

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
APRIL 20, 2016**

**Present:** First Selectman Melissa M. Mack, Timothy Reynolds, Joanne Sullivan, Mel Chafetz and Krystal Holmes

Also in attendance: Town Clerk Kathy Dunai, School Business Manager Bill Hoff and Director Economic Development Patrick McMahon

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and asked for a motion to add an additional Agenda item as # 11 for Discussion of Utility Extension Project. Selectman Reynolds motioned to add the agenda item. **Vote 5-0 in favor.**

**Approval of the Minutes from the April 5, 2016 Tri-Board Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Permanent Building Commission**

First Selectman Mack made a motion to amend the meeting minutes from the April 5, 2016 Tri-Board Special Meeting. Selectman Holmes stated that while she appreciated the detail of the minutes there were a few things she felt were not reflected. According to Selectman Holmes's recollection "Chris Childs had made a statement at one point regarding that the abatement for Bridge Street School was assumed in the ACCE budget and that was why it was not part of the bond." Selectman Holmes would like the minutes to reflect that Chris Childs had stated that the abatement of \$400,000 was assumed on the ACCE budget, which was to be assumed by the Town, and that is why it was not included in the bond.

Selectman Holmes also mentioned that she would like to see an additional edit relating to Page 7 of the minutes where it reads "Selectman Reynolds stated that if this project is going to change dramatically in scope we should go back to referendum to be fair to the taxpayers." Selectman Holmes wanted to clarify that this was purely Selectman Reynold's opinion and noted that she would like the record to reflect, based on her recollection of the discussion that "Chris Childs stated that we are obliged under our Town Charter to follow our Town Charter." Discussion ensued amongst the Selectmen as to the exact conversation and First Selectman Mack offered to review the audio tape if Selectman Holmes would like her to. Selectman Holmes declined the offer, however, she went on to state that "when you read the minutes, in my opinion, when you talk about Town Hall and then Bridge Street they seem to conflict to me on the legal opinion." In her reading through the minutes she felt like as though when talking about the process for appropriating funds the minutes "seemed to conflict for Town Hall versus Bridge Street when it comes to following Town Charter." First Selectman Mack asked that it be noted in the record that Selectman Holmes feels the two pieces are conflicting.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes with the inclusion of her suggested amendments. Selectman Chafetz abstained due to the fact that he was not in attendance at the meeting. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

## **Approval of the Minutes from the April 6, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

Joanne Sullivan motioned to table the minutes from the April 6, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. **Vote 5-0 in favor.**

### **Public Comment**

**Daniel Holmes of 42 Michael Lane** introduced himself as one of the candidates interested in being appointed as an alternate member to the Permanent Building Commission. He gave a brief overview of his experiences which included working for a surveying company, as well as having familiarity with subdivision and site development, wetland permits and land planning issues. He mentioned that he has been in attendance at the last five or six meetings of the Permanent Building Commission and feels as though he is up-to-date on Town issues. He also noted that the current board is very diverse however it is lacking on the Civil Engineering side and he feels he could add to the commission.

**Jerry Mahoney of 499 South Grand Street** commented about Agenda item #17 which involved the appointment of a Commissioner to the Fire Commission to fill remainder of Richard Trowbridge's term expiring on November 20, 2017. He wished to go on record as recommending candidate Andy Parrish. He noted that there were many qualified people interested in serving which is a credit to the Town. He mentioned that Mr. Parrish is a Marine with combat experience who also holds a Political Science degree which he obtained with honors. Mr. Mahoney feels that Mr. Parrish would be a good fit and asks that he be appointed to this position.

**Bob Brooks of 418 North Main Street** commented that Mr. Parish brings objectivity and analytic ability to the Commissioner position. He noted that while he understands that the other potential candidate has Fire Department experience and that it would be the natural tendency to select someone with that background he feels that the commission is already covered in that area. Mr. Brooks stated that the Republican Town Committee recommends Andy Parrish based on his objectivity, analytic ability and leadership qualities

### **Quarterly Update on Emergency Management Office by Art Groux**

Selectman Chafetz made a motion to table Agenda item #4 Quarterly Update on Emergency Management Office due to a request to reschedule by Art Groux. **Vote 5-0 in favor.**

### **Discussion of Road Flagger Ordinance**

First Selectman Mack asked Selectman Holmes to update the Board on her research regarding road flagger ordinances. Selectman Holmes explained that she had followed up on a request from the First Selectman to do research on ordinances or statutes which would increase Public Safety. This request stemmed as a result of two automobile accidents occurring at the same scene on Main Street in January 2016. An initial accident occurred which required Eversource to come to the scene and make repairs. While the repairs were taking place, a second accident occurred which raised the question of whether or not a road flagger or a police officer should be handling traffic during road repairs. Selectman Holmes reached out to Captain Rick Brown of the Suffield Police Department, Town Attorney Charles Alfano and sources at Eversource for

information. Attorney Alfano cautioned that the Town would need to be careful when considering construction of an ordinance as to avoid “punishing residents” by being too specific in nature. Captain Brown and Eversource both provided statistics supporting that there is not likely a public safety issue. The particular accident that prompted the need for an ordinance likely would have occurred whether or not a road flagger or police officer had been directing traffic. In addition, imposing this type of ordinance would increase the cost to contracted services borne by the Town and its residents. Based on the fact that there have been 4 accidents in ten years involving this type of scenario, it did not seem necessary to take further action at this time. First Selectman Mack thanks Selectman Holmes for her diligent research in this matter.

### **Presentation by Lodestar Energy LLC of purchase by Town of Suffield of virtual net metering credits from solar farm in Suffield**

First Selectman Mack invited Jamie Smith and Jeff Maso of Lodestar Energy, solar developers, to discuss the purchase by the Town of Suffield of virtual net metering credits from the solar farm Lodestar is developing at 1005 North Street in Suffield. The program is unique in that the solar energy is not produced on town buildings or property, but rather on private property. The Town can buy these credits at a discounted price of \$.85 per dollar and apply the credits against its electric bills. The former First Selectman signed a Letter of Intent with Lodestar about a year ago. Lodestar would like to negotiate a Purchase and Sale Contract with the Town. Selectman Reynolds asked for specific detail on how the program works. Lodestar will develop the solar farm on the Sullivan property and push the electrons generated onto wires and back into the grid. Eversource measures how much energy is pushed back into the grid. Lodestar provides the town meter numbers so that kilowatt hours are credited at the R30 rate that Eversource sets (\$.16 currently). For every kilowatt hour Lodestar pushes back into the grid, currently the Town would get a \$.16 credit. At the same time, Lodestar bills the town at 85% of the R30 rate which would currently result in \$.14 per kilowatt hour.

First Selectman Mack asked Lodestar to explain Connecticut’s specific program and why the Suffield project qualifies for State funding under the Farmland as opposed to the Municipal category. The virtual net metering program had \$10 million allocated to it within three categories, with no category being allocated more than 40%. The categories were municipal, agricultural and state. The municipal bucket was utilized quickly. First Selectman Mack asked who has the opportunity to buy the credits. Municipalities and not private citizens or entities may buy the credits. Savings for the Town are estimated at between \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year for 20 years based on usage of 3.7M kilowatt hours. Suffield’s top ten accounts use about 4.1 KW hours. First Selectman Mack confirmed that entering into this agreement with Lodestar will not violate any current contracts with energy distributors.

First Selectman Mack asked and received confirmation that there are no additional fees that could be imposed on the Town (i.e., escalator fees, etc.) She expressed concern with the 20-year term and confirmed that the Town could negotiate an early termination subject to negotiated penalties. Selectman Reynolds asked the outcome if something were to happen to Lodestar or the solar farm during the 20 years. Lodestar is insured if something should happen. The program is designed at 90% of the Town’s usage on its top ten accounts. First Selectman Mack asked what happens if the Town becomes more efficient in its energy usage on one of the listed accounts. Lodestar responded that there would be other areas where the credits could be applied.

Selectman Chafetz asked if the Town put solar panels on our own at the landfill, for example, how would that affect us? Again, the program only affects the top 10 accounts so additional solar sources could be used in other areas. First Selectman Mack confirmed that we have room to become more efficient on our own within this program. Selectman Holmes asked Kevin Sullivan how his farm benefits. The Sullivan property cannot take advantage of the credits but they do get a lease for his land. Electricity does not have to go out to bid. First Selectman Mack noted that previous First Selectman McAnaney had initiated the program and in the interest of fair dealing and good faith, she felt it was time to bring the Board of Selectmen in to decide whether or not to move forward. Bill Hoff, School Business Manager, said it makes sense because there is no risk as we will be continuing to use electricity regardless. The public schools should get a lot of the benefit due to the amount of electricity they use. School administration considered putting panels on the school roofs but this makes more sense by allowing someone else to take the risk and also save 15%.

First Selectman Mack mentioned the taxability of the solar farm. There is a statute that allegedly exempts energy from taxes but Lodestar would be willing to pay a fair PILOT. Selectman Reynolds asked what is the next step? First Selectman Mack suggested moving to the next agenda item and adding subject to review and approval by the Board of Finance and evaluate whether the contract requires sending to a Town Meeting.

### **Discussion and approval of First Selectman negotiating a definitive agreement and entering a net metering credit agreement with Lodestar Energy LLC**

Selectman Chafetz said he sees it as a win-win when he originally looked at it for the schools. First Selectman Mack confirmed that Lodestar has gone through zoning and is ready to proceed with construction. Selectman Holmes asked if there is a limited region where they can sell. As long as it is in Eversource's area they can sell the credits. Selectman Holmes noted that she thought it would be good for the Town but had reservations, including making such a long-term commitment to one company and its potential impact on the bid and purchase policy. She wanted to clarify that there was no conflict of interest with any of the Board of Selectmen and also wanted to hear the legal opinion of town counsel. Selectman Chafetz wanted the schools to be included and First Selectman Mack confirmed they were as they are large electricity consumers in the Town.

Selectman Chafetz asked about the timeline. Lodestar responded that the solar farm should be operational by the end of this calendar year with Town approval needed as soon as possible. Lodestar requested that if the Town is not interested in going forward they let Lodestar know so they can approach other towns. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the First Selectman to negotiate a definitive agreement and enter into a net metering credit agreement with Lodestar Energy LLC which would include obtaining all legal opinions as needed and refer to the Board of Finance, Town Meeting, if required, and other processes as necessary.

**Vote 5-0 in favor.**

### **Approval of Historic Preservation Grant for Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Kathy Dunai presented information regarding the annual Historic Preservation Grant. Funds are appropriated by population and the Town of Suffield is eligible for \$4,000 this year. Ms. Dunai discussed the process of scanning documents and how she would like to use the

grant money. She emphasized the push to get as many records on-line as possible. She noted that the Town earned \$682 recently by people using our on-line searchable records system. By scanning older records onto the system, we will increase this revenue and reduce traffic through the office and wear and tear on the copiers in the Town Clerk's office. A discussion ensued as to what types of documents are viewed online, what the cost per page is and how other towns and groups currently handle their records and search requests. Ms. Dunai stated that due to state budget cuts it is beneficial to apply for the grant as soon as possible. Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the Historic Preservation Grant for Town Clerk. **Vote 5-0 in favor.**

### **Approval of procurement of stop loss insurance policy through new Connecticut-domiciled captive insurer to be created by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)**

School Business Manager Bill Hoff began the discussion and introduced Mary Glassman, Manager of the CREC Office of Regional Efficiencies. Mr. Hoff clarified that CREC and the captive insurance company are two separate entities. CREC is facilitating putting the captive together, but the captive itself will be owned and operated by its members. Because the Town of Suffield self-insures its health insurance, it purchases stop loss insurance for any claims over \$150,000 occurring during the timeframe of July 1st of one year to June 30th of the following year. Currently, we purchase our stop loss coverage through Anthem, a for-profit company that includes a risk premium and a profit margin in its rates. The captive would eliminate both of these elements. From a risk management perspective this change would mean that the captive would capture all claims between our current \$150,000 stop loss level and the new stop loss level of \$500,000. Selectman Reynolds inquired as to how much money the town would save if we moved forward. The savings were calculated at \$101,800 for year one, however, Mr. Hoff noted that there had been an error in the calculation of rates. Despite the error, the rates will be held for the first year with an assumption that they will be adjusted appropriately at renewal. As we move forward we should still be looking at approximately \$40,000 in savings. It was noted that Anthem provided the Town of Suffield with an initial 18% rate increase for the upcoming policy year 2016-2017. As word of the captive has spread, Anthem is now offering a 5% rate increase. Mr. Hoff discussed various risk factors involved, including the possibility that the captive insurer fails. The captive's bylaws are already in place allowing any town to walk away at any time. The risk at that point would be the possibility of a town having a bad profile which could result in a town needing to pay more for its stop loss coverage. The Town will not incur any additional liability for other towns' claims by participating in the captive. If the underwriters underestimate claim activity and revenue is insufficient to cover claims, the Town will not be liable. In that event, it is expected that towns would start to opt out of the captive and it would dissolve. Mr. Hoff noted that there are many people working on this currently, including the State Department of Insurance, underwriting professionals and consultants who have set up a number of captives and have much experience with this product, including Marsh Captive who will be contract to operate the captive. Selectman Reynolds asks if this is new in the state, noting that it is not even named yet. Mr. Hoff asked Mary Glassman to provide some additional explanation as to why CREC is putting this together now. CREC had received a 25% increase in their stop loss rates and began talking with towns and schools who had similar experiences. The State of CT began allowing captives a few years ago. Towns and schools who were experiencing high increases with self-insured rates and then stop loss purchases lead to the creation of the captive. 16 groups self-insured Towns and Boards of Education are currently included in the captive. Mrs. Glassman gave an example of projected savings by explaining that last year the 16 groups

involved in the captive paid \$10.5 million dollars in stop loss premium. Upon review of the claim history of the same 16 groups, the estimated premium was calculated to be \$7.5 million dollars for the same insurance. The current member groups have favorable claims history which is a positive for all involved. The captive is going out to market with two carriers who will provide the stop loss for losses of \$500,000 and more.

First Selectman Mack asked if the Connecticut Department of Insurance was regulating this like a mutual insurance company. Mrs. Glassman said yes. First Selectman Mack asked; 1) How many towns are needed to make the captive economically feasible; 2) how many are currently in place; 3) will there be a capital call if there is not enough money to pay the claims. Mrs. Glassman provided a handout to the Board of Selectmen for review of details. She stated that the bylaws prohibit the ability to have the towns pay additional funds in the event that the claims outweigh the premiums paid. CREC will be capitalizing the program for the towns with \$500,000 of seed money. First Selectman Mack asked if each town would have a seat on the Board of Directors as this is being run as a Mutual Company. Mrs. Glassman said that was correct and that should Suffield decide to participate, Mr. Hoff has volunteered to serve as Suffield's directors. Mrs. Glassman walked the Selectmen through a slide outlining what CT Prime is and who will be involved. This group is not allowing other towns in that do not have a specific/similar claim history. This differs from other stop-loss where you are unaware of the claim history of others in the pooled product. One reason to join now is that there may not be an opportunity to join in the future but also as founding members we will be allowed to structure the rules for the group. Discussion continued surrounding the possible scenarios of large claims and how exactly the stop loss policy worked. Conversation also included how the premium paid in versus the claims paid out could actually result in significant dollars remaining which would accumulate and either be used to offset future premiums or be returned to the member towns once the Department of Insurance approves distribution of excess premiums over reserve requirements. Bylaws have been adopted although the actual stop loss policy has not been drafted yet which Mr. Hoff is hoping to be involved in. Mrs. Glassman noted that Manchester, Plainville, South Windsor, Windsor, and CREC are all committed at this point. Additional potential members are planning to vote on their commitment coming up soon as they need to recommend to their Towns. Further discussion ensued as to whether or not a Town Meeting was required for this initiative. It was determined that no Town Meeting would be required. Selectman Chafetz asked for and received confirmation that the projected \$101,800 in first-year savings was reflective of the Town and the schools combined. Mrs. Glassman discussed additional programs that are going to be looked at in an attempt to reduce healthcare costs even further. Mr. Hoff noted that the savings from this will go to the Town and to the employees as well due to the fact that the employees pay for the stop loss premium through their health care rates. Selectman Chafetz asked if there were additional risks. Mr. Hoff discussed possible risks but emphasized that the key was the ability walk away at any time. He notes that if we were making a three or four year commitment, it might not have been a great idea. Our health insurance consultants are a bit concerned due to the newness of it. Mr. Hoff does not have huge concerns. He stressed that part of what he believes makes it work is that we will be working Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the procurement of stop loss insurance policy through a new Connecticut-domiciled captive insurer to be created by the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC). **Vote 5-0 in favor.**

## **Approval of Farmland Leases for town-owned open space parcels associated with the Stratton Farms and Malec Farms subdivisions**

Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon explained that the Town currently leases several parcels of open space to farmers in an effort to keep the land active. He explained that it is important to have “stewards of the land” as opposed to allowing these parcels to lay dormant. The first farm is Stratton Farms which is 10 acres of land currently leased by Robert Nowak. He has leased this land for the last four years and would like to renew the lease for an additional four years. Mr. Nowak currently cultivates land adjacent to the leased property so access would be through that land and not the residential subdivision nearby. First Selectman Mack inquired as to how we negotiate the rates that are paid by the leasees. The process involves providing the Department of Agriculture with the rates that the farmers are willing to pay and confirming that those rates are within the appropriate range for parcels of like kind. Selectman Chafetz asked if we have raised the rates and if not, why not. Mr. McMahon explained that the point is not to necessarily make a large profit but more to utilize the land and ensure we continue with the agricultural activities in our town. The second farm is Malec Farms which is 15.2 acres leased to Bielonko farms. This land is adjacent to the Malec farms subdivision. The Bielonkos have farmed this land for numerous years and would like to continue for an additional 4 years. Provisional requirements were explained, including a default provision which allows the Town to intervene if necessary. Leasing for four years does not require the approval of a Town Meeting. Selectman Holmes inquired as to whether any other individuals have expressed interest in leasing these properties. There have been no other interested parties. Selectman Chafetz inquired as to where the money goes. First Selectman Mack clarified that with few exceptions, all monies earned by the Town go into the general fund. Mr. McMahon reported that the revenue generated from Stratton Farms would be \$2,677 per year and \$760 per year from Malec Farms. Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve farmland leases for town-owned open space parcels associated with the Stratton Farms and Malec Farms subdivisions as presented.

**Vote 5-0 in favor.**

## **Motion to an agenda item #11 for Discussion of Utility Extension Project**

Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon presented information on the pending water and sewer extension project on Route 75. He explained that a conceptual engineering study had been conducted in the mid-2000’s pertaining to this effort. At the time, Elaine O’Brien had been able to secure \$980,000 in Urban Act Funding. Unfortunately, the project never moved forward and the time has come to act before the Town of Suffield loses the remaining funds which are set to expire on December 31, 2016. Mr. McMahon walked through the original extension project and its location on Route 75. The new proposal would take the project further south than originally designed. Cardinal Engineering of Meriden has been hired and they have designed the entire system all the way to the town line. He stressed that Suffield is competing against other communities for economic development opportunities and it is imperative that we have water and sewer available. As it stands right now the Town of Suffield is at a disadvantage when competing with other communities for economic development opportunities due to our lack of water and sewer hook-up options. We have used \$100,000 of the grant money on design but \$880,000 remains. Director McMahon noted that preliminary cost estimates are significantly below actual construction costs and based on this we can do approximately 40% of the project from a linear foot standpoint. He stressed the importance of moving forward with this project

and using the remaining money in order not to lose it. He feels that asking the state for an extension would not be a wise choice. The project was put out to bid with three quality construction firms and the low bid came in at \$888,000 for the first phase. If we add a 10% contingency, plus the construction inspection which is critically important for something like this as it is a State route, we will need approximately \$1,067,000. First Selectman Mack asked whether the road will be ripped up or if they will be going through dirt. It appears as though the road will be ripped up as that is the preferred method. Director McMahon is confident that this is the most economical approach. Selectman Sullivan asked for clarification on which side of the street this will be running, east or west. It will primarily be the east side as the west side is mostly airport land. Discussion ensued regarding funding and Selectman Reynolds questioned whether the Board of Finance took any action regarding this project. Director McMahon said no, other than to bring it up to the WPCA to see if they would be willing to contribute, which they declined to do. Continued discussion pertaining to whether or not the WPCA might be willing to contribute lead to the inquiry of whether the WPCA would pay the Town back through benefit assessments as economic opportunities develop along Route 75. First Selectman Mack has concerns about benefit assessments as she sees them as adding another layer of costs to doing business with the Town of Suffield. Director McMahon walked through the schedule and noted that the design company feels that the project should be under contract in May for a June start in order to have completion during this construction season and to ensure that we meet the state deadline. Selectman Holmes asked if it needed to be 100% completed by the December 31, 2016 deadline or could we possibly be at 85% completion. Director McMahon feels that it should be at 100% although if we were at 85% he feels we might have a really good chance to go back to the State and explain what we have completed and what we still have outstanding and ask for an extension until Spring. Selectman Chafetz asked and received clarification that Director McMahon was asking for \$187,000. First Selectman Mack suggested that a different recommendation needs to be noted as the original recommendation did not include being put in the 2016-2017 budget. Selectman Reynolds recommended holding off until the WPCA weighs in. Selectman Holmes disagrees and would prefer to try and get it into the 2016-2017 budget. The narrow timeline was discussed. Selectman Holmes motioned to move forward and present to the Board of Finance. First Selectman Mack disagreed. She felt that the WPCA would not offer to contribute if they knew the Board of Selectman would be moving forward regardless and asking that funding be put in the Town's budget. Selectman Sullivan stated that the Board of Selectman are the leaders and they should not be required to go to every board prior to making a decision. Selectman Mack wants to see the WPCA involved. Selectman Holmes revised her motion to move forward in recommending this project be referred to the Board of Finance with the stipulation that the WPCA should be approached to appropriate funds with the remainder to be funded by the Town either in the 2016-17 fiscal year budget or through contingency.

**Vote 5-0 in favor.**

### **Discussion and appointment of alternate member to Historic District Commission to fill vacancy created by Charter Revision for a term of four years expiring on April 6, 2020**

Discussion ensued on the process for presentation of candidates. Candidates would be nominated. If the nominated candidate wins then the position is filled and no further action is required.

Prior to discussion of the first appointment, Selectman Holmes questioned the dates of the Historic District Commission term. She noted that an April 6, 2020 term seemed odd and asked if it should be April 30, 2020. First Selectman Mack agreed and noted the change to the term's expiration date of 4/30/2020.

First Selectman Mack noted there are two candidates for this position, Cami Beiter and Carlo Reale. She stated that Cami Beiter is recommended by the Democratic Town Committee. Selectman Chafetz made a motion to nominate Cami Beiter for the Historic District Commission. **The motion passed in a 4-1 vote with Selectman Holmes, Reynolds, Sullivan and Chafetz voting in favor and First Selectman Mack voting against.**

#### **Discussion and appointment of full member to Conservation Commission to fill remainder of Brian Casinghino's term expiring on June 30, 2019**

First Selectman Mack noted there are two candidates for this position, Elizabeth Fanous and Donna Blanchette, who are both Democrats. She noted that Elizabeth Fanous is recommended by the Democratic Town Committee. Selectman Holmes noted her abstention as Mrs. Blanchette is her mother. Selectman Chafetz nominated Donna Blanchette. Selectman Sullivan noted that the Selectmen received two letters of recommendation in favor of Donna Blanchette from Glenn Nielson and Tom Horanzy. She feels that despite Mrs. Blanchette's background as a developer, she would be an asset to the commission and at least two current members of the commission feel the same way based on their letters of recommendation. Selectman Sullivan stressed that Mrs. Blanchette is no longer involved in developing. Selectman Reynolds noted that her resume says "semi-retired" and asked for clarification as to what that means. Mrs. Blanchette was present in the audience and explained that she is no longer involved in development, although her husband still continues to make a living. She has no active development currently going on, sells no real estate and takes no floor time. She is only involved in her own real estate. Selectman Reynolds questioned her husband's involvement in development and Mrs. Blanchette stated that he is not involved in development nor has he ever been involved in development. Selectman Reynolds further noted that he has an issue with the Board of Selectman appointing family members, claiming it "smacks of nepotism." Mrs. Blanchette cited numerous reasons behind why she feels she is most qualified and mentioned that she was approached by certain individuals on the commission to seek appointment. Selectman Reynolds clarified that he has no problem with her qualifications or integrity. First Selectman Mack asked Tom Frenaye for his thoughts as the Democratic Town Committee Chair. He noted that the Democratic Town Committee had the same concerns as Selectman Reynolds regarding her development history. Selectman Chafetz asked what happens in the event that there is a tie vote. First Selectman Mack responded that a tie would result in a failed motion. **The motion failed in a 2-2 vote with Selectmen Chafetz and Sullivan voting in favor and First Selectman Mack and Selectman Reynolds voting against.**

First Selectman Mack made a motion to nominate Elizabeth Fanous. Selectman Chafetz wanted to know what her conservation credentials were. Her background was reviewed by First Selectman Mack who feels that a lawyer would be an asset to this commission as they have encountered several legal issues in recent years. Selectman Reynolds explained that he does not feel one has to have a background in the field that a commission deals with in order to be an effective member. **The motion failed in a 2-2 vote with First Selectman Mack and**

**Selectman Reynolds voting in favor, Selectmen Chafetz and Sullivan voting against and Selectman Holmes abstaining.**

**Discussion and appointment of alternate member to Conservation Commission to fill remainder of Will Hermann's term expiring on June 30, 2018**

First Selectman Mack noted that the same two candidates are being considered for this position as the last with Elizabeth Fanous being recommended by the Democratic Town Committee. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to nominate Elizabeth Fanous. **The motion passed in a 3-1 vote with First Selectman Mack, Selectman Reynolds and Selectman Chafetz voting in favor, Selectman Sullivan voting against and Selectman Holmes abstaining.**

**Discussion and appointment of alternate member (1) to Permanent Building Commission for a four year term expiring on April 30, 2020**

First Selectman Mack noted there are three candidates; Brian Baril who is Unaffiliated, Daniel Holmes who is a Democrat and is the recommended candidate by the Democratic Town Committee and Martin Page who is a Republican. She noted that Mr. Page has come independently and has not been reviewed by the Republican Town Committee. Bob Brooks asked First Selectman Mack who was holding these positions prior. She explained that they have been vacant for quite a while. Selectman Sullivan made a motion to nominate Daniel Holmes. Selectman Reynolds reiterated his feelings regarding appointment of family members to commissions and the difficulties it creates. Daniel Holmes asked to explain his position and mentioned that he was asked to apply by Joseph Sangiovanni almost two years ago. According to Mr. Holmes he sent an initial letter of interest approximately a year and a half ago which was prior to Selectman Holmes's involvement in the Board of Selectman. Selectman Sullivan stated the commission currently has an architect but could use a civil engineer on board. First Selectman Mack noted that one of the other candidates for this position is also a civil engineer. Selectman Sullivan explained that she feels the Town is losing good people by not allowing individuals who are related to serve on certain Committees and Commissions. If it were a paid position she might feel differently. Selectman Reynolds noted that these are positions of power. He does not question the qualifications of Mr. Holmes but more the perception. First Selectman Mack explained that while Mr. Holmes is a very qualified candidate, there are two very large projects coming up and one of them is very controversial. The controversial project is spearheaded by Mr. Holmes's wife. Good, bad or indifferent we have to face the fact that the Bridge Street School could cause issues. First Selectman Mack wanted to be clear that while she was not questioning Mr. Holmes' ethics, she is concerned about perception. She feels his skills are not in question. She noted that she would love for Mr. Holmes to be a part of the WPCA because he has expertise with building sewers and she feels he would be a huge asset there. However, as a member of the Permanent Building Commission she has pause and feels that in good conscience she cannot introduce these possible conflicts of interest into the projects. Mr. Holmes asked whether despite recommendations by the commission and the DTC she still feels it is still not a good idea. He further explained that he has experience with hazardous building materials and has been attending numerous PBC meetings and could add value. Selectman Chafetz explained his position which is that numerous people have conflicts and yet they serve on Boards. First Selectman Mack noted that it doesn't make it right. Selectman Reynolds agreed with the talent aspect; however, it still is a perception issue.

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to nominate Daniel Holmes. **The motion failed in a 2-2 vote with Selectmen Chafetz and Sullivan voting in favor; First Selectman Mack and Selectman Reynolds voting against; and Selectman Holmes abstaining.**

First Selectman Mack recommended candidate Brian Baril who was recommended by the staff of the Public Works Department. Selectman Chafetz agreed that he brings a nice skill set to the group which includes project management. Selectman Chafetz made a motion to nominate Brian Baril. **The motion passed in a 4-0 vote with First Selectman Mack, Selectmen Reynolds, Sullivan and Chafetz voting in favor and Selectman Holmes abstaining.**

#### **Discussion and appointment of alternate member (2) to Permanent Building Commission for a four year term expiring on April 30, 2020**

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to nominate Daniel Holmes. **The motion failed in a 2-2 vote with Selectmen Chafetz and Sullivan voting in favor; First Selectman Mack and Selectman Reynolds voting against; and Selectman Holmes abstaining.**

First Selectman Mack recommended Martin Page to the Permanent Building Commission. A high level background description was provided, including Mr. Page's project engineering experience. Selectman Chafetz asked if Mr. Page was recommended by the Republican Town Committee. First Selectman Mack noted that Mr. Page's resume only came in the day prior and had not yet been forwarded to the Republican Town Committee. Selectman Reynolds requested that the nomination be tabled due to the fact that "nobody seems to know him." Selectman Sullivan agreed. First Selectman Mack withdrew her motion. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to table the vote on Martin Page to fill the opening. **The motion passed in a 4-0 vote with First Selectman Mack, Selectmen Reynolds, Sullivan and Chafetz voting in favor and Selectman Holmes abstaining.**

#### **Appointment of Gina M. Pastula to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill remainder of Jack Bucior's term expiring on November 21, 2017**

First Selectman Mack gave a brief description of Gina M. Pastula's contribution as an alternate member of the Planning & Zoning Commission and noted that the Republican Town Committee is recommending that she be moved up to a full member. Selectman Sullivan made a motion to appoint Gina M. Pastula to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill remainder of Jack Bucior's term expiring on November 21, 2017. **Vote 5-0 in favor.**

#### **Discussion and appointment of Commissioner to Fire Commission to fill remainder of Richard Trowbridge's term expiring on November 20, 2017**

First Selectman Mack noted there are two candidates, John Leahey who is a Republican and Andy Parrish who is being recommended by the Republican Town Committee. Selectman Reynolds nominated Andrew J. Parrish. Selectman Chafetz asked Chief Flynn, who is in the audience for his opinion. Chief Flynn stated that he feels it might be a conflict of interest to give his opinion and declined the request to voice his opinion. First Selectman Mack agreed with his decision. Commissioner Ed O'Hurley advocated that John Leahey would be a credit to the Fire Commission based on his personal knowledge of him as a lifelong Suffield resident, student at the Fire Academy and his long career as a firefighter. Discussion ensued as to how many

firefighters already sit on the commission and whether it would present a conflict of interest since Mr. Leahey served as a paid firefighter for several years in Suffield. Mr. O'Hurley felt that he has been working outside of Suffield for a few years and it would not pose an issue. The backgrounds of the other current members of the commission were discussed which include an attorney, a property manager and the owner of a sanitation company. Robert Brooks spoke on behalf of the RTC nominated candidate, Andy Parrish. Mr. Parrish's objectivity and leadership are the reasons that the RTC chose him as their candidate for nomination. **The motion passed in a 3-2 vote with Selectman Reynolds, Selectman Holmes and Selectman Chafetz voting in favor and First Selectman Mack and Selectman Sullivan voting against.**

### **Selectmen Updates**

First Selectman Mack noted that she had met with the First Selectmen of East Granby and Windsor Locks to discuss the regionalization of the Animal Control Officer position. As a town we are currently paying too much for this service based on our peer towns and based on the call volume which has been tracked by Captain Brown. First Selectman Mack noted that the partnership makes perfect sense. Windsor Locks has a new facility with two part time Animal Control Officers. The Town of Suffield has an aging facility on Ff Tyler place which has reached the end of its useful life. She noted that many towns are currently regionalizing this position. This change could result in a \$50,000 savings to the Town budget. The current Animal Control Officer may be considering retirement and therefore this could be a perfect solution for all parties.

First Selectman Mack noted that she is interested in moving the upcoming Town Meeting on the Budget to the Suffield Middle School in order to allow for live streaming.

First Selectman Mack gave a Steap Grant update. Unfortunately, Babb's and Hill Top Farm were not included in the first round of 15 grants which were awarded on February 11, 2016. It should be noted that based on past history there are usually two more rounds and we are hopeful that we will be awarded the grants during that time.

First Selectman Mack gave a brief budget update and noted that the current numbers from the state impact us by approximately \$640,000 to \$650,000. The Town Budget came in at \$15,044,798 which is a 1.46% increase over last year. She noted that the Animal Control Officer savings have already been reflected in the budget. The Board of Education budget came in at \$34,230,243 which is a 1.56% increase over last year. This occurred because the town budget was reduced by \$95,000 and the Board of Education budget was reduced by \$205,000. Due to positive claims history we had a medical insurance credit of approximately \$1 million dollars. The Board of Finance added \$175,000 to revenue from fund balance and the latest state grant numbers are a reduction to Suffield of \$654,006. We also added \$20,000 to the Board of Selectmen budget for contracted services. This results in a proposed 28.20 mill rate or 1.51% change. These numbers were recommended for Public Hearing on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

First Selectman Mack noted that after the Tri-Board Special Meeting she went back and reviewed the Town Hall renovation budget to determine if the sprinkler systems had been budgeted for. Upon review, she confirmed that they were included in the renovation budget used to determine the bond amount in the Fire Suppression line item in the amounts of \$6,300 for the addition and \$97,200 for Town Hall. Selectman Chafetz asked how much was included for the

Town Hall abatement. She noted that no specific number was provided; however, the estimate noted that the price per square foot was higher to account for the required environmental abatement. In response to comments made at the special meeting, First Selectman Mack said she located a study prepared about ten years ago which outlined the space needs of Town Hall. She plans to have this study updated and will be meeting with all departments to determine current space needs prior to finalizing renovation plans. For example, we no longer need space for probate, we need greater capacity in our large conference room and we are moving toward digitalize documents which should reduce physical space needs. She wants to make sure we get the most value with our limited funds to ensure that the needs of the Town Hall moving forward will be met.

Selectman Chafetz provided an update on the Library. He noted that brick are being taken out of the director's office and the old bathrooms. There are also concerns in the auditorium due to brick surrounding the perimeter of the area. The hope is that this will not need to be removed as that would result in an additional cost. The brick work and cement should be done soon. It should also be noted that the additional air quality test results should be discussed at the PBC meeting tomorrow evening.

Selectman Chafetz asked a question regarding the number of Board of Finance members as he noticed there was a split decision referenced in their meeting minutes. He inquired as to whether that Board has always been a six member Board. He also wondered if it should be adjusted. Bob Brooks, past chairman of the Charter Revision Committee, explained that trying to change the structure of boards was met with significant opposition.

### **Public comment**

Tom Frenaye suggested having the resume of Martin Page forward to the RTC for review. He also suggested to the Board of Selectmen that they may want to meet with the Ethics Commission, or at least the Chairman of the Ethics Commission, in order to find guidance on issues with potential nominees for Boards, Commissions and Committees. Mr. Frenaye also wanted to express his opinion regarding the Route 75 Utility Expansion Project. He feels it would be crazy to ask the WPCA to help fund this project. He noted that the money collected by the WPCA is from people with sewers which is one third of the town. He does not feel it makes any sense to ask one third of the town to pay for what is an Economic Development Project. He feels that while the project is a good one and he is glad to see it moving forward, he does not feel that the WPCA helping with the funding is a good idea. First Selectman Mack asked if the WPCA had money in the bank. Mr. Frenaye answered yes. Selectman Reynolds noted that Economic Development helps everyone's tax bill. Mr. Frenaye agreed.

First Selectman Mack made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen O. Lambert

Recording Secretary