

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MAY 18, 2016**

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

Also in attendance: Director of Economic Development Patrick McMahon

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Approval of the Minutes from the April 20, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Minutes from the April 20, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Approval of the Minutes from the May 4, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the Minutes from the May 4, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. **Vote 3-0 in favor. Selectman Reynolds abstained.**

Public Comment

None

Approval of Main Street Investment Fund Grant Application and refer to Town Meeting

Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon discussed the Town's opportunity to apply to the Connecticut Department of Housing for a Main Street Investment Fund grant. Towns with populations of less than 30,000 residents are eligible to apply for up to \$500,000 in funding for streetscape activities and site work located in a town's commercial district, including recreational parks. The Town of Suffield applied for this grant twice in the past for purposes of redeveloping Ff Tyler Place, but was not awarded the funds due to the large scale of the proposed projects and their potential to trigger the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act. In an effort to qualify for the grant in our third attempt, Director McMahon and Town Planner Bill Hawkins reviewed the Town Commercial District and concluded that most items that would qualify had already been accomplished through a STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant. However, the Bridge Street Community Center site work would qualify. Director McMahon believes this project tells a "good story" as we already have leveraging of funds with the approved bonding of \$8.4 million for the project. Director McMahon

noted that the grant would fund the driveway, sidewalks, parking lot, decorative lighting, landscaping, drainage and a retaining wall for the parking area. He noted that the budget presented at the Town Meeting for the bonding for the Bridge Street School Community Center included over \$500,000 for site work. First Selectman Mack asked, and Director McMahon confirmed, that the site work items to complete with grant monies are the same items that were included in the budget and that this grant is not expanding the scope of the project. Selectman Reynolds questioned whether the environmental issues currently involving Bridge Street School would trigger a CEPA review similar to the Ffyer Place grant. Director McMahon answered that it would not because Ffyer Place was going to be new residential and commercial construction whereas the Bridge Street School project is a renovation. Director McMahon stated that the grant submission has already received approval by the Board of Finance; however, it also requires legislative body approval and will need to be brought to a Town Meeting. Town Meeting approval is required by May 31, 2016 in order to be considered for funding. Selectman Reynolds asked how long it will take to make a decision on the grant approvals. Director McMahon explained that the normal process is 90 to 120 days for approval and then an additional two months of paperwork. Selectman Sullivan asked, and Director McMahon confirmed that, if awarded, the money should be released to the Town by the Fall of 2016 and the Town would typically have two years in which to spend it. Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the Main Street Investment Fund Grant Application and refer to Town Meeting. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Approval of Board Secretary Rates and recommendation to Board of Finance

First Selectman Mack explained that during the recent budget planning process she surveyed the commissions that had paid secretaries to take board and commission minutes. She identified an inexplicable inconsistency in the rates that the Town pays to board secretaries. She asked if specific expertise or training was required to perform the administrative functions of each board. As a result of her findings, she created a new per meeting rate schedule which she feels is fair and will provide consistency moving forward. The schedule outlines the rates per meeting and notes the estimated number of meetings per year based on the specific commission. Duties of administrative secretaries generally include: preparing meeting agendas, attending meetings, preparing meeting minutes and ensuring that minutes are timely filed with the Town Clerk. First Selectman Mack proposed that, in addition to Board and Commission members, all board secretaries attend training on Connecticut's Freedom of Information Act and Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure as there are inconsistencies and non-compliance with these rules in agendas and errors in processes across Town Boards and Commissions that require correction. Selectman Holmes asked whether paying higher rates for the Board of Finance, Retirement Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals secretary was intentional. First Selectman Mack explained that these three boards require more complicated subject matter knowledge than other boards and she felt the rates were appropriate in these instances. A discussion ensued as to which Town Departments utilize their own Administrative/Executive Assistants to perform the secretarial duties without receiving separate stipends. These include the Police

Department, Board of Selectman, Permanent Building Commission, Conservation and Planning and Zoning. Selectman Reynolds asked if the assistants receiving stipends were considered Town employees and how were they being handled in that regard. First Selectman Mack suggested that she would ask Finance Director Deb Cerrato and report back next meeting. Selectman Holmes asked what the former rates were and First Selectman Mack responded as follows; 1) Heritage Committee Secretary from \$170 to \$125, Board of Finance from \$163 to \$150, Retirement Commission from \$176 to \$150, Zoning Board of Appeals from \$225 to \$150, Economic Development from \$127 to \$125 and Fire Commission from \$143 to \$125. Selectman Reynolds asked and First Selectman Mack confirmed that the rates were incorporated in the new budget. He also asked whether there had been any complaints due to the reductions. First Selectman Mack responded that the secretaries are unaware of the new rates as she felt it was important to present them to the Board of Selectman for review and then forward them to the Board of Finance to review as well. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Board Secretary rates as presented and recommend to the Board of Finance. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Motion to refer to Town Meeting Main Street Investment Fund Grant Application

Selectman Holmes made a motion to refer to Town Meeting Main Street Investment Fund Grant Application. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Motion to refer to Town Meeting Approval of Ordinance regarding Farmland Abatement

First Selectman Mack asked for a motion to table this issue. She explained that she has spoken with representatives of Four Seasons Farm to discuss the status of the project. They are currently working through some problems with the Army Corps of Engineers with respect to wetlands that may have been filled in on the property without proper authorization back in the 1980's. The second issue involved the group working with the Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) to obtain additional funding for the project. While First Selectman Mack is "cautiously optimistic" that these problems will be resolved, she does not feel it is wise to go to a Town Meeting with them outstanding. She wants to have a very clear plan for the project, the phases and when construction of the project will start. She emphasized that until these issues are resolved we cannot accurately estimate the impact of the tax abatements. First Selectman Mack does not want to jeopardize the passage of the tax abatement ordinance, which has the potential to benefit much of our farming community, based on these unknowns. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to table the approval of the Ordinance regarding Farmland Abatement. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Call of Town Meeting for Wednesday, May 25, 2016 in the Suffield Middle School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

Selectman Holmes read the call

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF A TOWN MEETING TOWN OF SUFFIELD

Notice is hereby given that a Town Meeting of the inhabitants of the Town of Suffield, Connecticut qualified to vote in Town Meeting, will be held in the auditorium at the **Suffield Middle School, 350 Mountain Road** on **Wednesday, May 25, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.** for the following purpose to wit:

1. To authorize application for a Main Street Investment Fund Grant for \$500,000 from the Department of Housing for site work at the Bridge Street School Community Center

Dated at Suffield, CT this 18th day of May, 2016.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN-TOWN OF SUFFIELD

Melissa M. Mack, First Selectman
Timothy Reynolds, Selectman
Joanne Sullivan, Selectman
Mel Chafetz, Selectman
Krystal Holmes, Selectman

Vote 4-0 in favor.

Discussion and appointment of Martin Page as alternate member to Permanent Building Commission for a four-year term expiring on May 30, 2020

First Selectman Mack confirmed with Robert Brooks in the audience that Martin Page is the recommended candidate of the Republican Town Committee. Selectman Holmes inquired as to whether the vote should occur or should they wait to vote as Selectman Chafetz was not present for the vote. First Selectman Mack explained that she has taken “flack” for not moving forward with votes due to the absence of a Selectman in the past and therefore feels that the Town business needs to move forward, especially in light of the fact that the Board of Selectman meeting schedule changes to a monthly basis for the months of June, July and August. The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectman will not be held until June 15th. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Martin Page as alternate member to Permanent Building Commission for a four-year term expiring on May 30, 2020. **Vote 3 in favor. Selectman Holmes abstained.**

Reappointment of William Gozzo, Kevin Goff and Catherine Elithorpe as members of Building Code Board of Appeals through June 30, 2020

First Selectman Mack read the agenda item and explained that these are currently serving members and they will be reappointed without opposition. Selectman Sullivan made a motion to reappoint William Gozzo, Kevin Goff and Catherine Elithorpe as members of Building Code Board of Appeals through June 30, 2020. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Reappointment of Vic Mathieu as member of North Central Health District through June 30, 2019

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to reappointment Vic Mathieu as one of Suffield's two members serving on the North Central Health District Board through June 30, 2019. **Vote 4-0 in favor.**

Selectmen Updates

a. Commission Updates

Selectman Holmes mentioned that the Stephen R. Bixler Picnic is on Memorial Day.

First Selectman Mack mentioned that the Memorial Day Parade will be held on Monday, May 30th. The parade will form at 8:45 a.m. on Ffyer Place and begin the procession at 9:00 a.m.

First Selectman Mack noted that the next Regular Board of Selectman Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 15, 2016 and that during the months of July and August there will only be one meeting. Normal meeting schedule will resume in September.

First Selectman Mack announced that the Town recently received a \$175,000 check from Environmental Partners LLC in exchange for accepting several tons of dirt from their MDC FastTrack project. More dirt and corresponding payments will be forthcoming. The dirt will ultimately be used to cover the landfill and is certified by the CT DEEP to use in landfills. She notes that this is a "great deal that our Public Works and Highway Departments were able to negotiate for the Town."

First Selectman Mack provided a brief update on the Town Hall Renovation project. She is very excited to report that she has meet with all Department heads as well as the organization that prepared the space needs study on Town Hall ten years ago. They discussed the different needs of each department moving forward. The goal is to provide a more customer and employee friendly and efficient design while capturing the needs of the Town for the next twenty years.

First Selectman Mack mentioned that on Saturday, May 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. the Town will be holding a Babb's Beach Clean Up event in an effort to have the beach opened to the public by August of this year. All volunteers are welcome.

First Selectman Mack reported that the Town has been awarded \$335,000 for a bike trail that will be connecting the schools and portions of Mountain Road with sidewalks and a multi-use bike trail. Construction should begin within a year. She noted that this will be a nice asset for the town.

First Selectman Mack reported on the current Firefighter grievance. She stated that Labor Council has performed all interviews and was now in the process of preparing a report for the town. All Paid firefighters and a large number of volunteer firefighters were interviewed and all were cooperative and contributed greatly. Selectman Reynolds asked if the First Selectman was allowed to divulge what the grievance involved. She explained that the grievance involved alleged safety issues for firefighters and failure to supervise and provide an appropriate chain of command. The grievance was presented to Chief Flynn and then, based on their union contract process, forwarded to the First Selectman.

First Selectman Mack provided an update on the Library which has a “very concerning PCB problem.” She explained that it is almost certain that PCB’s are in the waffle ceilings and possibly the walls. The Town is having a PCB expert come in to advise the Town on the issues. Next steps include determining the true extent of the problem and then First Selectman Mack would like to request a meeting with the regulators. The Town is located in the most stringent region of the Federal EPA with respect to PCB regulation. She feels that it is unfair to the taxpayers of Suffield to be held to a higher standard than other portions of the country. She emphasized the need to have the building determined to be safe for our employees and residents before allowing anyone back into the space, and remains hopeful that we can find a way to address the current issues. She will be looking for additional funding sources prior to entertaining the idea of going back to the town for any additional monies. It was noted that the possibility exists that she will need to look for alternative swing space for current employees still located in Town Hall as this situation conflicts with the original relocation plan to begin renovations on Town Hall.

Public Comment

None

Selectman Holmes made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, June 15, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary