

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Grange Hall
April 15, 2015
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: M. Walter; E. Lyman; E. Malavasi

Also Present: L. Bascombe; E. Blaschik; R. Casner; R. Dill; F. Hunt; Julia Leonardo, C. Mansfield; M. Murphy; T. Murphy; M. Sassi; J. Shea; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Walter noted that the Agenda should be amended to include item 8.C. Agriculture Commission Changes under New Business.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to approve the agenda as amended.
Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting of March 30, 2015, Regular Meeting of April 1, 2015 and Special Meeting of April 7, 2015

Mr. Lyman advised that he had not yet had time to review the minutes. Mr. Malavasi noted one change to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 1, 2015 and the Selectmen agreed to dispense with the approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 30, 2015, the Regular Meeting of April 1, 2015 and the Special Meeting of April 7, 2015 until their next meeting.

4. Correspondence: There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.
5. First Selectmen's Report:

- A. Shagbark Solar Project Virtual Net Metering Presentation & Discussion on Partnership – Mike Sassi: Mr. Walter introduced Mr. Sassi who distributed materials and explained how the Solar Virtual Net Metering partnership works. He stated that, in order for Shagbark to take advantage of the State's solar financing program, they need a signed Letter of Intent from a municipality agreeing to enter into a 25-year power purchase agreement with them.

Mr. Sassi advised that a preliminary study of the Town's historical electrical usage for its three schools indicate a substantial savings for the Town. He noted that the projections were conservative and that they also project a surplus that the Town could take advantage of for additional municipal buildings.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Sassi stated that the agreement would not lock the Town into using any particular supplier. He also confirmed that the

Letter of Intent would not obligate the Town to anything other than continuing discussions with Shagbark about their proposal.

There was a general discussion concerning the size and location of the solar array on Shagbark's property. Mr. Sassi responded to several questions from the Selectmen and Mr. Walter noted that he feels the proposal is a win-win. He also stated that any multi-year contract necessitates the approval of the Board of Finance and Town Meeting. He thanked Mr. Sassi for his presentation.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to execute a Letter of Intent with Shagbark to continue discussions regarding a Solar Project Virtual Net Metering Partnership and to work with the Town's Attorney on the proposal. Unanimous aye.

- B. Trowbridge Road/Middle School Property Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that property on Trowbridge Road, adjacent to an emergency access to the Middle School, was recently purchased and the new owner has advised him that school buses are using a section of his property to turn around. He stated that the owner has approached him about exchanging a 20,000 sq. ft. section of his property with a same sized section of nearby open space property owned by the Town.

Mr. Walter stated that he feels the exchange would benefit everyone; however, the Conservation Commission does not favor the exchange. He stated that he will discuss the proposal with the Town's attorney and will keep the Selectmen updated.

- C. Tax Incentive Program for Certain Emergency Services Volunteers Ordinance Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that he was asked by an Emergency Services volunteer to extend the Town's Tax Incentive Program for ES volunteers to include the taxes on her leased vehicle. There was a general discussion about whether or not the Town's ordinance and State statutes would allow the Town to extend the Tax Incentive Program to leased vehicles. Mr. Walter advised that he will consult with the Town's attorney regarding this request and keep the Selectmen updated.

Mr. Walter also reported on the following:

- He recently attended a meeting of the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission where he learned that the CT DECD has proposed to fund MCRC an additional \$1M to be used for small business loans and grants. Mr. Walter stated that the previous program had been very successful in helping small businesses in Middlesex County and he is pleased that the Commission has received new funding. There was a general discussion about the application process and benefits of the program.
- He called the Selectmen's attention to a tentative Memorandum of Agreement for a Regional Animal Control Department between the Towns of East Haddam and East Hampton. He reviewed the particulars of several points in the agreement and stated that he would like to finalize the Agreement at the Selectmen's May 4th meeting so that it can be presented to the public for a vote at a Town Meeting.

6. Citizens' Concerns: Mr. Murphy expressed his concern that the stop sign on Landing Hill Road, at the intersection with Maple Avenue, had been removed. Mr. Walter provided the background on the decision to remove the stop sign and Mr. Lyman stated that the installation of the sign was a temporary measure to deal with increased traffic on those roads during the Route 82 bridge work. Mr. Walter advised that he had consulted with a representative of UConn's Transportation institute and it was determined that the intersection did not meet the criteria for requiring a stop sign (i.e. traffic count levels and the fact that no accidents at that intersection have been recorded). Mr. Walter advised Mr. Murphy that the Board of Selectmen is the Town's Legal Traffic Authority and that a change in their decision would require a petition and further study.

In response to a question from Mr. Blaschik regarding the permitting process for Shagbark's proposed ground solar array, Mr. Walter stated that the Planning & Zoning and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions would review Shagbark's application for their solar project. There was a general discussion regarding the status of the Shagbark's outstanding violations and it was confirmed that the majority of the issues have been resolved and that Shagbark was working on resolving the remaining items.

7. Unfinished Business

- A. Blight Ordinance Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that, per Mr. Lyman's request, the Town's attorney is in the process of drafting an opinion concerning the adoption of a Blight Ordinance. The Selectmen discussed the pros and cons of such an ordinance and Mr. Walter agreed that any proposed ordinance should be thoroughly vetted by the public.
- B. A.P. Gates Road/Warner Road Drainage Discussion: Mr. Walter recognized Mr. Casner who reviewed a map of the area of concern. He reviewed the history of the Town's installation of drainage solutions and noted that the present solution results in drainage onto his property although previous drainage culverts/pipes routed the water elsewhere. He stated that a title search did not indicate that there were ever any easements attached to his property. Mr. Casner stated that he does not believe that the Town has any right to discharge water onto his property.

Mr. Walter advised Mr. Casner that he has provided the Town's attorney with applicable P&Z and IWWC meeting minutes and has requested a legal opinion regarding this issue.

- C. Wocl Road Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that the Town's attorney is reviewing the changes made to the agreement by the property owner's attorney.
- D. Emergency Communications Center Contract for Municipal Services Discussion: There was no update to this agenda item.

8. New Business

- A. RFP Award – Financial Advisory Services: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen’s attention to material in their meeting packets related to this Agenda item. He noted that a panel of himself, Kathleen Klinck, Susan Link, William DiCristofaro and Cynthia Varricchio was created to interview the firms responding to the Financial Advisory Services RFP. He stated that four firms had been interviewed and the panel recommended Independent Bond & Investment Consultants LLC be awarded the contract.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Lyman, to award the contract for Financial Advisory Services to Independent Bond & Investment Consultants LLC. Unanimous aye.

- B. Gift Acceptance – Donation from Friends of the East Haddam Free Public Library: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen’s attention to an email from Library Director, Michael Gilroy regarding a donation toward the East Haddam Free Public Library from the Friends Group. He noted that the gift now needs to proceed through the acceptance process.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to accept a gift for the East Haddam Free Public Library in the amount of \$2,000 for general support and send acceptance of said donation to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting for approval. Unanimous aye.

In response to a question from Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Walter advised that the donation will be deposited in a reserve account for the Library. He stated that a thank you note for the gift will be send on behalf of the Town of East Haddam.

- C. Board, Commission, Committee Changes (WPCA /AGC): Mr. Walter called the Selectmen’s attention to materials in their meeting packets regarding new members for the WPCA and Agriculture Commission and a change to the status of one member of the Agriculture Commission.

Water Pollution Control Authority

Mr. Walter called the Selectmen’s attention to an email from Andrew Lord, Chairman of the WPCA, recommending the appointment of Robert Casner to the Authority.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to appoint Robert Casner as a regular member of the Water Pollution Control Authority filling a vacant term to expire June 30, 2016. Unanimous aye.

Agriculture Commission

Mr. Walter called the Selectmen’s attention to an email from the Agriculture Commission Chairman recommending changes and appointments to the commission.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to change the status of Peter Dean from alternate member to regular member to fill a vacant term to expire January 1, 2016 on the Agriculture Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to appoint Tanya Bourgoine and Bonnie Buongiorno to vacant alternate member terms to expire January 1, 2016 on the Agriculture Commission. Unanimous aye.

- D. Volunteers of the Month (February, March): Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to an email, dated April 14, 2014, from Maryjane Malavasi, nominating Pete Govert for February Volunteer of the Month. Ms. Malavasi's email reviewed Mr. Govert's numerous activities on the Town's Commissions and Committees. Her email stated, *"Pete is not only a very special East Haddam volunteer, he is also teaching others to follow in his footsteps."*

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to name Peter Govert as volunteer of the month for February 2015. Unanimous aye.

Mr. Walter stated that he had nominated Susan Link for March Volunteer of the Month. He noted her long-term service on the Town's Board of Finance, her management of the Little League concession stand, and the Elementary School numerous fundraisers she had helped with.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to name Susan Link as volunteer of the month for March 2015. Unanimous aye.

- E. Tax Refunds: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to one tax refund.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to award a tax refund in the amount presented.

- \$ 54.54 to Howard Fraser.

Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: Mr. Casner asked if the Municipal Facilities Advisory Committee's charge includes a requirement to provide information on the cost to build new as well as the cost to convert the old Middle School to municipal offices. Mr. Walter stated that the Advisory Committee's charge did not include that requirement; however, an estimate to build new could be generated based on the required square footage for a municipal facilities building. He agreed that that information should be provided to the public so that they can make an informed vote at the referendum on this issue. Mr. Blaschik advised that the cost to demo both the Hale and Ray buildings should be included in any cost to build new.

10. Selectmen's Discussion

- A. Budget Town Meeting (April 21, 2015 @8:00 p.m.): Mr. Walter encouraged the public to attend the April 21st Budget Town Meeting.
- B. Public Hearing on Proposed Capital Projects (April 22, 2015 @7:00 p.m.): Mr. Walter noted that this meeting would be held at the Elementary School and encouraged the public to attend.
- C. Budget Referendum (May 5, 2015 – time to be determined): Mr. Walter reminded the public about the Budget Referendum scheduled for May 5th.

The Selectmen discussed groups/organizations that could contribute nominations for Volunteers of the Month. They also discussed the opportunities/process for applying for summer positions with Public Works.

Mr. Lyman noted that the recently reconstituted Agriculture Commission has indicated an interest in participating in discussions regarding the use of the Harris property and he expressed concern about potential conflicts with the Friends of Harris. Ms. Branscombe advised that the Friends of Harris would like to work with the Agriculture Commission and all agreed that it is important to have open communication regarding the Harris property.

- 11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary