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REC'D BY: 

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
OCTOBER 23, 2024  
7:00 P.M.  
911 Mountain Road, Suffield CT  
Hybrid Meeting**

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

**Selectmen absent:** Pete Hill

**Also Present:** Lisa Trase – Assessor, Bill Hawkins – Director of Planning and Zoning/Engineering Liaison, Chief Scott Cunningham – Suffield Fire Department and Paul Christian – Chairman of Suffield Board of Fire Commissioners

First Selectman Moll called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment**

Kristin Kling, 7 Strathmore Lane – Ms. Kling offered her support for Kent Memorial Library Commission Candidate Dr. Fred Sweitzer and outlined his qualifications for the group. She also expressed concern about a “disturbing trend” which she feels is preventing Suffield from reaching its true potential. She described the trend as “partisanship before progress.” She explained that this is the third time the DTC has put Dr. Sweitzer up for consideration as a member of the Kent Memorial Library Commission and she feels he will not get the consideration he deserves because of this. She urged the Board of Selectmen to put partisanship aside and focus on what is best for Suffield. She also asked the Board of Selectmen to read out loud and into the record any and all communication it received about this vote.

Annie Hornish, 864 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish noted she was receiving texts about the zoom audio cutting out. She also wanted to echo the comments made by Ms. Kling about Dr. Sweitzer and expressed her support for his appointment to the Kent Memorial Library Commission this evening.

Scott Guilmartin, 759 Hale Street - Mr. Guilmartin shared a letter written to the Board of Selectmen addressing misinformation and comments made by Selectman Chafetz at the September 4, 2024 Board of Selectmen Meeting pertaining to his appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission that evening. He provided details that corrected the misinformation provided by Selectman Chafetz at the September 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and pointed out that Selectman Chafetz owes him an apology.

Sandra Janik, 380 Prospect Street – Ms. Janik echoed the comments made earlier regarding the Kent Memorial Library Commission position and expressed her feeling that Dr. Sweitzer would be an excellent candidate, as would candidate Tess McCool, who also has excellent credentials. She also noted that both candidates have been up for consideration as members of the Kent Memorial Library Commission three times.

Debra Dudack, 315 Prospect Street – Ms. Dudack expressed her support for Tess McCool to fill the vacant position on the Kent Memorial Library Commission. She spoke of Ms. McCool's extensive qualifications and

also shared her personal experiences working with her. She thanked the DTC for endorsing Dr. Sweitzer and urged the selectmen to consider viewpoints other than their own when making these types of appointments.

Annie Hornish 864 Thrall Avenue – Ms. Hornish requested that Ms. Kling be allowed to repeat a portion of her public commentary for the record as it was not captured on the audio recording.

Ms. Kling was allowed to read the remaining commentary into the record and her full commentary is noted above.

**Approval of the minutes from the October 9, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

Selectman Harrington MOTIONED to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen as presented.

Selectman Moll made a friendly amendment and requested one change as follows:

- Under the Selectman Updates regarding the Permanent Building Commission Wrap-up the word “they” should be changed to “the.”

Selectman Harrington accepted the friendly amendment as noted. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

**Discussion and approval to appoint a member to the Kent Memorial Library Commission to fill the remainder of Michelle Kynard’s term through November 30, 2025**

First Selectman Moll noted that while correspondence received regarding this appointment would not be read aloud this evening, the members of the Board of Selectmen did receive copies of all resident correspondence that was sent in support of Dr. Fred Sweitzer.

Selectman Chafetz MOTIONED to appoint Fred Sweitzer to the Kent Memorial Library Commission to fill the remainder of Michelle Kynard’s term through November 30, 2025. Vote: 1 in favor (Chafetz) and 3 opposed (Moll, Harrington and Mahoney.) Motion failed.

Selectman Chafetz spoke of Dr. Sweitzer’s extensive qualifications and shared his personal experiences working with him over the years on the Juvenile Review Board and other areas.

Selectman Mahoney MOTIONED to appoint Ann Borracci to the Kent Memorial Library Commission to fill the remainder of Michelle Kynard’s term through November 30, 2025.

Selectman Chafetz questioned Ms. Borracci’s qualifications when compared to Dr. Sweitzer and expressed a need to add diversity to the Kent Memorial Library Commission. Discussion ensued among the selectmen regarding the definition of diversity, the qualifications that Ms. Borracci brings to the table and the history of this commission from a diversity and political affiliation perspective.

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

**Discussion and approval to appoint Jackie Guzie as a full member of the Parks and Recreation Commission through June 30, 2028**

Selectman Harrington MOTIONED to appoint Jackie Guzie as a full member of the Parks and Recreation Commission through June 30, 2028. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

### Department update from Fire Chief Cunningham

First Selectman Moll welcomed Fire Chief Cunningham and Fire Commission Chair Paul Christian and invited them to provide their department update to the selectmen. Chief Cunningham informed the selectmen that our Suffield Fire Department would be reporting to the Town of Berlin for the next two days to assist in the efforts to fight a dangerously large brush fire in that town. He provided a detailed update of department statistics including information on career fire fighters, volunteer fire fighters and cadets. He discussed the upcoming application process as we are currently down career firefighters and looking to hire. In addition to career firefighters, the town will be looking to hire part-time firefighters. He also gave detailed information relating to call statistics since January 1, 2024, as well as activities the Fire Department has participated in such as Suffield Night Out and Suffield on the Green and the use of the EDITH program and Smoke Trailer at the public schools. He gave an in-depth update on what the department has been doing from an educational standpoint and he described his efforts to get a Fire Service course into the curriculum at Suffield High School. Discussion ensued, questions were asked of both Chief Cunningham and Chairman Christian, which they answered accordingly. The selectmen all expressed their appreciation to Chief Cunningham for the great job he has done so far, recognizing that he has had a lot to take on since accepting his role as Fire Chief. They look forward to hearing more about the educational efforts that Chief Cunningham discussed.

### Department update from Director of Planning and Development and Engineering Liaison, Bill Hawkins

Mr. Hawkins provided an overview of the various areas that he is involved in. He reported on the great work that our Economic Development Specialist Chad Kuzontkowski has been doing within the business community since his arrival in mid-April. He also discussed how the Engineering Liaison role has been working with our Engineering Consultant J.R. Russo and Associates. He has been very pleased with them and their partnership thus far. He offered status updates on various projects, including the Quarry Road Bridge, the Mapleton Sidewalk Project and various LOTCIP Projects. He also reported on Planning and Zoning activities which include extensive updating of outdated regulations. At this time there are no new subdivision applications currently before them, however, he does feel that there will be an uptick over the next year. He reported on Farm Land preservation projects that have been completed, noting that it was an active year and there are still two additional farms expected to come up in the near future. The selectmen commended Mr. Hawkins for all the hard work he has done in the many roles he fills for the town of Suffield.

### Discussion and approval to waive the bid and purchase policy to allow NE Geosystems update planimetric data on GIS

Mr. Hawkins described the reason behind the request for a waiver. He described the GIS system and how important it is to a number of departments including Planning and Zoning, Assessor, Ambulance, Fire and Police. He referred to a memo submitted to the Board of Selectmen which outlined the full details and cost implications of the updates to the GIS system and why the waiver would be beneficial as NE Geosystems has been providing these services to the town since 2011 and changing to another vendor would be difficult.

Selectman Harrington MOTIONED to waive the bid and purchase policy to allow NE Geosystems update planimetric data on GIS. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

### Discussion and approval of the Elections Emergency Contingency Plan

First Selectman Moll referenced documents provided to the selectmen regarding the Elections Emergency Contingency Plan and emphasized how important it is to have the plan in place.

Selectman Mahoney MOTIONED to approve the Elections Emergency Contingency Plan as proposed. Vote: 4-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Discussion of Emergency Services Radio Project

First Selectmen Moll reported that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance held a joint meeting last Tuesday to discuss the RFP and Emergency Services Radio Project. He reported that at the conclusion of the meeting there were no issues of concern, both groups felt that the costs were in line with what was expected and the need to move forward with the project was evident. He expressed his confidence in the work that the consultants and project team have completed thus far and recommended that the selectmen should move the project forward to the Board of Finance for consideration. He also would like to include the HVAC Project for funding consideration. The selectmen were in agreement.

#### Public Comment

Tess McCool, 10 Sutula Road – Ms. McCool thanked Ms. Dudack for her comments and support. She also noted that Mr. Sweitzer would have been a great candidate. She explained why she felt that her experience would have benefited the Kent Memorial Library and described her background qualifications. She expressed her disappointment at not being selected but reaffirmed her commitment to the library and the community.

Sandra Janik, 380 Prospect Street – Ms. Janik stated that, in her opinion, this evening's appointment to the Kent Memorial Library Commission was a travesty. She noted that there were two extremely qualified candidates with experience to their names up for consideration for a position and the only thing missing was an "R" behind their name. She feels that choosing a grandmother who wants to get involved does not outweigh the outstanding qualifications of the other candidates. She pointed out the lack of "diversity" on the current commission Party affiliation and political leanings. She feels that First Selectman Moll is not doing the library any favors with his political movement.

Don Minor, 1855 Mapleton Avenue – Mr. Miner encouraged the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to move as quickly as possible on the radio project as there are serious gaps in the radio response currently in place.

#### Selectman Updates

##### Early Election

There have been 887 votes cast thus far and the process appears to be running very smoothly. Thank you to the registrars and all of the employees and volunteers for their hard work.

##### Veterans Day

There will be three ceremonies honoring our veterans this year. There will be ceremonies at each school on November 11<sup>th</sup> and all veterans are encouraged to attend. The Suffield Senior Center will be offering free lunch to all Veterans on the Friday before Veterans Day. There will also be a ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park at 11:00 a.m. to honor all veterans and to unveil the new memorial honoring those who have served in the Global War on Terror.

##### Trick or Treating

Due to early voting, the annual Trick or Treating at Town Hall is being moved. Next Thursday candy will be available at the Kent Memorial Library, Suffield Senior Center and various businesses around the area. Information is available on the Town Website.



### Welcome Back

Welcome Back to Ryan Selig who will be returning to the town as our Animal Control Officer.

### Lock your cars

First Selectman Moll urged residents to be vigilant about locking their cars as there have been groups of people that appear to be coming in from the cities and casing neighborhoods for potential break in opportunities.

### Affordable Housing

An affordable housing discussion will be held at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

Selectman Harrington noted that the Registrar of Voters offered to come to the meeting this evening to discuss the Elections Emergency Contingency Plan, however, the selectmen told them there was no need. She thanked them for their dedication and expressed her appreciation for their hard work.

### Crosswalk on Main Street

Work is underway on the Crosswalk on Main Street. First Selectman Moll reported that the town has been working with the Trees for Suffield group to ensure tree preservation.

### Adjournment

Selectman Chafetz MOTIONED to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary