

Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Rooms 1 & 2
February 25, 2019
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: E. Lyman; S. Link; R. Smith

Also Present: E. Blaschik; J. Buhl; P. Buhl; M. Callahan; D. Holahan; B. Lunt; T. McCabe; J. Moreau;
B. Perry; B. Reas; R. Turner; C. Varricchio; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectmen Lyman called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of Minutes

Special Meeting of February 2, 2019: The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of the February 2, 2019 meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 2, 2019 as written. Unanimous aye.

Regular Meeting of February 6, 2019: The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of the February 6, 2019 meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 6, 2019 as written. Unanimous aye.

Special Meeting of February 11, 2019: The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of the February 11, 2019 meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 11, 2019 as written. Unanimous aye.

Special Meeting of February 13, 2019: The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of the February 13, 2019 meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 13, 2019 as written. Unanimous aye.

3. Correspondence: No correspondence was discussed at the meeting.
4. First Selectmen's Report

Mr. Lyman reported:

- He met with Ms. Brown of CT DEEP and they agreed to start work on the marketing plan for the Transfer Station bag system in March.
- He attended a CCM meeting last week where the Governor's Chief of Staff spoke; the main points covered were:

- The Governor wants to develop a “world-class” transportation system in CT;
- There will be more support for tourism;
- The proposed state property tax legislation is not supported by the Governor;
- The Governor is in favor of some regionalization of Board of Education functions, municipal Assessors and Tax Collectors;

Mr. Lyman noted that he feels the Governor is making a good faith effort to reach out and find out what his constituents want for the state.

- A. Youth & Family Service Discussion Regarding Marijuana: Ms. McCabe addressed the Selectmen and asked if, in anticipation of CT’s possible legalization of marijuana, they would like to begin a community conversation about what would/would not be acceptable for the Town. The Selectmen agreed that it would not be useful to discuss possible Town ordinances until the state’s legislation is finalized; however, they agreed the Board of Selectmen would co-sponsor community forums on the topic with Youth and Family Services. Ms. McCabe agreed to organize the forums.

5. New Business

- A. Renewal of Grant Application with Middlesex Hospital for Paramedic Services: Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to a letter from Middlesex Hospital’s EMS Manager Santacroce, dated February 4, 2019 regarding the per capita charge for Paramedic Services to the Town residents. He noted that there is no change to the charge and the Amendment to the Agreement extends the term of the Agreement by one year.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, that Emmett J. Lyman, First Selectman, is hereby authorized to sign a one-year renewal of the Grant Application with Middlesex Hospital for Paramedic Services with a term from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Unanimous aye.

- B. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (EHSCIP, EDC)

East Haddam Schools Capital Improvements Building Committee

Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to an application for the East Haddam Schools Capital Improvements Building Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Ms. Link, to appoint Alyson Karpiej as a member of the East Haddam Schools Capital Improvements Building Committee. Unanimous aye.

Economic Development Commission

Mr. Lyman called the Selectmen’s attention to an email from Bob Casner, Economic Development Commission Chairman recommending changes to the Commission’s membership.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, to change the status of James Fennema from an alternate member to a regular member filling a vacant position with a term expiration of June 30, 2021 on the Economic Development Commission. Unanimous aye.

The Selectmen discussed EDC’s recommendation to appoint Michael Robidoux to an alternate position on the Commission. Mr. Smith noted that Mr. Robidoux had not submitted a copy of his

resume with his application and the Selectmen agreed to request a copy of his resume and postpone a motion until their next meeting.

C. Tax Refunds: There were no tax refunds considered at the meeting.

6. Selectmen's Discussion: There was no discussion under this agenda item at the meeting.

7. Public Comment

The following public comments were discussed:

- Mr. Buhl stated that, regarding the possible legalization of marijuana, in order to make the Town "dry", it would have to wait until state legislation is finalized which may, or may not, allow such ordinances. He recommended that, if the Town wants to pursue that option, the Selectmen should make Senator Needleman and Representative Haines aware.
- Mr. Moreau commented that, as the Town's largest employer, it should get ahead of legislation to legalize marijuana use in the state by updating its Employee Policy accordingly. He further stated that it is his opinion that Chief Auld made several inappropriate comments at the recent Fire Department's Annual Awards Ceremony. The Selectmen noted that they had not been invited to this year's event.
- Mr. Callahan recommended speaking with municipalities in MA similar in size and make-up to East Haddam regarding their experiences related to the legalization of the recreational use of marijuana.

8. 2019-2020 General Budget Review Workshop

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Link, there was a general discussion regarding setting a goal for reducing the proposed 2019-2020 budget to manage any increase in the Town's mil rate.

Ms. Varricchio advised that the state's shifting of the responsibility for approximately \$62,000.00 in the Teachers' Retirement Fund to the Town would impact the Board of Education's budget.

The Selectmen discussed overall new vehicle requests and considered several options for re-distributing vehicles among departments. They also discussed the Police Department's request to purchase a new boat.

A. General Government Budgets

Ms. Varricchio reviewed a summary of the general fund balances and several departmental capital budgets.

In response to a question from the Selectmen regarding the Grange windows, Mr. Turner stated that they do not have to be replaced this year but recommended reserving for the work over the next several years. The Selectmen agreed with Mr. Turner's recommendation but did not determine how much to reserve and for how many years.

The Selectmen and Mr. Turner discussed several other capital requests, including the Fire Department's request to replace the roof at Company No. 3 and security cameras for all of the

firehouses. Mr. Turner confirmed that the replacement of Fire Company No. 3's roof could be postponed for a year.

B. Public Safety Budgets

The Selectmen discussed the Police Department's request to purchase two new cruisers. No changes to the Public Safety budgets were made at this time.

C. Public Works Budgets

The Selectmen and Public Works Director Lunt discussed proposed road work and Ms. Lunt advised she would have to re-evaluate the roads after the winter but confirmed that the \$500,000.00 is a realistic estimate.

She and the Selectmen discussed her request to purchase a bucket-truck and hire two employees for the removal of diseased/dead trees. Ms. Lunt stated that, due to the evolving nature of the problem, she is having difficulty securing guidance on the cost to remove dead/diseased trees because contractors will only provide an estimated hourly rate. She noted that other towns are having a similar problem estimating the financial impact of the total project.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to take a break at 12:55 p.m. Unanimous aye. The meeting reconvened at 1:54 p.m.

The Selectmen agreed not to include the purchase of a new bucket-truck and two new employees in the Public Works budget and, instead, increased the Tree Care/Removal budget.

D. Health & Social Services Budgets

Ms. Varricchio distributed the Ambulance Association's balance sheet. There was a general discussion regarding the Town's contribution to the Ambulance Association. Ms. Varricchio advised that the Town has been reserving to purchase a new ambulance and noted that such a purchase is not yet necessary. Ms. Link noted that the Town has reserved almost the full cost of a new an ambulance and recommended reducing its contribution to reserves for this purpose.

E. Recreation & Leisure Budgets: Ms. Varricchio reviewed several reductions in the Recreation Department's budget.

F. Debt Services: This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.

G. Interfund Transfers: This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting.

H. Shared Service

In response to questions from Ms. Link, Ms. Varricchio reviewed the Travel Reimbursement and Technology budget lines. Ms. Varricchio confirmed that the annual fee for technical services is for all of the Town's departments' software and that most of the hardware is leased.

The Selectmen and Mr. Turner discussed the Maintenance Fund line in the Shared Services budget and the Selectmen agreed to reduce the amount by \$25,000.00.

I. Capital Improvement Detail

1. Board of Education Capital: Superintendent Reas responded to several questions from the Selectmen regarding the BOE capital budget requests and provided information regarding unanticipated emergency repairs and expenditures.

Mr. Reas reviewed the Board of Education's capital requests and advised that not all the projects need to be accomplished during the next fiscal year; however, he added them to capital improvements budget to keep track of them.

There was a general discussion regarding the proposed Elementary School envelope project and the potential for state reimbursement for some of the work. The Selectmen and Mr. Reas discussed any potential impact of the Governor's proposal for school regionalization and whether or not the Elementary School envelope project should be brought to a referendum before it is added to the budget. The Selectmen agreed to move out the \$1.7M for the project until the next fiscal year.

Several other BOE capital requests were discussed, including purchase of a new maintenance van and a new ball field irrigation system. The Selectmen agreed to postpone purchase of the maintenance van and reduced the total of the BOE capital budget to \$350,000.00.

The Selectmen reviewed several other department's capital requests and agreed to purchase two new police cruisers and re-purpose one of the police vehicles to the Building Department. They also agreed to several changes to the Fire Department, Parks & Recreation and Libraries' capital budgets.

- J. General Fund Revenue Detail: There was no discussion of this agenda item.

- K. Other Budget Items

Ms. Varricchio distributed a revised gasoline analysis for the Selectmen's review.

The Selectmen discussed the impact of increased ambulance calls on the Fire Department staffing and the need to negotiate a contractual agreement for reimbursement from the Ambulance Association for those calls. They also discussed breaking out the paid staff budget to separate Fire, EMS, and Ambulance budgets. The Selectmen agreed to reduce the Fire Department's wages budget line by \$58,000.00 and restrict new hiring to part-timers only.

The Selectmen discussed the request to hire a new School Resource Officer (SRO) and Mr. Smith recommended designating one of the existing officers as the SRO. Mr. Lyman supported Mr. Smith's recommendation; however, Ms. Link stated she did not agree with it.

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, to take a break at 3:55 p.m. Unanimous aye. The meeting reconvened at 4:05 p.m.

Ms. Varricchio reviewed the changes requested by the Selectmen and noted the impact on the mil rate. Ms. Link revisited capital requests and the general government budgets and the Selectmen agreed to several additional reductions.

9. Public Comment

The following public comments were made at the meeting:

- Mr. Moreau questioned the need for an SRO but confirmed that he had not attended the public forum regarding the issue. He also discussed the life-cycle of fire apparatus and expressed his dissatisfaction that after the Fire Department borrowed from reserves for a new fire truck to complete the updates to the its facilities, assuring the Selectmen that the cost of the truck had gone down by a comparable amount, the cost of the truck had not, in fact, been reduced.
- Mr. Blaschik acknowledged the difficult job the Selectmen had concerning the budget and thanked them for all their hard work.

10. Potential Budget Resolution

Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Smith, to recommend to the Board of Finance for fiscal year 2019-2020, a budget of \$13,444,469.00, which represents General Government, Shared Services, Capital and Reserves.

Ms. Link expressed her frustration that designating an existing police officer as the new SRO is, effectively, a reduction in the police force. She also expressed concerns about the number of “unknowns” in the 2019-2020 budget and strongly recommended that the Board of Finance be made aware of the unresolved issues related to the Ambulance Association and Fire Department, the Tree Care/Removal budget and potential FEMA reimbursement for storm damage in the budget recommended by the Selectmen.

Mr. Lyman and Mr. Smith voted aye; Ms. Link voted nay. The motion passed by a majority of ayes.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Ms. Link, to adjourn the meeting at 4:43 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Link, Secretary