

Board of Selectmen
Grange Hall
February 15, 2012
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: Mark Walter; John Blaschik, Emmett Lyman
Also Present: E. Blaschik; C. Praisner; R. Smith; H. Thomas, S. Wheeler

1. First Selectman Walter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.
3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of February 1, 2012: The Selectmen reviewed the minutes of the Regular Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 1, 2012.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 1, 2012, as written. Mr. Lyman abstained from the vote and the motion passed by a majority of ayes.

4. Correspondence

A. Economic Development Commission Business Letter: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of the Economic Development Commission's Business Letter in their meeting packets, dated February 2012, and advised that Peter Simmons was recently hired as the Town's part-time Economic Development Coordinator. He noted that Mr. Simmons will be a good asset for the Town.

B. Agriculture Commission Budget Update Letter: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of a letter from the Agriculture Commission dated February 11, 2012. Mr. Thomas explained that the Commission had underestimated its 2012-13 budget and the letter was a request to have it increased. He stated that there would be a combined meeting of several Town Boards and Commissions on April 11th at which the Agriculture Commission will do a presentation explaining the need for the increase.

5. First Selectmen's Report

A. Early Childhood Council Presentation: Mr. Walter introduced Ms. Praisner who distributed a copy of her presentation and provided some background on the Early Childhood Council. She reviewed the material in her presentation and discussed the potential for an achievement gap in children aged 5 years and under who live in a low socio-economic environment. She advised that it is the goal of the Council to undertake prevention measures with the birth to 5-year age group and noted that prevention is a much less expensive and more impactful course of action when compared to implementing remediation efforts at an older age.

Ms. Praisner reviewed the Council's programs and advised that the Council was established in 2009 thru an initial United Way grant of \$20,000.00 and stated that that is also the amount of their 2012-13 budget. She reported that the Council will receive a \$10,000.00 grant from United Way for budget year 2012-13 and that the Board of Education has agreed to contribute \$5,000.00 in funding. She distributed a letter requesting the Town provide \$5,000.00 to offset the remaining gap in funds and another document that provided information on how the Council's programs would be affected if the funding gap is not filled.

The Selectmen thanked Ms. Praisner for her presentation and stated they would consider her request.

B. Emergency Services Space Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that representatives from the Town's emergency services had toured Mr. Fischer's building and considered it a suitable option to house their departments. He advised that the Town has ordered an appraisal on the building. In response to a question from Mr. Blaschik, Mr. Walter stated that the Town is considering purchasing the building; however, Mr. Fischer would also consider leasing the space. Mr. Blaschik expressed his concern about removing a building located in a commercially zoned district from the tax rolls. Mr. Walter acknowledged his concern and stated the Selectmen could have a more detailed discussion about this option after all of the reports have been received.

6. Citizen's Concerns: Mr. Thomas stated that if the Town is considering an expansion of the septic system at Fire Company #1, test pits should be dug. Mr. Walter confirmed that the Land Use Administrator will be contacting the property owner to discuss that issue.

7. Unfinished Business

A. 4-8 Middle School Discussion: There was no update on this agenda item.

B. Old Middle School/Middle School Conversion Committee: There was no update on this agenda item.

C. Proposal to Exempt Class I Renewables from Building Permit Fees: There was no update on this agenda item.

8. New Business

A. Gift Acceptance – 2012 Polaris Ranger All-Terrain Vehicle: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a letter from the Board of Fire Commissioners advising of the offer of a gift to the Town of a 2012 Polaris Ranger all-terrain vehicle including the fire and rescue equipment from the East Haddam Volunteer Fire Department.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to accept a gift of a 2012 Polaris Ranger All-Terrain Vehicle with fire and rescue equipment from the East Haddam Volunteer Fire Department and send acceptance of said gift to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting for approval.

Mr. Blaschik advised that he had reviewed the Board of Fire Commissioners' meeting minutes and noted that they contained no motion to recommend acceptance of this gift to the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen discussed whether or not such a motion was required and agreed to table Mr. Walter's motion until such time as the Board of Fire Commissioners could meet and vote on a motion to recommend acceptance of the 2012 Polaris Ranger All-Terrain Vehicle to the Board of Selectmen.

B. Grant Acceptance – 2008 Wheelchair-Accessible Motor Vehicle (Senior Bus): Mr. Walter advised that the Red Cross had put out an offer to donate a used 2008 Ford Wheelchair-Accessible Motor Vehicle (Senior Bus) to a CT municipality and that East Haddam was the first town that responded.

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

RESOLVED: That a 2008 Ford Wheelchair-Accessible Motor Vehicle for Services to Elderly and/or Disabled Persons Program is hereby accepted upon the terms and conditions set forth in an Agreement between the Town of East Haddam and the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, and that Mark B. Walter, First Selectman, is authorized to sign and execute agreements/contracts, along with all necessary agreement/contractual documents and certifications on behalf of the Town of East Haddam with the Department of Transportation of the State of Connecticut, and is authorized to affix the corporate seal of the municipality.

Unanimous aye.

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

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to award a tax refund in the amount of \$125.12 to Brittany O'Mara. Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: There was no public comment at the meeting.

10. Selectmen's Discussion:

A. Haddam Land Swap Board of Selectmen Letter: Mr. Walter reported that Mr. Smith had attended their February 1st meeting to request the Board of Selectmen send another letter to State officials reiterating their objections to the Haddam land-swap deal. He stated that both he and Mr. Blaschik continue to be opposed to the deal; however, they wanted to wait before taking any action so that they could discuss the issue with Mr. Lyman at this meeting. There was a general discussion about several issues related to the land-swap deal and Mr. Lyman confirmed that he also continues to be opposed to the deal. Mr. Lyman offered to draft an updated letter stating the Board of Selectmen's opposition to the plans.

B. Board of Fire Commissioners/Fire Department Update of Outstanding Issues: Mr. Blaschik distributed copies of a draft report on his findings concerning whether the Board of Fire Commissioners is: (1) in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, (2) whether or not they have properly recorded minutes of their meetings, (3) if there are written procedures to follow in the firehouses, and (4) whether or not the bidding for fire equipment is in compliance with regulations. He reviewed his findings and noted that there may be a training opportunity for the Fire Commissioners regarding the rules for running and reporting on public meetings. In response to a question from Mr. Walter, Mr. Blaschik confirmed that he would attend the next meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners and discuss his report.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional regular business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Tape: There was no recording made of this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary