

Board of Selectmen
Grange Hall
May 16, 2012
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: Mark Walter; John Blaschik, and Emmett Lyman

Also Present: C. Behilo, E. Blaschik, S. McKinnon, R. Smith, J. Ventres, 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. Blaschik, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.
3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of May 2, 2012.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 2, 2012 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: Mr. Walter distributed a copy of the Town & City publication and the CCM Legislative Update. There was a general discussion about the changes in Workers Compensation for municipal employees as a result of legislative action.
5. First Selectmen's Report: Mr. Walter noted that some residents whose homes are located on a private road had requested a reduction in property taxes since they maintain the road at their own expense. Mr. Edward Blaschik stated that he was aware of the request and the Selectmen and attendees discussed the issue but no further action was agreed upon.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Walter, Mr. Ventres advised that a number of homeowners who are hooked-up to the Village sewer system attended the WPCA meeting and expressed a desire to have the increased fees phased in over time. Mr. Ventres noted that WPCA will hold another meeting in July, at which time he will present several options of phase-in plans. He emphasized; however, that no matter how the increased payments are structured it will not reduce the total amount due.

Mr. Ventres reported that participants at the WPCA meeting had also inquired about expanding the system and were informed that expansion potential is limited.

6. Citizen's Concerns: Mr. Behilo distributed a photo-sheet documenting white streaks on some of the bricks at the new Middle School. He advised that the same thing had happened to bricks on his property which ultimately cracked. Mr. Walter stated he would bring the issue to the attention of the Middle School Building Committee.

7. Unfinished Business

A. 4-8 Middle School Discussion: Mr. Walter reported that the Building Committee had met with the general contractor who agreed to repair the roof over the library that has been leaking and to have the mason so some repairs.

B. Proposal to Exempt Class I Renewables from Building Permit Fees: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to materials in their meeting packets containing an ordinance, drafted by Attorney

Poliner, regarding a waiver of the electrical hook-up fee for solar panels and thermal systems. Mr. Lyman noted that the draft did not address the exclusion of systems built exclusively for the re-sale of the power generated and Mr. Walter stated he would bring that to Atty. Poliner attention.

C. Three Bridges Road Bridge Discussion: The Selectman and Mr. Ventres discussed potential options for a footbridge over the river and Mr. Ventres agreed to ask Mr. Nemergut to draw-up a preliminary design.

D. Tax Exempt Handicapped Vehicles: Mr. Walter provided the Selectmen with a copy of East Hampton's property tax exemption for vehicles modified for handicapped use. Mr. Blaschik stated that, if the Town pursues the exemption, he recommended it contain a means test. The Selectmen discussed how the Town would qualify vehicles for an exemption and Mr. Mackinnon advised that the Department of Motor Vehicles must certify the safety of any vehicle modified for handicapped use; he suggested that the certification could be part of the Town's qualification process. Mr. Walter agreed to check with CCM to see if other towns offer such an exemption.

E. Internet Usage Policy Discussion: Mr. Walter noted that he had received feedback from several Town department heads on the draft Internet Usage Policy. In response to a request from Mr. Walter, Mr. Ventres elaborated on his concerns regarding the language related to searching a work area. Mr. Ventres stated that he felt there should be a "reasonable cause" for any search of a work area and suggested similar language be included in the policy. Mr. Blaschik advised that most government agencies now have similar policies in place and that government workers generally understand that they can not consider their work space and/or computer as private spaces.

8. New Business

A. Open Space Grant Application – Zeiller and Pages Property: Mr. Walter invited Mr. Ventres to present the information on the Zeiller and Pages properties. Mr. Ventres advised that the Zeiller and Pages properties consist of 103 and 238 acres, respectively, and reviewed the topographical details related to each. He reported that the CT Departments of Energy and Environmental Protection Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program is accepting applications through June 28, 2012. He advised that the Town currently has a balance of \$1.8M remaining from the initial Open Space bond authorization and that, if a grant is secured for the purchase of these properties, the Town's contribution would be approximately \$900,000.00. Mr. Ventres stated that he was seeking the Board's permission to move forward with the grant application and to work with Attorney Poliner to draft contracts for the properties.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, that the Board of Selectmen support an application to the State of Connecticut's Open Space Grant program for funds to purchase the Zeiller property and Page property as described in the May 4, 2012 document submitted by the East Haddam Open Space Commission, Land Use Office. Unanimous aye.

B. Gift Acceptance – Consumers Union: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a letter from Consumer Reports' Auto Test Division advising of three donations to the Town. Mr. Walter explained that the Consumers Union has made a monetary gift totaling \$25,000.00 on behalf of the Board of Education, the Town of East Haddam, and Fire Department to be used as follows:

- \$10,000 to the Fire Department UTV Trailer
- \$10,000 to baseball and softball field dugout roofs
- \$ 5,000 for the general fund

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to accept a gift from Consumers Union of United States, Inc. for the Town of East Haddam in the amount of \$10,000 for the Fire Department UTV Trailer and send acceptance of said donation to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting for approval. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to accept a gift from Consumers Union of United States, Inc. on behalf of the Board of Education in the amount of \$10,000 for baseball and softball field dugout roofs at the 4 – 8 middle school.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Blaschik, Mr. Walter confirmed that the Board of Selectman is authorized to accept this gift on behalf of the Board of Education since it has been earmarked for capital improvements. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to accept a gift from Consumers Union of United States, Inc. for the Town of East Haddam in the amount of \$5,000 for the general fund and send acceptance of said donation to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting for approval. Unanimous aye.

Mr. Walter advised that he expected the individual groups would send a letter of thanks to the Consumers Union and he would also send a thank you note for the gifts on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.

C. Commission Status Change (EDC): Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packets from Mr. Odell, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission, dated May 3, 2012, advising that the EDC Commissioners had voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Selectmen advance alternate Fred Weissbach to fill the open seat vacated by Ms. Stricker.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to change the status of Frederick Weissbach from an alternate member to a regular member position with a term to expire June 30, 2016 on the Economic Development Commission. Unanimous aye.

D. Volunteer of the Month: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a memo in their meeting packets from Deb Denette, recommending Trudy Rottino as Volunteer of the Month. He noted that Ms. Denette's memo stated that Ms. Rottino's "*... passion and education is in early childhood development and she has volunteered countless hours with Cindy Praisner*" and "*she is also the sole Sunday School teacher at the Hadlyme Congregational Church*".

E. Tax Refunds: There were no tax refunds for consideration on the agenda.

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

10. Selectmen's Discussion: Mr. Walter advised that he is going to put out an ad for a 10-hour assistant for Joanne Rozniak and noted that Ms. McCabe has recommended reviewing all of the services offered by the Town and discuss how best to re-allocate the related responsibilities.

A. Parade Meeting – May 22, 2012: Mr. Walter reiterated that the next meeting of the Memorial Day Parade Committee is scheduled at 5:30 p.m. on May 22, 2012 at the Annex.

B. Budget Referendum – May 22, 2012: Mr. Walter advised that the Budget Referendum will be held from 12 noon until 8:00 pm on May 22, 2012.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional regular business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Tape: None

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary