

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 18, 2023
7:00 P.M.
Town Hall Meeting Room, 83 Mountain Road, Suffield CT
Hybrid Meeting**

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

Also present in person or via Zoom: WPCA Superintendent Jamie Kreller

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

Jeff Davis, 8 Wisteria Lane – Mr. Davis, a resident and member of the WPCA, shared his thoughts on the allocation decisions being made by the ARPA Commission. He believes that the WPCA should be receiving a substantial portion of these funds in order to assist with the WPCA’s \$3 million Stony Brook Interceptor project. He also expressed concerns with the proposed expenditures and asked if they had been reviewed by the Town Attorney to ensure that they are qualified expenditures. He also suggested that the town consider selling the former Bridge Street School property to a private developer in order to provide tax relief for the residents of Suffield.

Janet Davis, 8 Wisteria Lane – Ms. Davis, a resident and WPCA Chairperson, shared information pertaining to the American Rescue Plan Act, citing specific sections to bolster her arguments that the WPCA should be receiving a substantial portion of the ARPA funds to assist with the WPCA’s \$3 million Stony Brook Interceptor project. She also provided her personal thoughts on how the ARPA funds should be allocated based on her interpretation of what she has read in various documents. She questioned the proposed allocation of funds and cautioned the selectmen to seek legal interpretation prior to making any decisions in order to avoid putting the town into a “legal quandary.”

Selectman Mahoney asked **Ms. Davis** if the WPCA had any specific data available that would reflect the number of residential customers who currently utilize the services of the WPCA as he felt that type of information might be helpful to the ARPA Commission when pushing for funds to cover the WPCA’s project. **Ms. Davis**, as well as **Mr. Davis**, responded to **Selectman Mahoney** by providing more generalized data about town-wide usage but did not have specifics on residential customers specifically. She noted that his information could most likely be provided by the WPCA Superintendent.

Dave Gauthier, 3219 Phelps Road – Mr. Gauthier gave his opinion on the allocation of ARPA funds to the WPCA and cautioned the selectmen to look closely at the parameters surrounding the allocation of funds, specifically as it relates to the amount of reporting involved. He also suggested that funds used for renovation projects of any type should have a stipulation that states the contractors involved must have either a business or residential address in Suffield, thereby ensuring that the funds stay within the town.

Approval of the minutes from the January 4, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Harrington requested the following change:

Page 1 – The second to last sentence should read “changed drastically as a result *of* internet availability...”

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the minutes from the January 4, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen with changes as noted. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Department updates from the Water Pollution Control Authority Superintendent

First Selectman Moll invited **WPCA Superintendent Jamie Kreller** to address the board. **Mr. Kreller** provided an overview of the department while focusing on their Facilities Plan and how the projects related to the plan impact the infrastructure of the plant. **Mr. Kreller** explained the Facilities Plan in detail for the board and noted that this plan assists the WPCA with planning projects as far as 20 years out. He went on to discuss what the WPCA has been doing recently, how they have been handling rate increases and what recommendations have come from the most recent Facilities Plan. He stated that the plan includes recommendations for four different studies; Lake Congamond, Kent Farms tie in to the force main on Mountain Road, Sanitary Sewer Evaluation for Thompsonville Road/Cassotta Lane and the Stony Brook Interceptor Project. **Mr. Kreller** provided in-depth details on each project and noted where they were in the design phase of each. He also touched upon other projects that will be undertaken in the near future with expected costs for each.

Discussion ensued with the selectmen asking questions of **Mr. Kreller** which he answered accordingly.

The selectmen thanked **Mr. Kreller** for his updates and stated that they all felt he was doing a great job in his role as Superintendent.

Discussion and approval to appropriate National Opioid Settlement funds to the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association and Suffield Police Department and refer to Board of Finance

First Selectman Moll provided information on additional funds received in November 2022 from the National Opioid Settlement and explained how he would like to see the funds utilized. He suggested allocating \$5,600, to be split equally between the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association and the Suffield Police Department to purchase NARCAN kits. The remaining funds received, \$22,000, would be held until **First Selectman Moll** and **School Superintendent Tim Van Tassel** have an opportunity to meet and discuss how these funds can be used to provide education and usage prevention opportunities.

Discussion ensued among the selectmen, with some raising concerns about the possibility of purchasing too many NARCAN kits which may not be utilized prior to expiration. **First Selectman Moll** acknowledged their concern and said he would make sure that the appropriate number of kits would be considered with expiration date in mind.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the appropriation of National Opioid Settlement funds in the amount of \$2,800 each to the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association and Suffield Police Department and refer to Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of American Rescue Plan Funds and refer to the Board of Finance

First Selectman Moll mentioned that the most recent ARPA meeting was held on January 4th and during that meeting decisions were made with regard to allocations for the second round of funding. He also expressed his desire to address some of the questions that had been brought up during Public Comment earlier this evening regarding the appropriate usage of the funds. **First Selectman Moll** explained that when the ARPA Commission approved the first round of funds they had discussed using the ARPA money to replace lost revenue. ARPA Commission member Brian Kost, who also serves as a member of the Board of Finance, conducted an analysis to determine lost revenue. **First Selectman Moll** explained what criteria Mr. Kost used for the analysis, the methodology used in determining what items would be eligible and how the commission determined the way in

which the money would be spent. He noted that the Town Attorney was involved in the process and approved the methodology being used. He also explained the rationale behind the second round of funds. The second round allocations approved thus far include: \$750,000 to pay the remaining balance on the Tanker Truck, \$540,000 for purchase of a Landfill Bulldozer, \$150,000 for the VFW renovation project and \$200,000 towards Town Organizations. The Town Organizations include: \$75,000 for WPCA, \$40,000 for Land Conservancy, \$10,000 for Trees for Suffield and \$75,000 towards Historical Assets and Buildings. This leaves the town with just under \$1,000,000 to be allocated. **First Selectman Moll** explained that the ARPA Commission has approved these proposed allocations and it is now up to the Board of Selectmen to approve or reject. If approved, the next step will be to bring the proposed allocation to the Board of Finance. **First Selectman Moll** asked the selectmen for their thoughts.

Selectman Harrington remarked that she did not see any issues and felt comfortable with the appropriation of funds and the fact that the Town Attorney has been involved in the process. She mentioned that she would like the ARPA Commission to consider funding an additional \$75,000 to the WPCA to fund half of their Stony Brook Interceptor project design during the next phase of their review.

Selectman Hill expressed his concerns with the way the ARPA funds were being appropriated and felt that allocating to outside organizations puts the town on a “slippery slope.” He strongly feels that the funds should be used to take care of town assets first, before funding private entities. He provided examples of projects in need of funding, including the different schools throughout town, and suggested that if there are any funds leftover after that, perhaps they can be shared with outside organizations not directly affiliated with the Town of Suffield.

Discussion continued among the selectmen as to how the funds were being handled.

Selectman Chafetz reminded the group that the schools have received separate ARPA funds and, therefore, they were not considered in the allocation process. He expressed his concerns involving the VFW Renovation Project and some of the other organizations being considered. He also commented on the Bridge Street School area and recalled a former proposal from the town to sell the property to a private developer and why it was soundly defeated.

Selectman Mahoney expressed his thoughts on the funds and explained that, given the source of the funds, he feels confident with the decisions the ARPA Commission has made thus far.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the allocation of the proposed American Rescue Plan Funds and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 4 in favor (Moll, Chafetz, Mahoney and Harrington) and 1 opposed (Hill.) Motion passed.

Discussion and approval to reappoint Tom Frenaye, Mel Chafetz, Brian Kost, Michael Stevens and Colin Moll to the American Rescue Plan Committee through January 19, 2024

Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the reappointment of Tom Frenaye, Mel Chafetz, Brian Kost, Michael Stevens and Colin Moll to the American Rescue Plan Committee through January 19, 2024. Vote 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of Kathie Harrington, Robin Zatony, Kevin Goff, Erin Golembiewski, Krystal Holmes, David Colangelo and Mark Sinopoli to the Affordable Housing Committee starting February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2025

First Selectman Moll explained that the creation of the Affordable Housing Committee was approved on November 11, 2022 and was designed to include one representative each from the Board of Selectmen, Board of

Finance, Social Services Commission and Planning & Zoning Commission, as well as three interested citizens. He thanked all of those who stepped up to volunteer.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the appointment of Kathie Harrington, Robin Zatony, Kevin Goff, Erin Golembiewski, Krystal Holmes, David Colangelo and Mark Sinopoli to the Affordable Housing Committee starting February 1, 2023 through January 31, 2025. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of Crystal Quandt as an alternate member of the Historic District Commission to fill the remainder of Elizabeth Tracey's term through June 30, 2024

Selectman Hill motioned to approve the appointment of Crystal Quandt as an alternate member of the Historic District Commission to fill the remainder of Elizabeth Tracey's term through June 30, 2024. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously

Selectmen Updates

Visit from Congressman Joe Courtney

Congressman Joe Courtney visited the Suffield Police Department today. **First Selectman Moll** extended his thanks to Congressman Courtney on behalf of the town for securing the funds to pay for the Police Departments new NextGen software system. Software updates are currently underway and should be completed by April.

New Part-time Fire Marshal

The Town of Suffield has hired a new part-time Fire Marshal whose first day is today. Welcome Eric Vincent!

Environmental and Sustainability Task Force

The new task force will be convening shortly. The members of the task force include: Ginny Bromage, Terry Stearns, Lauren O'Hara, Suzy Irwin and CiCi Partain.

Hiring of new Fire Chief and Fire Captain

The Fire Commission will begin their search for a new Fire Chief and Fire Captain in the next few weeks. The postings are currently being worked on and once completed, the searches will begin.

Tree Photo Gallery Contest

Trees for Suffield displayed the photos from their recent photo contest at the Kent Memorial Library. The submissions can also be viewed on the town website.

Bridge Street Park

First Selectman Moll noted that he is waiting for phased design plans for the Bridge Street Park. Further information should be available at the next Board of Selectmen meeting in February.

Town Clean Up Day

On Saturday, April 29th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. the town will be holding a Clean-up Day with assistance from USA Recycling. Additional details will be provided at a later date.

Public Comment

Jeff Davis, 8 Wisteria Lane – Mr. Davis addressed a comment made by **Selectman Chafetz** earlier in the meeting pertaining to the sale of the Bridge Street School property.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to adjourn at 7:54 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary