

Board of Selectmen
Grange Hall
January 18, 2017
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: E. Lyman; E. Malavasi Absent: S. Link
Also Present: C. Brownell; D. Dill; E. Dill; R. Dill; A. Gamble; T. Gelston; J. Moreau; C. Riling; C. Varricchio; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.
3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of January 4, 2017.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 4, 2017 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence
 - A. Letter from Board of Education Regarding Educational Cost Sharing Grant: Mr. Lyman reviewed correspondence concerning the state's cuts in its Educational Cost Sharing Grants. He noted that the East Haddam Board of Education advised that it believes it can absorb the \$55,469.00 cut imposed on the Town's share of the Grant.
5. First Selectmen's Report
 - A. 2.5% State of Connecticut Spending Cap Discussion – Cindy Varricchio: Mr. Lyman provided a brief overview of the state's 2.5% spending cap legislation and introduced Finance Director Varricchio.

Ms. Varricchio distributed handouts related to the Municipal Spending Cap. She advised that if municipalities exceed a 2.5% increase in their 2017-18 budget expenditures, their funding from the state's Municipal Revenue Sharing Program (MRSA) grant will be reduced by \$.50 for every \$1.00 of excess spending. She noted that certain aspects of the budget are excluded from the new legislation.

Ms. Varricchio stated that the Governor feels many municipalities are in better shape than the state and she is concerned that the state may decide to further cut grants to the Town. Mr. Lyman stated that he believes the state is looking for ways to shift the cost burden to towns since the cities and the state are in poor fiscal shape. Ms. Varricchio noted that other members of the Council of Small Towns feel the same way. She also referenced a

recent article in the Connecticut Mirror noting the potential for withholding of state aid from small towns that refuse to become more efficient by regionalizing.

- B. Foxtown Road Bridge Replacement Public Information Meeting Update (January 11, 2017): Mr. Lyman reviewed the DOT's presentation on their plans to replace the Foxtown Road Bridge. He noted that the work will occur over approximately ten weeks in 2018.
- C. Town Office Conversion Public Information Meeting Update (January 12, 2017): Mr. Lyman reviewed the Municipal Office Building Committee's presentation regarding their progress and plans to convert the Old Middle School into municipal offices. He stated the project will be underway in a few weeks and complimented the Committee members, architect and construction manager on the work that has been done so far.
- D. Community Forum on Potential Effects of Legalization of Marijuana Update (January 13, 2017): Mr. Lyman provided information regarding the Community Forum on the Potential Effects of the Legalization of Marijuana organized by Rep. Ziobron. He stated that he did not think the panel changed anyone's mind on legalizing marijuana; however, the lawyer from Colorado was very persuasive, stating that surrounding states are legalizing it and it would be better for Connecticut to create its own laws for the possession and use of marijuana.

Mr. Malavasi noted his opposition to legalizing marijuana and stated that he hopes the state does not look to that option to address its fiscal problems. The Selectmen had a general discussion regarding the issue.

- E. Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Government Meeting at Capitol Update (January 18, 2017): Mr. Lyman reported that earlier in the day he had attended a River COG meeting at the Capitol. He reviewed a number of the items that were discussed at the meeting including unfunded mandate relief, the 2.5% spending cap, educational regionalization, as well as other issues.
 - F. Shared Services Report – January: Mr. Lyman and the Selectmen reviewed the January Shared Services Report.
 - G. Major Capital Projects Update – January: Mr. Lyman called Mr. Malavasi's attention to the January 2017 Major Capital Projects Update report in their meeting packets. Mr. Lyman reviewed the status of the municipal facilities, elementary school renovations, the Town-wide radio and firehouse renovation projects. He and Mr. Malavasi discussed several of the projects.
6. Citizen's Concerns:

In response to a request from Mr. Gelston, Mr. Lyman stated he would arrange to have a link to the Mirror article put on the Town's website. He also stated that Reps. Ziobron and Linares are working hard to protect the municipalities they represent from bearing the burden

of solving the state's fiscal problems. Mr. Gelston stated that he is not in favor of legalizing marijuana and Mr. Lyman advised that the decision will be with the legislators. There was a brief discussion regarding whether or not the issue could be added to a ballot.

Ms. Riling stated that she opposes the legalization of recreational marijuana in Connecticut. In response to a question from Ms. Riling, Mr. Lyman stated that banning the manufacture and sale of marijuana products in East Haddam would require a vote of the legislative body of the town. Mr. Malavasi reviewed research that the Local Prevention Council did on how to control the sale of marijuana in East Haddam.

Ms. Riling also noted that regionalization does not necessarily require closing schools but, rather drives an effort to pool resources across municipalities. Ms. Varricchio noted the areas within the Board of Education where regionalization has already taken place. Ms. Riling further noted that spending, as well as revenue, must be looked at to manage the Town's budget. She gave examples of various town resource and employee groups that could be looked at to reallocate duties. Mr. Lyman commented that the largest allocation in the town's budget is to the Board of Education. Ms. Riling added that we need to look at areas in our own town where we can save funds. Mr. Lyman pointed out that state unfunded mandates have a big impact on the Town's spending.

7. Unfinished Business:

- A. Shagbark Solar Project Discussion: Mr. Lyman reported that Shagbark has secured a new financial backer for their solar project and that the project is moving forward.
- B. Goodspeed Airport Scenic Easement: Mr. Lyman advised that the Town has not heard back from Mr. Mellon regarding its December 19, 2016, letter suggesting he consider awarding the scenic easement to the Town rather than the state. In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Lyman stated that he has not heard back from the state either.
- C. Grant Acceptance – Neglected Cemeteries: Mr. Lyman advised that the Town has been awarded a \$2,000.00 grant under the Neglected Cemetery Account Grant and noted the grant acceptance process now needs to move forward.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to adopt the following resolution to be referred to the Board of Finance and the Town Meeting for approval:

RESOLVED: That a grant in an amount of \$2,000.00 is hereby accepted from the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management through the Neglected Cemetery Account to provide upkeep of local cemeteries to keep them in orderly and decent condition upon the terms and conditions set forth in the Notice of Grant Award.

In furtherance of this resolution, Emmett J. Lyman, the First Selectman, is duly authorized to enter into and sign said contracts on behalf of the Town of East Haddam. Emmett J. Lyman currently holds the office of First Selectman and has held that office

since July 20, 2016. The First Selectman is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the local, state or federal government in connection with said contract and to execute any amendments, rescissions, and revisions thereto. Unanimous aye.

8. New Business:

- A. Grant Acceptance – 2017 Historic Document Preservation Grant: Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to materials in their meeting packets from the Connecticut State Library regarding a Historic Document Preservation Grant. He noted that the Town applies for this grant every year.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to recommend to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that a grant in the amount of \$4,000.00 is hereby accepted from the State of Connecticut, State Library, for the purpose of historic document preservation; and that Emmett J. Lyman, First Selectman, is empowered to execute and deliver in the name of and on behalf of this municipality, a contract with the Connecticut State Library for an Historic Document Preservation Grant. Unanimous aye.

- B. Rathbun Library – Approval Request for Wine Service: Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to an email from Michael Gilroy, dated January 3, 2017, in their meeting packets. He advised that the Art League is hosting three events in the next few months and would like to serve wine.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve wine service at the Rathbun Library for an Art League Meeting on February 1, 2017, an Art Show Set-up on April 5, 2017 and an Art Show Reception on April 21, 2017. Unanimous aye.

- C. Senior Center – Approval Request for Beer and Wine Service: Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to an email from Mary Murphy of the Democratic Town Committee, dated January 4, 2017, requesting permission to serve beer and wine at the Senior Center for their “Mardi Gras” event on February 25, 2017.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to approve the serving of beer and wine at the Senior Center by the Democratic Town Committee for their “Mardi Gras” event on February 25, 2017. Unanimous aye.

- D. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (REC):

Recreation Commission

Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packet forwarded from Tiffany Quinn noting the status of two members of the Recreation Commission. He noted that Mr. Gowac’s term expired and he has chosen not to be

reappointed. Mr. Lyman noted he will send a letter of thanks to Mr. Gowac for his years of volunteering on the Recreation Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Michael Michalski from the Recreation Commission. Unanimous aye.

- E. Tax Refunds: Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen's attention to two tax refunds. Ms. Dill noted that the refund to Caring Community of CT Inc. is the consequence of an oversight by the tax assessor as to the tax exempt status of the organization.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi, to award tax refunds in the amount presented.

- \$4,564.82 to Caring Community of CT Inc., and
- \$ 759.61 to Amy Munson or Clara Munson.

Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment:

In response to a question raised by Erik Dill, Mr. Lyman noted that the issue of regionalizing health districts is evolving and noted that there is very little support for it in the legislature. Ms. Varricchio noted that the increase would put the town over its spending cap.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Riling, Mr. Lyman noted that Courtney Richardson's cost-saving proposal she referred to is pending until Mr. Casner, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, returns from Florida. He stated that there would be a cost involved, however, no action would be taken unless he is comfortable there would be value for the Town in doing the study.

Mr. Moreau voiced his support of the work done by the transfer station employees and it was noted that the work they do is not always visible to the public.

10. Selectmen's Discussion: In response to a question raised by Mr. Malavasi, Mr. Lyman stated that public safety measures will be in place for the Town's Women's Vigil on Saturday, January 21, 2017.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Malavasi to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. Unanimous aye

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Link, Secretary