

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JULY 20, 2022
7:00 P.M.
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT
Hybrid Meeting**

Selectmen present: Colin Moll, Kathleen Harrington, Pete Hill and Jerry Mahoney

Selectmen absent: Mel Chafetz

Also present in person or via Zoom: Town Attorney Derek Donnelly, Director of Planning & Development Bill Hawkins and Building Official Kimberly Rogers

First Selectman Moll called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

None

Approval of the minutes from the June 15, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from the June 15, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen as drafted with one (1) change as follows:

- **Page 2 – Following the section “Discussion and Purchase to Waive the Bid and Purchase Policy” the second sentence reads “*the statute in questions reads as follows.*” The word “questions” should be singular.**

Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes from the June 30, 2022 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from the June 30, 2022 Special meeting of the Board of Selectmen as presented. **Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and approval to increase Building Permit Fees

Building Official Kimberly Rogers presented to the board regarding the town’s current Building Permit Fees. She explained the services that the fees are intended to cover and how they were originally developed, provided an analysis on our current fees which have not been evaluated since 2012, provided a comparison of fees currently being charged in surrounding towns and explained her rationale behind the proposed increase to the minimum permit fee and the fee per thousand of construction value thereafter. The following increases were proposed:

- Increase the current minimum permit fee from \$30.00 to \$60.00
- Increase the current \$15.00 per thousand of the construction value after the minimum fee is applied to \$17.00 per thousand of the construction value

According to **Ms. Rogers**, this permit revenue increase would potentially be \$15,000 to \$36,000 per year, based on approximately 1200 permit applications. **Ms. Rogers** also noted that in speaking with various surrounding towns she discovered that they feel their permit fees may be in need of increase which would put us even farther below our neighbors.

The board members asked questions which **Ms. Rogers** answered accordingly. **Selectman Harrington** questioned the validity of raising the current minimum permit fee from \$30.00 to \$60.00. **Ms. Rogers** provided detail as to the services that are covered in this permit fee, as well as the fee per thousand of the construction value and why we are in need of an increase.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to increase Building Permit Fees as presented. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to approve the expenditure of \$231,000 from the open space fund for the purchase of 27.51 acres of CT DOT land located off Overhill Drive, subject to Board of Finance and Town Meeting approval

Director of Planning & Development Bill Hawkins addressed the board. He provided the following background:

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) has owned two pieces of property located off the end of Overhill Drive since the 1960's. The DOT acquired the properties to accommodate the proposed project of extending Route 190 from Enfield to Bridge Street. The highway project was abandoned in the 1970's and the properties have been sitting unused by the DOT since that time. Staff reached out to the DOT in 2019 to find out if they would be interested in disposing of the properties, as they are adjacent to other open space land the town is in the process of preserving. The DOT determined the parcels are excess land not necessary for highway purposes and agreed to offer them to the Town before putting them on the market. On July 5, the DOT sent a letter to the town offering the properties for \$231,000, which includes a \$1,000 administrative fee. **First Selectman Moll** countered by offering \$210,000, which the DOT accepted, contingent upon receiving all necessary approvals and performance of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment to determine if there are any areas of environmental concern.

Mr. Hawkins explained the financial impact should the town approve the purchase of the parcels and discussed other open space/farmland preservation projects which are expected to close in the next six months which will ultimately impact the open space account. **Mr. Hawkins** recommended the Board of Selectmen approve the purchase of the two DOT owned properties for open space purposes.

Discussion ensued amongst the board and **Mr. Hawkins**. He answered all questions to the board's satisfaction.

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the expenditure of up to \$210,000 from the open space fund for the purchase of 27.51 acres of CT DOT land located off Overhill Drive, subject to Board of Finance and Town Meeting approval.

Town Attorney Donnelly asked **Selectman Harrington** to change the wording of the motion to read "*off Overhill Drive and refer to the Board of Finance and Town Meeting.*" **Selectman Harrington** accepted the friendly amendment.

Selectman Mahoney noted that he did not feel that this was a good use of the funds and explained his rationale.

Vote: 3 in favor (Moll, Harrington and Hill) and 1 against (Mahoney.) Motion passed.

Discussion and approval to waive the Bid and Purchase Policy for consultant services to assist with the completion and adoption of the Plan of Conservation & Development and award the business to Planimetrics for \$4,500.00

Director of Planning & Development Bill Hawkins addressed the board. He provided the following background:

The Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) is the broadest policy document the town has to guide decision-making on development and conservation issues over the next ten years and beyond. Section 8-23 of the CT General Statutes requires that each municipality adopt a POCD at least once every ten years. The town's current POCD was adopted in September 2010. Town staff has been working on the updated POCD since 2019 by hosting a series of three "listening sessions" that centered on the three themes of the document including Conservation Issues, Development Issues, and Infrastructure Issues. Information gathered at the listening sessions was used in the development of the draft 2022 POCD. The draft POCD is on the town website and **Mr. Hawkins** will be meeting with different boards and commissions over the summer regarding certain chapters with the goal of holding a public information meeting in September with possible adoption of the plan in December. He is requesting a waiver of the bid and purchase policy so that we can work with Planimetrics to get the POCD over the finish line and adopted per the attached scope and schedule.

Mr. Hawkins reached out to Planimetrics in June to discuss the POCD and what steps should be taken in order to get the document ready for adoption by the end of the year. Planimetrics has already reviewed the draft POCD during the preparation of the affordable housing plan so they are familiar with the document. After discussing the project with Planimetrics, they submitted an attached scope and schedule with a lump sum fee of \$4,500. The bid and purchase policy requires at least three verbal quotes for projects over \$2,500. The bid and purchase policy specifies that requirements may be waived at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen. **Mr. Hawkins** would like to work with Planimetrics on this project due to their familiarity with the draft POCD and the town. In addition, the town has worked with Planimetrics during the preparation of the 2010 POCD and they have a familiarity with the Planning & Zoning Commission who will ultimately adopt the plan.

If allowed to proceed with Planimetrics, the \$4,500 would come from the Planning & Zoning Commission's budget for contracted services. The current balance of this budget line item is \$5,000.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to waive the Bid and Purchase Policy for consultant services to assist with the completion and adoption of the Plan of Conservation & Development and award the business to Planimetrics for \$4,500.00. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Tree Warden

First Selectman Moll explained that the town's current Tree Warden is interested in stepping away from the position and a local resident, **Sue Mayne**, has offered to take over the role. **Ms. Mayne** is willing to attend classes and receive appropriate training necessary to assuming the position. **First Selectman Moll** expressed his opinion that **Ms. Mayne** is passionate about this topic and seems to be a good fit, providing she passes all the educational requirements.

Attorney Donnelly provided the group with an overview of the state statute relating to the role of Tree Warden, including the history of the position and the educational requirements. He stressed the

importance of having an active Tree Warden. It was also noted that the Tree Warden is an unpaid position.

Selectman Harrington asked if the wording of the agenda item would allow the board to appoint individuals this evening. **Attorney Donnelly** instructed her to amend the agenda if she so wished.

Selectman Harrington motioned to amend item #8 to read “Discussion and appointment of Sue Mayne as Tree Warden and Mike Turgeon as Deputy Tree Warden.” **Vote: 3 in favor (Moll, Harrington and Mahoney) and 1 opposed (Hill.)**

Selectman Hill asked if any of the arborists in town had been contacted about this opportunity. He feels that it would be beneficial to put the opportunity out, prior to making any decisions, as there may be a professional arborists interested.

Selectman Mahoney agreed with **Selectman Hill’s** point of view and felt it would be wise to hold off on any decisions this evening. He also encouraged **Ms. Mayne** to provide a resume for review as she appears to be motivated and highly interested in the position.

Selectman Harrington motioned to table and revisit the Tree Warden discussion again at the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting to be held in August. **Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and appointment of Glen Vincent as full member of the Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Andrew Krar’s term through 6-30-2024

First Selectman Moll motioned to appoint Glen Vincent as full member of the Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Andrew Krar’s term through 6-30-2024. **Vote: 1 in favor and 3 opposed. Motion failed.**

Discussion and appointment of Chad Kuzontkoski to Cable Advisory Council through 6-30-2024

Selectman Mahoney motioned to appoint Chad Kuzontkoski to Cable Advisory Council through 6-30-2024. **Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and reappointment of Carl Casinghino to Cable Advisory Council through 2-28-2024

Selectman Mahoney motioned to reappoint Carl Casinghino to Cable Advisory Council through 2-28-2024. **Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and reappointment of Kathleen Powers to Amplify through 5-31-2023

Selectman Harrington motioned to reappoint of Kathleen Powers to Amplify through 5-31-2023. **Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and reappointment of Vic Mathieu to North Central District Health Department Board

Selectman Harrington motioned to reappoint Vic Mathieu to North Central District Health Department Board. **Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and reappointment of the following commission members through 6-30-2026

- a. Norm Noble, Ray Wilcox and Tom Elmore to the Conservation Commission
- b. Bill Moryto and John Schwemmer to the Historic District Commission
- c. Joe Sangiovanni to the Building Code Board of Appeals
- d. Jacqueline Marien to the Housing Authority
- e. Mark Blackaby, Susan Hastings and Despina Tartisinis to the Zoning Board of Appeals
- f. Dennis Kreps, Dara Goings and Susan Keane to the Ethics Commission

Selectman Mahoney motioned to table agenda item 14b. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to reappoint the following commission members as presented, through 6-30-2026:

- Norm Noble, Ray Wilcox and Tom Elmore to the Conservation Commission
- Joe Sangiovanni to the Building Code Board of Appeals
- Jacqueline Marien to the Housing Authority
- Mark Blackaby, Susan Hastings and Despina Tartisinis to the Zoning Board of Appeals
- Dennis Kreps, Dara Goings and Susan Keane to the Ethics Commission

Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman's Updates

First Responders Mobile Open House Tour

First Selectman Moll attended the recent Mobile Open House Tour on Woods Hollow Road with the Suffield EMS crews. He noted there will be additional tour opportunities over the next few weeks in different neighborhoods throughout town and encouraged the selectmen and all residents to consider attending.

Parks and Recreation

The Wednesday evening Concert Series on the Green and the Saturday evening Movie Nights on the green have been well attended so far this summer. **First Selectman Moll** encouraged residents and the selectmen to come out and enjoy the fun.

New Police Cruisers

The new police cruisers have arrived in town and are currently in the process of being outfitted with the appropriate equipment.

Suffield Night at Yard Goats

Saturday, July 16th was Suffield Night at the Hartford Yard Goats. **First Selectman Moll** noted that he was in attendance and the event was a great success. He congratulated all the community award winners who were in attendance.

Garden Club

First Selectman Moll thanked the Garden Club for their hard work on all the displays that made the recent Garden Tour such a success. He heard from many residents that the event was great!

Suffield Town of Farms Passport

First Selectman Moll gave kudos to **Ellie Binns** and **Kacy Colston** who were involved with the creation of the Suffield Town of Farms Passport in conjunction with the Economic Development Commission. The passport encourages visitation to our local farms. Those who fully complete their passport can turn it in and be entered into a raffle to win prizes.

Voting - Primary

Voting for the Democrat and Republican Primaries is August 9, 2022 at the Suffield Middle School Gymnasium. Doors will be open from 6 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

America's Night Out

America's Night Out is being held on August 2, 2022 at the Suffield High School. The event will begin at 4:00 p.m. and will include all of Suffield's emergency services.

Hilltop Farm Creamery Grand Opening

On Sunday, July 31, 2022 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Hilltop Farm Creamery will be holding a Grand Opening. The event will include a ribbon cutting ceremony, music, games and much more.

Taxes

Friendly reminder to all that taxes are due by the end of July.

Library Director Update

The search for a new Library Director is winding down with **First Selectman Moll** expecting a decision to be made, and an offer extended, within the next day or two.

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

On Saturday, July 16, 2022 a new three-digit 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline was rolled out. We offer this information in response to a resident who brought the information to our attention at last month's meeting. The number is designed to be a memorable and quick number that connects people who are suicidal or in any other mental health crisis to a trained mental health professional. Mental health advocates hope that 988 will become a widely known, safer and more effective alternative to dialing 911. It should be noted that the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's 10-digit number — 1-800-273-8255 — will remain active, but calls will be routed to 988.

Tamer's Witness Stone

Selectman Hill asked for an update on the Tamer's Witness Stone. **First Selectman Moll** is awaiting a response from Bill Sullivan of the Suffield Academy for final details on the programming.

Roundabout/Traffic Circle State Traffic Calming Recommendation (Mountain Road and N & S Stone

Selectman Hill voiced his concern with the state's roundabout recommendation for the intersection of Mountain Road and North/South Stone Streets. He feels that it will be detrimental to the farming community and the vehicles they use to transport their crops as it is a heavily traveled road for farmers. He suggested alternatives for this particular area and hopes that it will be considered further. All selectmen were in agreement.

Public Comment

None

Executive Session – Current Litigation

Executive Session – River Valley Contract Negotiation

Selectman Mahoney motioned to enter Executive Session at 7:48 p.m. to discuss current litigation and the River Valley Contract Negotiation and invited Attorney Donnelly to join. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session ended at 8:26 p.m.

Action Taken on Executive Session

No action taken.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to adjourn at 8:27 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary