim Irwin and provided her thoughts on why Mr. Irwin should fill the vacancy left by the resignation of former commission member Ann Ho.

**Jim Irwin, 58 Marbern Drive** – Mr. Irwin, also a member of the Friends of the Library, introduced himself to the selectmen, provided a brief background and outlined the various ways in which he has been involved with library and town activities over the years which have lead him to seek appointment to the

Kent Memorial Library Commission. Mr. Irwin agreed with Ms. White's comments that appointment decisions should not be based on political party affiliation and thanked the group for their consideration this evening.

**Mike Alexopolous, 15 Strathmore Lane** – Mr. Alexopolous, a current member of the Kent Memorial Library Commission, noted that he has served with all five individuals who are up for reappointment and feels that each one has skills that are highly needed on the commission. He recommends that all five be reappointed this evening. By maintain the current make-up of the commission, he feels this will allow for stability as they continue to establish our town library as the 21st century library all are interested in obtaining.

**Eliza Childs, 338 South Main Street** – Ms. Childs, the acting President of the Kent Memorial Library Commission, thanked Mr. and Mrs. White for their remarks and noted that each member up for reappointment brings unique talents to the table. She asks that all current commission members be reinstated as they always have been in the past.

**Annie & Neil Hornish, 584 Thrall Avenue** – Ms. Hornish, speaking on behalf of herself and her husband Neil, requested that the selectmen allow the current library commission members to keep their appointed seats and expressed support for commission candidate Jim Irwin. She also suggested that with the “millions of federal and state dollars coming in” the board should consider using some of the “freed up budget money” in order to ensure that our library is properly funded.

**Ann Franczyk, 31 Greendale Drive** – Ms. Franczyk spoke of the apparent tension and conflict among the Kent Memorial Library staff, commission members and town leaders, which is “disconcerting” to her. She requests full transparency from the new administration with regard to what issue or issues drove this disconnect initially and asks the administration to look for solutions which will lead to restoring the communities trust and reestablishing a workable alliance between the Kent Memorial Library staff, commission and the Board of Selectmen.

**Suzanne Richardson-White, 824 Newgate Road** – Ms. Richardson-White wanted to express her general support for the library and her belief that the Library is the “heartbeat” of the town. She encouraged the selectmen to do what was best for the library and reappoint the current members and avoid moving forward with the “unprecedented” action of removing current members who are interested in reappointment. Ms. Richardson-White also expressed her support for Jim Irwin to be appointed.

#### **Approval of the minutes from the December 1, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen with three changes as follows:**

- 1) Page 3 – At the bottom of the page the vote for waiving the Bid and Purchase Policy should be recorded as 3 in favor (Moll, Mahoney and Harrington) and 1 against (Hill) with motion passing.**
- 2) Page 2 – In the second paragraph on the third line the word “be” should be inserted to read “would be comfortable.....”**
- 3) Page 8 – Under CCM Convention on the second line a period should be placed after the word “convention” in order to complete the sentence.**

**Vote: 4 in favor (Moll, Hill, Harrington and Mahoney) and 1 abstain (Chafetz.) Motion passed.**

#### **Approval of the minutes from the December 10, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2021 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval to apply for a small cities community development block grant for the housing authority**

**First Selectman Moll** invited Director of Planning and Development **Bill Hawkins** to present to the selectmen on the grant application for Suffield Housing Authority Improvements. Mr. Hawkins provided the following overview:

**BACKGROUND:** The Suffield Housing Authority is seeking assistance to make modernization improvements to its public senior and disabled housing complex on Bridge Street. The Town has the opportunity to apply for grant funds through the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program to assist with these improvements. The application deadline has not been announced yet but we expect it to be in April similar to previous years. We are seeking authorization to submit a grant application to the State of Connecticut for \$2,000,000.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:** The Suffield Housing Authority operates 70 units of senior/disabled housing at Laurel Court, Maple Court and Broder Place. The properties were developed in three phases in 1967, 1971 and 1988. Immediate capital improvement needs include replacing concrete dumpster pads, split unit heat pumps on all dwelling units, outside water faucets, gutters and downspouts, new sidewalks, additional parking spaces. Budget permitting, siding on the structures will be replaced. The Housing Authority is in the process of acquiring an architect to develop plans and a cost estimate for the grant application.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** There is no financial impact to the town outside of staff time. We will seek consultant services to submit the grant application and administer the grant should one be offered to the town. The consultant will be paid out of the grant funding.

**OTHER BOARD ACTION:** The Board of Finance will need to approve the application at their next meeting, which Mr. Hawkins plans to attend on January 10, 2022. Suffield Housing Authority

**Mr. Hawkins** introduced **Suffield Housing Authority Director Kerry O'Brien** who spoke briefly about the grant, how it works and how it would be utilized.

Discussion ensued among the selectmen, Town Attorney Donnelly, Director Hawkins and Director O'Brien. Answers were provided accordingly.

**Selectman Mahoney moved and voted that the Board of Selectmen adopt the following resolutions regarding application to the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program for funding for improvement to the public senior housing operated by the Suffield Housing Authority; and that the First Selectman is hereby authorized to enter into and execute such documents necessary for the grant.**

**WHEREAS, Federal monies are available under the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Housing pursuant to Public Law 93-383, as amended; and,  
WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 127c, and Part VI of Chapter 130 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Commissioner of Housing is authorized to disburse such Federal monies to local**

**municipalities; and,**

**WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Suffield make application to the State for \$2,000,000 in order to undertake a Small Cities Community Development Program and to execute an Assistance Agreement therefore, should one be offered.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN:**

- 1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for State Assistance imposed by Part VI of Chapter 130 of The Connecticut General Statutes; and,**
- 2. That the filing of an application by the Town of Suffield in an amount not to exceed \$2,000,000 is hereby approved, and that the First Selectman is hereby authorized and directed to file such Application with the Commissioner of the Department of Housing, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required by the Commissioner, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an Agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, rescissions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Suffield and refer to Board of Finance as discussed. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval of LOTCIP pavement grant**

**First Selectman Moll** walked through the request being made by Town Engineer Karen Isherwood as she was unable to be in attendance. Ms. Isherwood had provided information to the selectmen in advance of the meeting in order for them to fully understand the options before them. Her summary is as follows:

The Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is inviting municipalities to submit proposals for Transportation Improvement Projects for funding under the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Project (LOTCIP). Proposals to be considered include Reconstruction (road/bridge) projects, Bicycle/Pedestrian projects, Pavement rehabilitation projects and Stand-Alone Sidewalk projects. Each municipality may submit materials for two (2) project proposals, with a maximum limit of award of \$3.2 million per municipality. The RFP submission deadline is January 19, 2022.

The maximum cost for any single Roadway Reconstruction/Major Pavement Rehabilitation/Bridge Improvement project is 3.2 million. Minor pavement rehabilitation, Stand-Alone Sidewalk projects and Bicycle and Pedestrian projects are subject to a maximum cost of 1.2 million per project.

Awarded funds would provide for 100% of all construction expense and includes expenses for construction inspection. Funding for initial project design would be the responsibility of the Town. I estimate design fees at approximately \$100,000-\$120,000 per project. The Multi-Use Trail account currently has \$150,000 unencumbered that is available for design, along with \$90,000 unencumbered in the Remington Street Bridge account.

The request before the Board is for a motion to allow the Town Engineer to appropriate approval from the Board of Finance to apply for LOTCIP funding, and upon authorization, to submit all required documentation for the RFP for the projects chosen by the Board of Selectmen.

**Projects options include:**

- Thompsonville Road (Rt. 190) Pavement Rehabilitation**
- Bridge Street Pavement Rehabilitation**
- Farmington Valley Greenway Bike Trail - Rehabilitation**
- CRCOG LOTCIP Program 2022 Solicitation Project Selection Policy**

A lengthy discussion ensued among the selectmen and Attorney Donnelly with First Selectman Moll providing the recommendations of Town Engineer Isherwood. Each project was discussed individually with the selectmen which allowed them to each provide their thoughts, concerns and the rationale behind their own preferences.

**Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the LOTCIP pavement grant for Thompsonville Road (Rt. 190) Pavement Rehabilitation *without* relocating utilities underground and for the Farmington Valley Greenway Bike Trail Rehabilitation and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 4 in favor (Moll, Harrington, Mahoney and Chafetz) and 1 against (Hill.) Motion passed.**

**Discussion of American Rescue Plan funds**

**First Selectman Moll** invited Attorney Donnelly to provide a quick overview of the American Rescue Plan Funds and how the program will work. He noted that it is very complicated and constantly moving with guidelines changing frequently. Many towns have found themselves scrambling to figure out the best way to utilize these funds. He provided information on the total dollar amounts received thus far for both the town and the state and offered examples of how some of these funds have been spent by other towns. Attorney Donnelly walked the selectman through a document he had provided to them earlier which outlined ways in which the funds can be used and offered examples, including examples of what some of our surrounding towns have done. He noted that there is plenty of time to consider what to do, however, it is important to start thinking about the directions we would like to go.

Discussion ensued amongst the selectman with ideas being considered for how to move forward with the spending of funds. Attorney Donnelly weighed in with his thoughts.

**Discussion and approval of appointments to the Kent Memorial Library Commission**

**First Selectman Moll** introduced the agenda item and began by explaining that there are currently six (6) openings on the Kent Memorial Library Commission and the board received resumes from 12 interested parties. This evening the board must make a decision as to who will fill these openings.

**Selectman Chafetz motioned to reappoint all those who are presently on the Kent Memorial Library Commission to a new term.**

Discussion ensued amongst the selectmen with regard to the current political party make-up of the commission, the importance of having a balanced commission that represents all points of view and the process for reappointment. The arguments were made for and against automatic reappointment with each selectmen expressing their opinions on the process. In this particular instance, the board of selectmen received 7 resumes from interested parties and in turn requested resumes from the 5 current commission members. While requesting resumes from current commission members is not necessarily common practice it was deemed appropriate in order keep the evaluation process as fair as possible. Past practices were discussed and it was argued that the practice of automatically renewing the same individuals does

not allow for newly interested volunteers to have an opportunity to become involved and may ultimately deter people from volunteering in the future. Whether or not the decision to handle the reappointments was political in nature was discussed, as the current make-up of the commission includes 8 Democrats, 1 Republican and 3 unaffiliated. It was argued that although it was not politically motivated, party composition of any commission is a factor to be considered in any appointment. All agreed that the goal is to choose individuals who will have the library's best interest at heart and not choose based on political affiliation. Not all were in agreement of the way in which the process was being handled as they felt it was unfair to those who had volunteered their valuable time to be "kicked off" the commission without a valid reason and against what seems to be the way things have "always been done."

**Vote: 2 in favor (Hill and Chafetz) and 3 opposed (Moll, Harrington and Mahoney.) Motion failed.**

**Selectman Harrington motioned to appoint Joshua Barrows, Christine Sinopoli, Despina Tartsinis, Corbin Adzigirey, Joe Grimard and Claire Kawalec to the Kent Memorial Library Commission.**

Discussion continued among the selectmen with regard to this method of asking some to step down when they wish to continue. Concerns were raised about whether or not a candidate had a history of involvement with the library and also with the idea of politics becoming involved in the decisions. Management of the library and its interaction with the town management were also discussed.

**Vote: 3 in favor (Mahoney, Harrington and Moll) and 2 against (Hill and Chafetz.) Motion passed.**

**Selectman Hill motioned to add agenda item 9A "Public Comment." Vote: 2 in favor (Hill and Chafetz) and 3 against (Moll, Harrington and Mahoney.) Motion failed.**

### **Selectmen Updates**

#### **Condolences**

**First Selectman Moll** extended condolences to **Selectman Mahoney** on the recent passing of his father.

#### **New Police Chief and Captain**

**First Selectman Moll** welcomed new Police Chief James Canon and new Police Captain Robert Palmer. He also extended his thanks to retiring Police Chief Rick Brown for his dedication and service to our community and wished him the best in his retirement. **First Selectman Moll** noted that the Swearing-in Ceremony for the new Chief and Captain will take place on Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium at the Suffield High School and all are welcome to attend.

#### **Bradley Development League Meeting**

**First Selectman Moll** gave an overview of his recent attendance at the December meeting which he attended with Planning and Development Director Bill Hawkins. He looks forward to working with the group and seeing what they have to offer our town.

#### **COVID Test Kit Rollout**

**First Selectman Moll** thanked all that were involved in the recent distribution of the COVID Test Kits received by the state. He acknowledged that it was not an easy process and the window for distribution of the kits was extremely short. Unfortunately, Suffield only received enough kits to cover less than 10% of its population. First Selectman Moll reported that the town will be receiving another 1,000 kits with a

planned distribution date of Saturday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. The town has worked through some of the flaws encountered in the first distribution and plans to coordinate this next distribution by utilizing an online sign-up format on the town website. Sign-ups will be on a first come, first serve basis. Those who have already received a free test kit are being asked NOT to sign up again which will allow others in need to obtain a kit. The town will be requesting address and contact information for tracking purposes. Information on the sign-up process will be made available on the town website.

### **Kentucky Donation Update**

The Town of Suffield has been taking in donations to aid those affected by the tornados in Kentucky. We have received overwhelming support from the community and have been able to fill an entire tractor trailer with donations. More details will be forthcoming. **First Selectman Moll** extended thanks to all who have been involved in this great effort to help a community in need.

### **Finance Director**

**First Selectman Moll** reported that, due to unfortunate circumstances, our new Finance Director has decided to step down. As such, the town will be re-posting this position. **First Selectman Moll** thanked the Finance Department for stepping up and assisting with anything the town needs as they have really embraced a team effort and the roles they have been asked to take on. Thank you Sal Shwayhat, Marie Bourque and Katie Martin for a job well done!

### **Budget Season**

**First Selectman Moll** reported that budget season is underway. ACCE is starting up and we are in the process of receiving budgets from the department heads. He noted that individual department budget meetings will be held and invited the selectmen to join in any meeting that may interest them.

### **Police Union Arbitration**

**Selectman Mahoney** noted that a decision has been reached in the police union arbitration. The decision called for a change in schedule for the patrolmen. Mahoney explained the former schedule and how it will be adjusted and believes the decision reached is a positive for the Town of Suffield.

**Selectman Mahoney** noted that there has been a variety of litigation between the Hornish's and the Town of Suffield over the last two years with much speculation and commentary on facebook and other social media sites. A decision was recently reached regarding the release of the dog in question or to allow the Hornish's visitation with the dog. This decision is available as a public document and he suggests individuals seeking further information should go directly to the document for accurate information on the subject.

**Selectman Hill** motioned to add agenda item 9a "Public Comment." **Vote 2 in favor (Chafetz and Hill) and 3 opposed (Harrington, Mahoney and Moll.) Motion failed.**

### **Executive Session – Pending Litigation**

### **Executive Session – Employee/Personnel**

**Selectman Hill** motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation and Employee/Personnel and invited Town Attorney Derek Donnelly and Human Resource Director Karin Ziemba to participate. **Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Session to discuss Employee/Personnel matter began at 9:02 p.m. and ended at 9:06 p.m.

Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation began at 9:06 p.m. and ended at 9:39 p.m.

**Action on Executive Session – Pending Litigation**

No action taken.

**Action on Executive Session – Employee/Personnel**

No action taken.

**Selectman Mahoney motioned to adjourn at 9:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary