

Board of Selectmen Meeting
Grange Hall
October 16, 2013
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: M. Walter; E. Lyman; J. Blaschik

Also Present: E. Blaschik; D. Denette; B. Gillis; A. Gionta; L. Salicrup; P. Seaman; H. Thomas; J. Turner; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski

1. First Selectman Walter called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:03 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 October 2, 2013 and Special Meeting of October 8, 2013.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 2, 2013 as written. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 8, 2013 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: Mr. Walter reported that he had received the following correspondence:
 - A report from the Town's shared services departments, Facilities/Finance/Technology. He reviewed several items in the report.
 - A letter from Lisa Conroy requesting that a question be added to the upcoming Advisory Committees' referendum regarding whether or not citizens would "...support construction of *[athletic] fields behind the old middle school*".

Mr. Walter provided some background on Ms. Conroy's request and the Selectmen discussed the feasibility of Mr. Blaschik's suggestion that several school playing fields be turned over to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

5. First Selectman's Report:

A. Board of Selectmen Proclamation: Mr. Walter noted that it was Mr. Blaschik's last Board of Selectmen meeting and presented him with a proclamation thanking him for his service to the Town.

B. Blight Ordinance Discussion: Mr. Walter noted that several people were in attendance at the meeting to discuss adopting a Town blight ordinance and opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Thomas thanked the Selectmen for the opportunity to address them on this issue and stated that there are several blighted properties in Town that are reducing surrounding property values and jeopardizing the health, safety and welfare of the community. He further noted that blighted properties inhibit economic development and tourism and stated that existing regulations are insufficient to address the situation. Mr. Thomas noted that the draft blight ordinance, previously submitted to the Selectmen, unlike the existing regulations, provides several intermediary steps before court action is taken.

Mr. Walter acknowledged that the Selectmen have been discussing a potential blight ordinance; however, the Town's attorney has advised against such action because the State has not provided a clear definition of "blight" making enforcement very difficult. He noted that the attorney suggested strengthening the Town's existing regulations as an alternative. There was a general discussion about the subjective nature of identifying blight.

Mr. Thomas stated he feels that there are several steps that can be taken to move the process forward: (1) research the Town's existing Zoning regulations to determine to what extent they provide coverage of the issue and whether or not they can be strengthened; (2) research other towns' experience enforcing their blight ordinances; (3) identify any language in the Connecticut blight regulations that defines "blight", and (4) negotiate acceptable revisions to the draft blight ordinance language previously submitted. Mr. Walter also suggested the group review the Town's existing housing ordinance.

6. Citizen's Concerns: Mr. Edward Blaschik expressed concern about recent publicity regarding Board of Education employees that have been hired without security checks. Mr. Walter advised that the Board of Education is currently reviewing its records and will secure background checks on any employees who do not already have them on file. He noted that background checks were not required prior to 1994 and any employees hired at that time may be grandfathered. Mr. Walter stated that the Board of Education is also looking into ways of better securing the information in their personnel files.

Mr. Walter made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to recess the Selectmen's meeting at 8:01 p.m. to conduct a short Town Meeting. Unanimous aye. The Selectmen's meeting was reconvened at 8:05 p.m.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Tax and Business Incentive Program Application: There was no update on this agenda item.

B. Transfer Station Update/Transfer Station Committee: Mr. Lyman reported that a pre-construction meeting was held earlier today and that Carlson Construction had been awarded the contract to repair the hopper. He stated that they are hoping to move forward quickly and that the hopper will have to be closed for a few days while the repairs are done. He further noted that the repairs are a "band-aid" and that the Town still needs to develop a long range plan for the Transfer Station.

C. Ordinance Book Review Discussion: Town Clerk Denette stated that she is working on setting a date with General Code. She noted that the Mid-State Regional Planning Organization has been replaced by the Lower River Valley Council of Governments (COG) and she would like to remove the section about the Planning Organization from the ordinances. Mr. Walter stated that he will confirm with the director of the COG that the Mid-State Regional Planning Organization was merged into the COG and, if so, the section can be removed.

8. New Business

A. 2012 Homeland Security Memorandum of Agreement Resolution: Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Town of East Haddam may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Mark B. Walter as the First Selectmen of the Town of East Haddam is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of East Haddam and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.

Unanimous aye.

B. Board and Commission Changes (AGC): Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a resignation letter from Harvey Thomas dated October 7, 2013.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Blaschik, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Harvey Thomas as a regular member of the Agriculture Commission. Unanimous aye.

Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to an email from Scot Mackinnon dated October 10, 2013 and an application from a resident regarding a position on the Agriculture Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to change the status of Jeffrey Savitsky 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. Blaschik, to appoint Nancy Mackinnon to a vacant alternate member term to expire January 1, 2015 on the Agriculture Commission. Unanimous aye.

C. Volunteer of the Month (October): Ms. Zemienieski advised that the paperwork for the October Volunteer of the Month had not been received in time for consideration at this meeting.

D. Tax Refunds: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to three tax refunds.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to award tax refunds in the amounts presented.

- \$ 12.59 to Joan Dill
 - \$451.53 to Toyota Motor Credit Corp
 - \$254.38 to Toyota Motor Credit Corp
- Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: Mr. Edward Blaschik thanked Selectman Blaschik for his service to the Town.

10. Selectmen's Discussion: The Selectmen discussed the proposed project timeline submitted by the East Haddam Elementary School Building Advisory Group. Mr. Walter advised that it was a very aggressive schedule and stated he did not feel it could be met due to the time that will be needed for bond council to draft the appropriate resolutions. The Selectmen agreed not to modify the schedule at this time but to make adjustments as needed going forward.

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 8:22 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Emmett Lyman, Secretary

Tapes: 674B
675A