

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
AUGUST 16, 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:** Town Attorney Derek Donnelly

**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 add agenda item 17a “Executive Session – Wilson Litigation.”  
**Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Public Comment**

**Annie Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue** – Ms. Hornish stated that she had concerns with the proposed Dog Ordinance and the ordinance language. She also expressed disappointment at not being able to find the document online, suggesting that this was another example of the current board’s history of poor transparency. Ms. Hornish admitted that upon reaching out to the First Selectman’s office she was able to obtain a copy immediately. She explained why she is opposed to the Dog Ordinance and pointed out certain language within the document that she feels is “arbitrary and far too broad and gives far too much power to government.” She suggested the town was using this as a form of financial intimidation against pet owners who dare to challenge any town decisions regarding their impounded animals. In her opinion, it does not align with state law and this ordinance is sure to invite more lawsuits against the town.

**Dave Gauthier, 3219 Phelps Road** – Mr. Gauthier corrected comments he had made at the June 21, 2023 Board of Selectmen meeting regarding the American flag and other flag guidance. He also spoke on the APRA Grant Application Form.

**Paul Christian, 281 Hill Street** – Mr. Christian expressed his appreciation for the Board of Selectmen and feels that they are doing exactly what they should be doing with regard to running the town appropriately. He did not agree with public comments made earlier regarding the actions of the board.

**Discussion and Approval of the minutes from the June 21, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

**Selectman Harrington** motioned to approve the minutes from the June 21, 2023 regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen as presented. **Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval to transfer \$24,000 from Contingency to Animal Control Veterinary Services to pay remaining River Valley invoices and refer to the Board of Finance**

**First Selectman Moll** explained that this transfer will cover the outstanding FY 2022-23 impound/boarding costs for Dexter Hornish at River Valley Animal Hospital.

**Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the transfer of \$24,000 from Contingency to animal control Veterinary Services to pay remaining River Valley invoices and refer to the Board of Finance.**

**Chairman Chafetz** stated that he finds it difficult to approve this and feels it is a tragedy.

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

**Discussion and approval to transfer funds from Payroll to Contracted Services to pay J.R. Russo for Engineering Consultation in the amount of \$50,000 and refer to the Board of Finance**

**First Selectman Moll** explained that the transfer of funds from Payroll to Contracted Services is in keeping with best accounting practices as recommended by former Finance Director Eric Remington.

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the transfer of funds from Payroll to Contracted Services to pay J.R. Russo for Engineering Consultation in the amount of \$50,000 and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval to transfer \$25,000 from Contingency to purchase a vehicle for town hall to replace the current vehicles and refer to the Board of Finance**

**First Selectman Moll** explained the rationale behind the transfer of funds and provided information regarding the new vehicle.

**Selectman Mahoney motioned to approve the transfer of \$25,000 from Contingency to purchase a vehicle for town hall to replace the current vehicles 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 \$2,251.04 to BLD Construction LLC due to overpayment**

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve Tax Abatement in the amount of \$2,251.04 to BLD Construction LLC due to overpayment. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval of Tax Abatement in the amount of \$1,452.28 to Michael D. and Paige E. Berry due to overpayment**

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve Tax Abatement in the amount of \$1,452.28 to Michael D. and Paige E. Berry due to overpayment. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval of Tax Abatement in the amount of \$2,267.06 to Patrick and Holly McCormack due to overpayment**

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve Tax Abatement in the amount of \$2,267.06 to Patrick and Holly McCormack due to overpayment. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and approval to waive the bid and purchase policy to use Green Eagle Energy and Environmental Systems Corporation for energy efficient lighting installation and EV charging stations**

**First Selectman Moll** explained that he and **Public Works Director Chris Matejek** have been working on this project over the last six months with Environmental Systems Corporation to look at potential energy efficiencies and cost saving measures for the town. The town budgeted \$75,000 this past fiscal year through ACCE and the town has been working with a local company, Green Eagle Energy, and their representative Sean Robinson to coordinate with Environmental Systems Corporation. Mr. Robinson lives in town and runs off the state contract pricing which allows municipalities to skip the bid and purchase process since the state has already gone through it. Green Eagle Energy is not on the state contract list and in keeping with best practice, **First Selectman Moll** wanted to run this decision through the board. The selectmen asked questions which **First Selectman Moll** answered accordingly. **Selectman Harrington** raised a few questions relating to contract language, which **Town Attorney Donnelly** will follow up on.

**Selectman Mahoney** motioned to waive the bid and purchase policy to use Green Eagle Energy and Environmental Systems Corporation for energy efficient lighting installation and EV charging stations. **Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and appointment of Bill Boucher to the Board of Police Commissioners to fill the remainder of Jason Trombly's term through November 17, 2025**

**First Selectman Moll** explained that Mr. Boucher's resume was forwarded by the DTC for consideration. In addition to Mr. Boucher's resume, **First Selectman Moll** also received an additional resume from a resident volunteer who is Unaffiliated. Due to a technical difficulty, the resume sent could not be opened in time for the board to consider this evening. He asked the board if they would like to move forward with a vote or wait until the additional resume could be considered. Discussion ensued among the selectmen.

**Selectman Chafetz** motioned to appoint Bill Boucher to the Board of Police Commissioners to fill the remainder of Jason Trombly's term through November 17, 2025. **Vote: 2 in favor (Hill and Chafetz) – 3 against (Moll, Harrington and Mahoney.) Motion failed.**

The appointment will be added to a future agenda.

**Discussion and approval of Suffield Dog/Animal Control Ordinance and refer to Town Meeting**

**First Selectman Moll** opened discussion on the edited version of the ordinance and the selectmen discussed their thoughts and concerns pertaining to the document. **Selectman Mahoney** expressed concern that the document did not explicitly give the town the ability to seek attorney's fees and costs as appropriate in any dispute that could arise. He feels strongly that language should be included so that the town has the ability to clearly recover attorney's fees and costs should it be necessary. He recommended that the current language in Section F be deleted and new language be inserted as follows: "*The town may recover, in a civil action from any person found by the court to have violated this ordinance, a sum equal to any pecuniary benefits received as a result of the violation, together with costs of collection and interest fees and attorney's fees expended by the town.*" **Town Attorney Donnelly** explained that the included language is used in other towns and has held up in court. **Selectman Harrington** also pointed out a few small changes including a correction to subsection E where it reads "a through c" it should actually read "a through d" and sub-section G should have the word "either" removed. **Attorney Donnelly** agreed with her suggested changes. **Selectman Chafetz** asked for clarification on how the ordinance follows the CT General Statutes and how it deviates, which **Attorney Donnelly** provided.

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the Suffield Dog/Animal Control Ordinance with the three (3) changes in language as presented and refer to Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **Discussion and approval of Town Social Media Policy**

**First Selectman Moll** asked **Attorney Donnelly** to walk the board through the Town Social Media Policy being presented for approval. **Selectman Harrington** agreed with the fact that **Attorney Donnelly** took in creating the policy; however, she did have a question and two small changes, which she brought to **Attorney Donnelly's** attention. He answered her question and agreed with the small grammatical changes, which included Sub-section 4B, the word "director's" should read as "director" and in section 5B the wording should be changed from "5B" to "as set forth in the policy." **Selectman Chafetz** raised concerns about not allowing employees or unions to be involved in the creation of the policy. **First Selectman Moll** said he viewed it as a management decision and there would be no need to run it by employees, as it would be the expectation that they would "do the right thing." Discussion continued with all selectman offering their views on the subject.

**Selectman Harrington motioned to approve the Town Social Media Policy with the two (2) wording changes as presented. Vote: 4 in favor (Moll, Mahoney, Harrington and Hill) and 1 against (Chafetz.) Motion passed.**

### **Discussion of Babb's Facility and Bridge Street Property**

**First Selectman Moll** walked the board through a PowerPoint presentation, which illustrated a possible rendering of the pavilion plan, including a dog park, for the Babb's Facility in West Suffield. The board discussed the presentation, asked questions and provided their own thoughts and concerns on the subject. The proposed plan would possibly include moving funds currently allocated for the Bridge Street Property to the Babb's Facility project. The board agreed to take some time to absorb what was presented this evening and revisit it at a future Board of Selectmen meeting.

**First Selectman Moll** also discussed the Bridge Street Property. Each selectman brought forth their personal opinion on what should happen moving forward with the Bridge Street Property. **Selectman Hill** and **Selectman Chafetz** are adamantly opposed to taking any funds from Bridge Street Property at this time and feel the need to invest in our community. **Selectman Harrington** is in no rush to make any moves on the property until all options have been considered and **Selectman Mahoney** feels that what has been presented thus far for the Bridge Street Property is not providing the town with much value for what it would cost.

**First Selectman Moll** thanked the selectmen for their input and noted that he will put the items on an upcoming agenda for further discussion.

### **Selectman Updates**

#### **ARPA Grant Awards**

**First Selectman Moll** thanked all the organizations who submitted an application for the Historical ARPA Grants. A total of \$75,000 was allotted for the grants. Funds will be distributed to the following organizations:

Friends of the Farm at Hilltop, CT Landmarks, Friends of the Winsor Locks Canal Trail, Kent Memorial Library, West Suffield Center District Improvement Association and Suffield Historical Society. Congratulations to all.

### **Oktoberfest**

The second annual Oktoberfest will be held at Hilltop Farm on Saturday, October 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Suffield on the Green**

Suffield on the Green will be held on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> rain or shine.

### **Parks and Recreation Road Race**

The road race will be held on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Town-wide Clean-up Day**

A second town-wide Clean-up Day will be held on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> with a small focus on six or seven major roads. More details to follow.

### **Friends of the Library**

The Friends of the Library are looking for help moving books on Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **Environmental and Sustainability Task Fore**

The ESTF is working on a Composting Campaign. The campaign will kick-off at the end of August or early September. More details to follow.

### **Resident Spotlight**

Congratulations to Amy Reay and Don Miner for being the town's first winners of the Resident Spotlight.

**Selectman Harrington** addressed Mr. Gauthier's earlier comments regarding the flag policy and other policies. She believes that at the beginning of their new term the board reaffirmed all of the prior terms policies that had been in effect. **Attorney Donnelly** explained the process that normally occurs and said he could look back on past minutes for confirmation.

Selectman Chafetz noted the recent art show of Peggy McKinnon's works at the Kent Memorial Library was a huge success.

## **Public Comment**

**Neil Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue** – Mr. Hornish responded to **Selectman Chafetz's** comment regarding agenda item number 4 as being a tragedy and reiterated a statement he made at an earlier Board of Selectmen meeting regarding the solutions that the Hornish's have offered with regard to their dog Dexter and the board's refusal to consider them.

**Chip Glynn, 455 Babbs Road** - Mr. Glynn, a lifelong resident of Suffield and the grandson of Nelson Babb, gave his thoughts on the proposal for Babb's Facility in West Suffield and voiced his concerns with possible tree removal.

**Anita Glynn, 455 Babbs Road** – Ms. Glynn provided her thoughts on the proposal for the Babb's Facility and expressed her concern involving the removal of trees as well as noise that could impact the residents in the area.

**Dave Gauthier, 3219 Phelps Road** – Mr. Gauthier disagreed with **Selectman Harrington** regarding the adoption of previous policies and feels some are actually obsolete. He spoke on the Babb's Facility and feels it should be added to the Master Facility Plan. He also spoke on the Bridge Street Property and is in agreement with **Selectman Chafetz** that a playscape is needed in this area.

**Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road** – Mr. Frenaye agreed with Mr. Gauthier with regard to including the development of our recreational facilities into the Masters Facility Plan. He feels the board is making a mistake if they wait or do nothing at all, as costs will continue to rise. He provided thoughts on possible areas to consider, and feels there is a lack of imagination when trying to develop these recreational facilities. Mr. Frenaye is against including the dog park at the Babb's Facility.

**Brian Defosses, 445 Babbs Road** - Mr. Defosses liked the idea of the Babb's facility but expressed concerns about regulation of the area and vandalization prevention.

## **Executive Session – 301 Hickory Street**

### **Executive Session – Wilson Litigation**

**Selectman Mahoney motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss 301 Hickory Street and Wilson Litigation and invited Town Attorney Derek Donnelly to join the session at 8:23 p.m. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Executive Session ended at 8:40 a.m.**

### **Action on Executive Session**

No action was taken during Executive Session.

**Selectman Mahoney motioned to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary