



TOWN OF SUFFIELD

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN

May 24, 2022

Town Hall, First Floor Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT

Meeting Name: Board of Selectman Special Meeting

By: First Selectman, Colin Moll

Type of Meeting: Hybrid Meeting (In-Person and Zoom)

Selectmen Present: Colin Moll, Kathleen Harrington, Mel Chafetz, Pete Hill and Jerry Mahoney

First Selectman Moll called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Ann Franczyk, 31 Greendale Drive – Ms. Franczyk expressed her feelings regarding hate groups, the recent mass shootings and racism. **Ms. Franczyk** is trusting that the town's leadership and board of education will work together to create meaningful policies and solutions. Kudos to Governor Ned Lamont for passing a bill today to enhance hate crime investigations.

Annie Hornish, 584 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish spoke about Governor Ned Lamont signed bill into law today to support police investigations of racism and racism in schools. Thanked **First Selectman Moll** and **Selectman Chafetz** for attending rally at the town green last Friday.

Approval of the minutes from the May 4, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington presented three changes and motioned to adopt a draft of the minutes from the May 4, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen as presented. **Vote: 5 in favor (Moll, Chafetz, Harrington, Hill and Mahoney) Vote: Motion passed.**

Discussion of Community Challenges Grant

First Selectman Moll invited **Planning & Development Director Bill Hawkins, Director of Parks and Recreation Peter Leclerc** and **Facilities Manager Christopher Matejek**, to present to the Selectmen the Community Challenges Grant. **Mr. Hawkins** opened presenting two possible project options through this state grant program, Babbs Beach Recreation Center or Bridge Street Park. Discussion ensued between the selectmen and the presenters.

First Selectman Moll expressed that he wished to review the plans and that he favored the Babbs Beach Recreation Center proposal, as well as the opportunity to generate operating costs.

Selectman Hill expressed that he favored the Bridge Street Park proposal, to have another park in town for young children in addition to Sunrise Park and in a central location. Historic registry for grant money and possibly federally as well, with the consideration to apply for both proposal.

First Selectman Moll concurred to apply for both to express that the town has the funds.

Facilities Manager Christopher Matejek commented that each estimate was completed in 2021 and that inflation will now have to be taken into consideration while reevaluating them.

First Selectman Moll considered that there are also additional funds available set aside in ARPA money for Parks and Recreation, to potentially fund one project.

Reviewing the Bridge Street Park proposal, **Selectman Mahoney** considered feedback from a past public presentation regarding an athletic field that they are not utilized and were said to be in poor condition. Comparing the Babbs Beach Recreation Center proposal, **Selectman Mahoney** expressed that he is not in favor of the town funding either project but would be if the project were to be funded in conjunction with ARPA money and grant funds.

Selectman Harrington inquired to the presenters what types of things would the space at the Babbs Beach Recreation Center be used for.

Director of Parks and Recreation Peter Leclerc shared his results of a soft survey conducted. He envisions potential for a multiuse facility such as a lake front hall of possibilities such as portable hoops, rental for events, birthday parties, weddings, which would then also include cost recovery and create jobs.

Selectman Harrington favored the Babbs Beach Recreation Center proposal and agreed with **Selectman Mahoney** also recalling the past public comments regarding the athletic field.

Selectman Chafetz commented that Bridge Street Park proposal would be favorable to have an additional park in town for young children. He expressed that the residents in West Suffield would favor the Babbs Beach Recreation Center proposal. He took into consideration that the town has to sell this project while completing the grant application. He shared that with his experience of grant writing, that the Babbs Beach Recreation Center proposal would be attractive to the reviewers of the application.

Director of Parks and Recreation Peter Leclerc commented that the grant will be highly competitive and that the application reviewer will choose the most unique project. The Bridge Street Park proposal could be broken down into phases and agreed that having an additional playground available to residents would be favorable in addition to access to a four-season park including opportunities for large sledding hill. He then added that the Babbs Beach Recreation Center proposal is very different, including opportunities for summer programs, a large field and the beachfront.

Selectman Chafetz questioned what needs to be done at the Babbs Beach Recreation Center.

Facilities Manager Christopher Matejek responded that a three-phase power supply from Eversource needs to be installed for the building to include heating and cooling. He also shared recent improvements including the removal of old restrooms, installation of stairwell and water line, windows and siding.

Selectman Mahoney commented on the importance of heat and plumbing to be added.

Facilities Manager Christopher Matejek continued to share that the facility also required a septic tank, flooring, restrooms, plumbing, fire suppression.

Planning & Development Director Bill Hawkins confirmed that this is a great opportunity to continue the progress at Babbs Beach Recreation Center and that it is the better application in his opinion.

Selectman Harrington commented that the town should apply for the grant that they have the most chance of receiving. She also likes the idea of continuing the phases of Bridge Street Park.

Selectman Mahoney expressed consideration of conducting the Bridge Street Park in phases as a project for the town to move along.

The conversation concluded with **First Selectman Moll** thanking the presenters and **Planning & Development Director Bill Hawkins** stated he would move forward with obtaining estimates to include in the grant application.

Discussion of Tentative Agreement for the Fire Union

First Selectman Moll shared a summary of changes made to the fire union contract in recent negotiations, including changes to vacation time, carryover approvals, increase of personal time, premium cost shares, insurance cost saving measures, wages increases, step increases and the removal of Fire Marshall duties.

First Selectman Moll requested a motion to approve.

Selectman Mahoney requested to amend the agenda to read as the Discussion and Approval of Tentative Agreement for the Fire Union.

Selectman Hill commented that they are unable to amend the agenda due to this being a Special Meeting.

First Selectman Moll apologized and agreed to add the revised title to the next agenda.

Selectman Chafetz requested a union comparison chart from Human Resources to be shared with the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Harrington agreed that an overview summary of each union would be helpful and commented that the changes look good and she was glad to see that the Fire Marshall position was removed from the contract.

Selectman Chafetz inquired if an additional position would replace the Fire Marshall.

First Selectman Moll shared that this position was the vacant Fire Captain / Fire Marshall position and that the funds will be used for the Fire Marshall position.

Appointment of Director of Finance

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve.

Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Chafetz requested a report from the monthly Board of Finance meeting for review.

Discussion and appointment of Sharon Bruno as full member of the Social Services Commission to fill the remainder of Alan Popp's term through 11/30/2022

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve.

Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and appointment of Kathleen Bielonko as full member of the Social Services Commission to fill the remainder of Diane Remington's term through 11/30/2024

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve.

Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectmen Updates

First Selectman Moll - Reminder, the Dustin Doyon Race in memory of 2nd Class Petty Officer Dustin Doyon is Saturday May 28 beginning at 9:50am, the next meeting is the third week of June and the Suffield Summer Fair is seeking volunteers.

Selectman Chafetz - Spoke about today's developing story about a shooting at the elementary school in Texas and the recent shooting in Buffalo, NY. He also shared his personal experience with antisemitism and stressed that the schools and community need to do something.

First Selectman Moll announced **Highway Foreman Mark Cervione**'s retirement date of July 5, 2022 and thanked Mark for his years of service.

First Selectman Moll shared that a job offer was extended for the position of Chief Building Official.

First Selectman Moll Traffic Safety study is in its final draft and will be available on the town website for review.

Selectman Chafetz inquired about the competitive hiring market while recruiting for the Highway Foreman and Chief Building Official in comparison to the Library Director position salary increase.

Selectman Hill expressed his concern and the importance in continuing the Facilities Master Plan.

Public Comment

Kristina Hallett, 1211 Newgate Rd – Ms. Hallett thanked **Selectman Chafetz** for his words and thanked he and **First Selectman Moll** for attending the gathering on Friday. We are currently living in difficult times that are concerning to our community. Encourages people to listen to the May 2, 2022 BOE meeting to listen to peoples experiences. Reminder for Pride on the Green Saturday, June 4 from 12:00pm – 3:00pm and Juneteenth on the Green on Sunday, June 19 as a part of the Suffield Fair Celebration.

Annie Hornish, 584 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish shared an update on today's mass shooting in Texas. Expressed that racism is not only the schools issue, this is a town issue, but the following actions can help such as curriculum reform, hiring teachers of color, funding library with diverse book collection, gender neutral pronouns to be used in communications, flying the pride flag. Pleaded to please take action so it is known that racism and forms of other bias will not be tolerated by government.

First Selectman Moll motion to adjourn at 7:06pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Jendrysik