

Board of Selectmen
Town Office Annex
October 6, 2010
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: Mark Walter, Pete Govert and Emmett Lyman
Also Present: C. Behilo, R. Hays, M. Sassi, 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: Mr. Walter stated he would like to amend the Agenda to add and move item 5.A. Youth & Family Services Discussion, up to the first item discussed at the meeting and add item 8.D. Committee Appointment (GREEN). Motion made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Govert, to approve the agenda as amended. Unanimous aye.

5.A. First Selectmen's Report – Youth & Family Services Discussion: Mr. Walter welcomed Ms. Hays and Mr. Sassi to the meeting and invited them to begin the discussion. Ms. Hays thanked the Selectmen for the opportunity to speak with them about the possible relocation of the Youth & Family Services when the old Middle School was converted into municipal offices. She noted that, in addition to planning for a possible move to a new space and any resulting financial impact, they would like to have a better understanding of their financial arrangements with the Town.

Mr. Walter advised that the Town viewed Youth & Family Services as an independent agency and holds their assets separate from the rest of the community budget. He acknowledged the importance of agencies such as theirs and the Food Bank during these difficult financial times and provided an update on the status of the Middle School conversion project. Mr. Walter stated that he would like to continue these discussions with Youth & Family Services while the Middle School Conversion Committee worked through the issues related to the project.

Ms. Hays stated that Youth & Family Services would like to update its contract with the Town and the Selectmen agreed it would be beneficial for both sides to formalize their expectations and understandings in a legal contract. Mr. Walter suggested a next step would be for Youth & Family Services to document the services it provides to the citizens of East Haddam.

Ms. Hays and Mr. Sassi thanked the Selectmen for the opportunity to meet with them and left the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of September 15, 2010:

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 15, 2010 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence:

A. Board of Assessment Appeals – Fall 2010 Final Report: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of the Board of Assessment Appeals - Fall 2010 Final Report in their meeting packets and the Selectmen reviewed its contents.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Govert, to accept the Fall 2010 Final Report of the Board of Assessment Appeals as submitted. Unanimous aye.

B. Economic Development Commission Fall Business Letter: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of EDC Fall Business Letter. The Selectmen reviewed the information contained in the letter.

C. Nature Conservancy Invasive Species Letter: Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a letter in their meeting packets dated August 2, 2010, from David Gumbart, Assistant Director of Land Management for The Nature Conservancy, advising of several species of invasive plants they have found in and around the Eightmile River watershed. The Selectmen reviewed the contents of the letter and agreed that the Town should support the efforts of The Nature Conservancy.

5. First Selectman's Report: Mr. Walter reported that he and Finance Administrator Cindy Varricchio had attended the annual convention of the Connecticut Council of Municipalities. He advised that the subject of public education in Connecticut was one of the main topics of discussion. He stated that several causes for its decline were noted, including the State's not fulfilling its full financial obligation to the municipalities, local Boards of Education becoming too political, the cost of the pension and healthcare packages negotiated by unions, and coasting on our previous reputation. He stated that the prevailing opinion of the convention attendees was that the State would impose regionalization on local educational systems.

Mr. Walter stated that he had also attended a break-out session that focused on ways to contain municipal budgets. He noted that the Town has already taken many of the steps discussed in the session.

6. Citizen's Concerns: There were no citizen's concerns expressed at the meeting.

7. Unfinished Business

A. 4-8 Middle School: Mr. Walter stated that he had no specific update on this Agenda item; however, he advised that he, Mr. Thumm, Mr. Carroll and several others had toured all of the Town's schools and made a list of repairs that Public Works could address. He stated that they were now working on a plan to schedule the work. He noted that a major portion of the Elementary School parking lot needed to be replaced but that they could extend the useful life of the High School parking lot by making some repairs in the near term.

B. Goodspeed Opera House Update: Mr. Walter advised that the building manager for the actors' housing project had resigned and been replaced by the Goodspeed. Mr. Lyman stated that the houses look closer together than they did on the conceptual drawings but that, overall, he thought they looked good.

C. Old Middle School: Mr. Walter stated that he was planning to have heating oil delivered to the school. He distributed the cost projection that Newfield Construction developed for the conversion project and there was a general discussion about its impact on the project.

D. Road Acceptance and Associated Drainage Easement – Meadow Brook Road: Mr. Walter advised that he had no update on this agenda item.

E. STEAP Power House Road Grant: There was no new update on this agenda item.

F. Clark Gates Road Petition: Mr. Walter distributed copies of the Town of Chester's ordinance establishing its Board of Selectmen as the Traffic Authority for the town. He stated that, after he received more details on how the process works, the Selectmen can have further discussions on whether or not they might want to pursue the same action for East Haddam.

G. Rotary Club Donation of Edgar D. Williams Park: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an e-mail from Shirley Judge in their meeting packets providing information on the Rotary Club's expenses for the Edgar Williams Park. The Selectmen agreed the Town should continue to move forward on this issue.

H. DCS Energy – Solar Panel Offer: Mr. Govert reported that he had researched the questions raised by Mr. Lyman at an earlier meeting. He stated that the primary maintenance for the solar panels was to replace the inverter after 10-15 years and that any damage done to them should be covered by insurance. In response to another question from Mr. Lyman, he advised that the power company was required to buy back any excess electricity the panels generate at 50% of its value.

The Selectmen reviewed the list of potential sites for location of the solar panels and Mr. Govert advised that Mr. Ventres would bring the list to the attention of Planning and Zoning to finalize the appropriate locations. He stated he would attend the P&Z meeting at which the solar panel discussion was on the agenda.

8. New Business

A. Transfer Station Fee Waiver – First Church: Mr. Walter Mark called the Selectmen's attention to a completed Transfer Station Fee Waiver Application submitted by the First Church. He noted that the Town had originally received this request in July when First Church was clearing a room to temporarily host the clothing bank.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Govert, to approve the application to waive Transfer Station Fees for First Church of Christ, Congregational for items requested on their July 10, 2010 application. Unanimous aye.

B. Committee Resignation (GREEN): Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to a resignation email in their meeting packets from Michael Harris dated October 5, 2010.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Lyman, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Michael Harris from the Green Committee. Unanimous aye.

C. Tax Refunds: Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to five tax refunds.

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

- \$ 208.40 to Nissan Infiniti LT,
- \$ 77.59 to Brian E. Milano,
- \$ 339.76 to Financial Services Vehicle Trust,
- \$ 31.14 to Diane L. Burke, and
- \$1,093.68 to James & Alden Murphy.

Unanimous aye.

D. Committee Appointment (GREEN): Mr. Walter called the Selectmen's attention to an email in their meeting packets, dated October 5, 2010, from Martha Hansen, Secretary of the Green Committee, recommending appointment of Jean Breuler as a regular member.

Motion made by Mr. Walter, seconded by Mr. Govert, to appoint Jean Breuler as a regular member to fill a vacancy on the Green Committee. Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: There were no public comments discussed at the meeting.

10. Selectmen's Discussion: Mr. Govert noted that he had received a letter from Mr. George Greider concerning the cost of keeping the light at the Rotary Park on during the winter months. Mr. Walter advised that they had researched the cost of having CL&P turn off the electricity to the light in the fall and then turn it on again in the spring and it would exceed what the bill was to keep the electricity on year-round. He stated that the Town was looking into having a switch installed on the light.

Mr. Walter suggested it would be a good idea to develop an inventory of street lights that are out and the Selectmen discussed various options of generating the inventory, including a Scouting or community service project.

In response to a question from Mr. Walter, Mr. Govert advised that the Agriculture Commission had held its first meeting earlier in the week.

Mr. Lyman advised that the Eightmile River Fest would be held at Devil's Hopyard between 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on October 16th. He also noted that Chatham Health and Emergency Management Services was holding children's flu clinics on November 4th and 30th. Mr. Walter noted that there would also be free flu shots offered to Town employees.

Mr. Govert suggested scheduling a combined meeting for the Selectmen, Board of Finance, and the Middle School Conversion Committee to discuss the conversion project. There was a general discussion about potential options to reduce the cost of the project.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional regular business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Lyman, seconded by Mr. Walter, to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 pm. Unanimous aye.

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623B

Respectfully submitted,

Emmett Lyman, Secretary