

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
NOVEMBER 2, 2022
7:00 P.M.
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT
Hybrid Meeting**

Selectmen present: Colin Moll (via Zoom,) Mel Chafetz (via Zoom,) Kathleen Harrington, Pete Hill and Jerry Mahoney

Also present in person or via Zoom: Town Attorney Derek Donnelly, Finance Director Eric Remington, Police Chief James Canon, Town Engineer Karen Isherwood and Director of Public Works Chris Matejek

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

Selectman Harrington motioned to amend the agenda to change item #5 to read “Discussion and approval to apply for the Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program for Municipal Police Department grant, American Rescue Plan Act Auto Theft and Violence grant, Click It or Ticket grant and refer to Board of Finance.” Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Approval of the minutes from the October 19, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from the October 19, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen as drafted. Vote: 4 in favor (Moll, Mahoney, Harrington and Hill) and 1 abstain (Chafetz.) Motion passed.

Department updates from the Director of Finance

First Selectman Moll invited **Finance Director Eric Remington** to address the board. **Mr. Remington** gave a comprehensive overview of the Finance Department and what he has been involved in since he took over the Finance Director role 6 month ago. He discussed the day to day activity of the department, internal control enhancements that have been implemented, the impact of having 7 separate union contracts to administer and the level of complexity involved in each. He discussed his desire to get a better understanding of the individual needs of each departments and has started meeting with revenue raising departments to form a stronger relationship with each. He went on to explain near term priorities such as current record storage retention issues and how he plans to address them, along with other upcoming priorities and his observations thus far, including his realization that we are currently underinvested and need to change that in order to take advantage of interest rates. The selectmen thanked **Mr. Remington** for his thorough overview, noting that they were extremely impressed with his work over the last six months. Discussion ensued with the selectmen asking numerous questions which **Mr. Remington** answered accordingly.

Department updates from the Director of Public Works

First Selectman Moll invited **Director of Public Works Chris Matejek** to address the board. **Mr. Matejek** provided an overview of the Department and how the evolution of the town has impacted the relationships and processes within. He provided his thoughts on how he sees himself fitting into the new role he has taken on and the direction he would like to take the department moving forward. He provided examples of projects being worked on currently, those that will be undertaken in the future and those that have been completed recently. He noted that he is now building relationships with some departments that he had not worked with in his previous role as Facilities Director. He discussed the challenges he has faced over the last few months, especially as it pertains to trying to juggle so many different tasks from other areas as well as his own and what he has learned so far. Topics included the bid and purchase policy and the possibility of a procurement person to assist with some of the larger items. He also spoke extremely highly of the employees he currently manages including those at the Highway Department and the Landfill. He feels it is going well thus far and the best way to describe it is that they are in a “rebuilding phase.” **Attorney Donnelly** praised **Mr. Matejek** for his fresh approach in this role he has taken on.

The selectmen all praised **Mr. Matejek’s** work thus far and asked questions regarding manpower needs and what the department may be in need of from a personnel expansion perspective which Mr. Matejek answered accordingly

Discussion and approval to apply for the Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program for Municipal Police Department grant, American Rescue Plan Act Auto Theft and Violence grant, Click It or Ticket grant and refer to Board of Finance

First Selectman Moll invited **Police Chief James Canon** to address the board. **Chief Canon** provided an overview of the various DOT traffic related grants he is interested in applying for and how they will be utilized by the town should we receive the funds. Discussion ensued among the selectmen and questions were asked of **Chief Canon** which he answered accordingly.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the application process for the **Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program for Municipal Police Department grant, American Rescue Plan Act Auto Theft and Violence grant, Click It or Ticket grant and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and approval of Tax Abatement in the amount of \$2,312.32 to Edward Cook due to overpayment

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve **Tax Abatement in the amount of \$2,312.32 to Edward Cook due to overpayment. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and approval of corrected Tax Abatement in the amount of \$1,370.85 to Lereta, LLC due to overpayment

First Selectman Moll explained that due to a transposition error on the original abatement form, the incorrect dollar amount was approved at the last Board of Selectmen meeting.

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve **corrected Tax Abatement in the amount of \$1,370.85 to Lereta, LLC due to overpayment. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and approval to accept Hidden Way as a Town road

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve Hidden Way as a Town road. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to accept Stonegate Lane as a Town road

Selectman Harrington noted that she had questions earlier in the day with regard to Stonegate Lane but was able to get them answered prior to the meeting this evening.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve Stonegate Lane as a Town road. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to transfer funds in the amount of \$25,000 from the Fire Department to the Building Department to cover the costs of the Fire Marshal for the remainder of the fiscal year and refer to the Board of Finance.

First Selectman Moll explained the recent Fire Union Negotiation process and the combined position of Captain and Fire Marshal that has been in existence, plans to change this combined position moving forward and the plan they have for the Fire Marshal position only through the remainder of this fiscal year which will end on June 30, 2023.

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve transfer of funds in the amount of \$25,000 from the Fire Department to the Building Department to cover the costs of the Fire Marshal for the remainder of the fiscal year and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Harrington motioned to amend agenda item #11 to read “Discussion and approval to pay River Valley invoices and refer to Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to pay River Valley invoices and refer to Board of Finance

Attorney Donnelly gave a brief history as it relates to River Valley Animal Hospital and their continued care for Dexter, a dog owned by Neil and Annie Hornish. A disposal order was placed against Dexter, however, the owners have appealed and the appeals process has been ongoing for some time now. Until January of 2022, the owners had been making payments to River Valley for the care of Dexter. As of January 2022 they refused to make any further payments and due to their action, the invoices were presented to the Town of Suffield for payment. The Board of Selectmen had previously approved invoices for January 2022 and February 2022. They now must determine whether to approve invoices for March 2022 through August 2022. Payment amounts are as follows:

- March 2022 - \$2,057.16
- April 2022 - \$1,990.80
- May 2022 -\$2,100.96
- June 2022 – \$1,990.80
- July 2022- \$2,057.16
- August 2022 - \$2,057.16

- Total Due: \$12,254.04

Selectman Harrington motioned to amend agenda item #11 to read “Discussion and approval to pay River Valley invoices and refer to Board of Finance.” Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve payment of River Valley invoices in the amount of \$12,254.04 and refer to Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

First Selectman Moll commented that he does not believe it is fair for the taxpayers to continue to “foot” this bill.

Discussion and approval to waive the bid and purchase policy and allow the First Selectman to purchase two (2) used vehicles for Town Hall

First Selectman Moll explained the current \$10,000 limit of the Bid and Purchase policy and the restrictions it imposes on the current search for two used vehicles. He would like to request this policy be waived in order to give him the opportunity to negotiate and act immediately when something decent becomes available. He noted that the vehicles we are looking at are more in the range of \$13,000 and as such is limiting the purchase process.

Discussion ensued as to whether the amount should be raised in the near future to account for inflation and other factors. It was agreed that this should be undertaken at a future Board of Selectmen meeting. The selectmen asked questions which **Attorney Donnelly** and **First Selectman Moll** answered accordingly.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the waiver of the bid and purchase policy and allow the First Selectman to purchase two (2) used vehicles for Town Hall. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Harrington motioned to amend agenda item #13 to read “Discussion and approval to extend lease for cell tower and refer to Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval to extend lease for cell tower and refer to Town Meeting

Attorney Donnelly explained that this topic was discussed in Executive Session at the last Board of Selectmen Meeting and it can now be acted upon. This contract has been in negotiations for several months.

Selectman Harrington motioned to amend agenda item #13 to read “Discussion and approval to extend lease for cell tower and refer to Town Meeting.” Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve extended lease for cell tower and refer to Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Call Town Meeting for November 22, 2022 on Betty Lane water tower lease to T-Mobile, sale of 1140 and 1148 South Street, approval of Tax Abatement Ordinance and purchase of 27.5 acres of land off of Overhill Drive

Attorney Donnelly asked for a friendly amendment and noted that due to a recent change the Legal Notice would need to be amended to change T-Mobile to Sprint Spectrum, LLC.

Selectman Harrington accepted the friendly amendment and motioned to call a Town Meeting and read the following Legal Notice:

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF A TOWN MEETING TOWN OF SUFFIELD

Notice is hereby given that a Town Meeting of the inhabitants of the Town of Suffield, Connecticut qualified to vote in Town Meeting, will be held in the auditorium at the **Suffield Middle School, 350 Mountain Road** on **Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.** for the following purpose to wit:

- a. To approve a five (5) year lease of space at the water tower on Betty Lane to Sprint Spectrum, LLC with four (4) five (5) year extensions; and
- b. To approve the sale of 1140 & 1148 South Street to ATR Realty, LLC for \$675,000; and
- c. To approve the Tax Abatement Ordinance; and
- d. To approve the purchase of 27.5 acres of land off of Overhill Drive for \$210,000.

Dated at Suffield, CT this 2nd day of November, 2022.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN-TOWN OF SUFFIELD

Colin Moll, First Selectman
Mel Chafetz, Selectman
Peter Hill, Selectman
Kathleen Harrington, Selectman
Jeremiah Mahoney, Selectman

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

Selectmen's Updates

Trick or Treat at Town Hall

On Monday, October 31st between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. a Trick or Treat event was held at Suffield Town Hall. Many trick or treaters came to visit our various town departments as well as our emergency services (police, fire and ambulance) to fill their Halloween goodie bags with candy. **First Selectman Moll** extended his thanks to all town hall employees, the IT Department, the SVAA, Police department, Fire department, State Representative Tami Zawistowski and Jim Irwin for participating in this successful event.

Election Day

Election Day is this coming Tuesday, November 8th. **First Selectman Moll** encouraged all to come out and vote.

Veterans Day

Veterans Day Ceremony will be held at Veterans Memorial Park on Friday, November 11th at 11:00 a.m. to honor all those who have served. **First Selectman Moll** extended his thanks to all veterans who have served and those who are currently serving for their sacrifice and dedication to protecting our freedoms.

Field of Flags

The Field of Flags is being installed this week on the town green. There is still time to sponsor a flag if anyone is interested. **First Selectman Moll** extended his thanks to Todd Zenczak, the Suffield High School Boys and Girls Soccer teams and Girls Volleyball team for volunteering. An additional thank you to **Selectman Mahoney** and **Selectman Harrington** for volunteering and various RTC members who also plan to volunteer. Anyone interested in joining is welcome to meet on the town green at 11:00 a.m.

Joint Facilities Meeting

Joint Facilities Meeting scheduled for November 17th in hopes of having final discussions on the Facilities Master Plan presented by Tecton and determine what is best to recommend to a tri-board meeting in the future. All are welcome to attend.

Pedestrian Traffic Infrastructure and Safety Commission Meeting

Commission met last week. A survey is being planned in order to help prioritize projects based on importance and cost in order to make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance.

Tamar's Witness Stone Update

The ceremony for the Tamar's Witness Stone will be held in the spring of 2023 as it was unable to be completed in time for a fall ceremony.

Suffield Village Market

First Selectman Moll wanted to recognize and thank Ming Chou, the owner of Suffield Village Market for his generous donation of all the sushi for the recent Oktoberfest at Hilltop Farm. He noted the town is lucky to have so many wonderful businesses in town that have been willing to sponsor and donate to town events and organizations.

Suicide Prevention/Narcan Course at Senior Center

A free Suicide Prevention and Narcan course is being held tomorrow evening at the Senior Center from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. This event is being sponsored the Suffield Local Prevention Council. Spots are still available for those interested.

Cell Phone Training

On November 9th at 4:00 p.m. the IT Department and students from Suffield High School will be providing free training on how to use a cell phone. The program is open to all residents and will be held at the Suffield Senior Center.

Police Department Recognition

First Selectman Moll extended his thanks to the entire Suffield Police Department and all police departments across the nation for their hard work and dedication to protecting and serving all. After the recent events that took place in Bristol and the ceremony that was held last week for the fallen officers it is just a stark reminder that their line of work is never easy and cannot be taken for granted.

Juvenile Review Board Update

On the last Wednesday of the month **Selectman Chafetz** and Greg Halczak provided an update to the Police Commission and explained the history of it as well for those members who are newer.

Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration

Selectman Chafetz noted that on Sunday, November 20th, First Church will host the Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at 4:00 p.m. All are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in this special service.

Veterans Breakfast

First Selectman Moll noted that the scouts will be coming out to honor our veterans at the upcoming Veterans Breakfast being held at the VFW on Sheldon Street from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Executive Session – River Valley Contract

Selectman Mahoney motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss River Valley Contract at 8:14 p.m. and invited Town Attorney Derek Donnelly to attend. **Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Session ended at 8:25 p.m.

Action on Executive Session

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the River Valley contract as amended and subject to approval by the other party. **Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

Public Comment

None

Selectman Mahoney motioned to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary