

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
AUGUST 17, 2016**

**Present:** Melissa M. Mack, Timothy Reynolds, Joanne Sullivan, and Mel Chafetz.

**Absent:** Krystal Holmes

Also in attendance: Senior Center Director Paula Pascoe, Human Resources Director Karin Ziemba, and Registrar of Voters Darlene Burrell

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. She expressed her thanks to Selectman Reynolds for covering for her during her two week vacation.

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

First Selectman Mack noted that Selectman Holmes, who was unable to attend the meeting due to vacation, had submitted via e-mail some modifications she wanted to include in the July 20, 2016 Minutes prior to approval. First Selectman Mack requested that her Administrative Assistant review the tape recording of the July 20, 2016 Board of Selectman Meeting and transcribe the pieces that pertained to the requested modifications. Administrative Assistant Kris Lambert read aloud the transcription for the group prior to approval.

On page 10 of July 20, 2016 Minutes Selectman Holmes requested the inclusion of additional commentary after the sentence “While she will recuse herself, she does not agree that there is a conflict of interest as neither she nor anybody in her immediate family has a financial gain.” Based on the tape recording, the following amendment will be added: **Mrs. Holmes did talk to legal counsel, two local attorneys, just to verify because she felt bad if she had actually violated her code of ethics and they were in agreement with her that they did not see a conflict, a true conflict of interest, because there was no financial gain.**

Selectman Holmes requested that two additions to the record be included under the *Selectmen Updates* section. The first addition pertains to an inquiry Selectman Holmes made about the hiring of the Human Resources Director and the response she received from First Selectman Mack. Based on the tape recording, the following amendment will be added: **Selectman Holmes asked “How many applicants did we have?” First Selectman Mack responded “We had about 6.” Selectman Holmes asked “Did we have an interview committee put together to interview each applicant?” First Selectman Mack responded “We did not. I interviewed her with the assistance of the then serving HR Director. This woman exceeded all of my expectations of anyone we could have gotten to apply with the amount of money being offered. She came to us with seven years of municipal experience, starting in the town of Chicopee, Massachusetts working for the superintendent doing payroll. She then had a 30 year career as the HR Director for the Sheraton Hotel and Marriott Hotel groups most recently; an experienced HR Director who managed union shops and non-union shops. One of the most impressive pieces of her resume was that she showed up to a position with 200 grievances filed against the employer and within a year had it down to 50 grievances.**

**This woman has managed to have longevity in the hospitality industry which is an excellent parallel to our industry as we are a customer services industry. Her work ethic, which has already been seen, is amazing. She was looking to make a quality of life change and had a few other job offers. We needed to act quickly and I did not want to let Suffield lose out on this opportunity.”**

The second addition pertains to a request by Selectman Homes. Based on the tape recording, the following amendment will be added: **Selectmen Holmes asked if someone from the Technology Committee could come and present to the Board of Selectmen as she felt there was a lot going on. First Selectmen Mack agreed that there was a lot going on and that she also planned to attend the next Technology Committee meeting. She also noted that she felt the Committee was at a point where they need guidance.**

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Minutes, as amended, for the July 20, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

First Selectman Mack added that per Selectman Holmes’ request, the Technology Committee had been scheduled to present at the August 17, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. As Selectman Holmes is currently on vacation and unable to attend, the presentation has been rescheduled to September 7, 2016 in order for Selectman Holmes to benefit from hearing the report.

#### **Public Comment**

**Chris Rago, 22 Brookside Drive**, expressed her concerns about the Library as far as what is going on and how long it is taking to get done. She feels that an incredible amount of money has been put forward and while she trusts that everything that can be done is being done, she feels bad for those individuals currently in this situation.

#### **Update on Senior Center by Paula Pascoe, Senior Center Director**

Senior Center Director Paula Pascoe gave a brief update, noting that significant changes have occurred over the last six months, including a successful transition of the mini-bus into the Senior Center. The Senior Center is working collaboratively with Parks and Recreation, Kent Memorial Library and Youth Services to coordinate a fall event with a Scarecrow Contest and other activities which will be free to the public. She has been working with Janet Frechette, Emergency Aid Director and Leslie Offenbach, Director of Youth Services to solidify and provide a more comprehensive contribution to the Town’s emergency operations plan. Two new ipads were recently purchased by the Senior Center and three training classes were held for the seniors with high school students as instructors. The training was extremely successful and the interaction of teens and seniors was amazing. Upcoming fall/winter events include a dinner show in November and a Holiday Bazaar in December. Director Pascoe provided financial and statistical reporting which was reviewed by the Board. Board members asked questions pertaining to the various services currently being offered and whether there were specific trends that had been identified. Services being discussed included mini-bus usage, fitness classes, educational programs and meal services, which Director Pascoe is most proud. She described

how the meal program operates, the number of meals served each week and the importance of being able to prepare the meals on-site as opposed to bringing them in from an outside source. She is often able to get excellent deals on local produce and mentioned how she is able to use this food as well as vegetables from their own raised garden beds. After reviewing financial information, and statistics, the Board asked Director Pascoe if she would be able to provide additional detail for the last five years, which she agreed to do.

### **Appointment of Derek Donnelly of Blackburn & O'Hara as new Town Counsel**

First Selectmen Mack introduced Attorney Donnelly. In addition to the comprehensive overview of his and his firm's credentials at the July 20, 2016 Board of Selectmen meeting, Mr. Donnelly wanted to note that Town attorneys often deal with tax lien foreclosures. This type of foreclosure process allows attorneys to collect their fees at the end of the foreclosure process, which is at the time of sale. In the past, the Town has paid these attorney's fees up front and dealt with reimbursing themselves afterward. Blackburn & O'Hara will not bill the Town during the process. They will wait and collect their fees at the end of the foreclosure as they would for any other type of foreclosure process. One other item Mr. Donnelly wanted to mention was that in his firm's initial proposal a declaration of insurance was included in the documentation. This particular page had since expired; however, an updated version for the proposal will be provided to the Town so that there will be no confusion and to ensure that all insurance policies are in place and in good standing. Mr. Donnelly expressed his willingness to entertain any additional questions that were not answered at the last BOS meeting. First Selectman Mack noted that Mr. Donnelly's willingness to come back for consideration was a credit to his professionalism, character and his dedication to the Town of Suffield. He responded by stating that he felt it had been a good spirited debate and felt it was positive to have had it happen in public. First Selectman Mack noted that Alfano and Flynn LLC resigned as Town Attorney.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Derek Donnelly of Blackburn & O'Hara as new Town Counsel. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

### **Introduction of Karin Ziemba, new Director of Human Resources for Town of Suffield**

First Selectman Mack introduced Director of Human Resources, Karin Ziemba and expressed how much she has already done for the Town in the short amount of time that she has been in her new position. Mrs. Ziemba gave an overview of her 30 year career which included many facets of Human Resources. She and First Selectman Mack listed the numerous projects she is currently working on for the Town of Suffield, including revising job descriptions, identifying key HR policies needing consideration for adoption by the Town, assisting in the hiring process for open positions, transitioning retiring employees and those moving positions within the Town, providing input for union negotiations and favorable settling a CHRO claim filed against the Town. She noted that she has an open door policy and is excited to be here to fulfill the needs of all Town employees.

**Approve revised transfer of funds in Conservation budget for Sunrise Park Part-time Gatekeeper positions**

First Selectman Mack explained that this was a request from Finance Director Cerrato which included a small revision to the original request for transfer of funds from the Conservation Commission– Park Maintenance -Tools & Equipment line item. The revised request will transfer money from the Repairs and Maintenance line item to Payroll and employee benefits instead. All funds continue to be pulled from the Conservation Commission budget, but reflect a minor change for record keeping and budget tracking purposes. Selectman Chafetz inquired as to whether there was a dollar limit where things can be transferred without coming to the Board of Selectmen for approval. First Selectmen Mack explained that there is no limit when payroll and employee benefits is involved, but for other operating expense items, funds can be transferred between accounts within the same budget without Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance approval.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to transfer \$2,894 from Conservation – Park Maintenance – Repairs & Maintenance and allocating \$2,688.00 to Conservation – Park Maintenance – Payroll and allocating \$206.00 to Conservation – Park Maintenance – Employee Benefits. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

**Approve a tax rebate for Edward & Dorothy Markowski in the amount of \$2,088.22 due to accidental overpayment**

First Selectman Mack recognized Tax Collector Jill Schechtman who received praise from a tax payer for being so helpful.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve a tax rebate in the amount of \$2,088.22 due to accidental overpayment. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

**Approve a tax rebate for Christine S. Ahrens in the amount of \$3,351.85 due to accidental overpayment**

**Selectman Sullivan made a motion to approve a tax rebate in the amount of \$3,351.85 due to accidental overpayment. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

**Reappointment of Doug Mayne, Scott MacClintic and Lisa Sabbatino to Historic District Commission through August 31, 2020**

First Selectman Mack explained that all individuals are currently serving and it is the recommendation of the HDC Chair that they all be reappointed to the Historic District Commission through August 31, 2020. Selectman Reynolds asked First Selectman Mack confirmed that all individuals are interested in reappointment.

**Selectman Sullivan made a motion to reappoint Doug Mayne, Scott MacClintic and Lisa Sabbatino to the Historic District Commission through August 31, 2020. Vote: 4-0 in**

**Favor.**

**Reappointment of Leeayn Burke to Parks & Recreation Commission through August 31, 2020**

First Selectman Mack confirmed Leeayne Burke's willingness to continue her appointment on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Selectman Sullivan made a motion to reappoint Leeayn Burke to Parks & Recreation Commission through August 31, 2020. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

**Motion to approve changing terms of Technology Committee members to four years per Town Charter and corresponding change to Technology Committee Bylaws**

First Selectman Mack explained that it had come to her attention that the Technology Committee Bylaws, which were presented a few months earlier, had incorrectly listed the terms as two years. Per the Town Charter, terms on appointed commissions are for four years so she was asking for a technical correction.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve changing the terms of Technology Committee members to four years per Town Charter and corresponding change to Technology Committee Bylaws. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

**Discussion and approval of proposal by Technology Committee for Video/Audio System replacement upgrade at Police Department and recommend to Board of Finance**

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to table the discussion until later in the agenda. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

**Selectmen Updates**

- **Anthony Riello, Superintendent of Police Services** – First Selectman Mack explained the recent change in title for former Police Chief, Anthony Riello due to CT police certification issues that were brought to her attention a few weeks ago. Ms. Mack explained that Anthony Riello was initially hired to lead the Suffield Police Department on a temporary six-month basis. Mr. Riello was never expected to act as a police officer, but instead, was hired for the Suffield Police Department to benefit from his extensive experience leading police departments through times of turmoil and transition. As a result of the Town extending his contract for two additional six-month terms to enable him to carry out the Police Department's strategic plan and management transition, his temporary certification with POSTC, the CT agency that certifies police expired. Upon receipt of notice, First Selectman Mack and the Police Commission worked with POSTC and the CT Attorney General's Office to quickly resolve the issue by appointing Mr. Riello as Superintendent of Police Services responsible for management and leadership of the Suffield Police Department. He continues to do exactly what the Town of Suffield hired him to do. First Selectman Mack emphasized that this situation never posed a

public safety concern to Suffield and that Deputy Chief Richard Brown is able to take all actions required of a Chief of Police in CT.

- The Town of Suffield received a \$20,000 Certified Local Government Grant as a match to the \$20,000 Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant (HPTAG), which was awarded jointly to Windsor Locks and Suffield earlier this year for the Windsor Locks Canal restoration needs study.
- Registrar, Darlene Burrell reported on the work she and other registrars throughout the state have done in relation to voters with disabilities. She described a company which devised a method for individuals to vote from a tablet allowing all voters, including those with disabilities, the opportunity to vote independently and privately. It will be available statewide in November and will be provided to the Town at no charge.
- The Fire Commission will be providing apparatus recommendations for discussion at the September 21, 2016 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting
- Suffield received the HEARTSafe Community Designation from the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the American Heart Association. This is a three-year designation which went into effect on July 6, 2016. Recognition went to Emergency Management Director Art Groux for making sure that this certification was in place.
- North Central District Health Department Grant – The Town has an opportunity to take advantage of a grant for environmentally sustainable projects such as community gardens. We will be coordinating with NCDHD, Hill Top Farm and the Senior Center to formulate a plan in which to utilize the grant most effectively in their community gardens. Hill Top Farm manages some of the Town’s open space.
- The fiber project will be starting in September and should be completed by mid- October. This project will provide fiber to Kent Memorial Library, the Senior Center, and the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association. This work will allow the SVAA to better coordinate with police and fire during emergencies. It will also address the mini-bus phone issue and provide cost-savings and efficiencies for the Senior Center.
- Babbs Beach update – Community clean-up efforts started the momentum earlier in the summer. The Highway Department has significantly cleaned-up the rock wall and enhanced it with new plantings. We have installed a lifeguard chair, a safe platform for concerts and programs, an access road, ADA parking spaces near beach and wheelchair accessibility. First Selectman Mack encouraged all to check it out. We are hoping to celebrate the improvements with a re-opening in September.
- **Swing Space Update** – Ongoing environmental issues associated with the renovation of Kent Memorial Library continue to push back its reopening. Once air balancing issues are resolved at KML, the environmental group Fuss & O’Neil will perform additional testing to determine the extent of the environmental issue and provide clearer next steps, including costs, to remediate the problem. Completed reports and state and federal regulatory input is not anticipated until the end of December. Both the Public Works Department and Permanent Building Commission are working diligently on these issues, but this is a very cumbersome and complex process. Everybody anticipated the project would be completed by now and it is moving forward as quickly as possible. Having said that, moving Town offices out of Town Hall has been delayed due to the issues impacting KML so alternative arrangements must be made to keep the move/renovation of Town Hall moving forward. The town reviewed several options within Suffield for alternative town office swing space. Locations have to comply with stringent state statutes for the

safekeeping of records, ADA accessibility, have access to fiber optics as well as ease of resident use. While many options were investigated, including moving town offices to the Senior Center, each fell short of regulatory/spatial needs or were cost prohibitive. In the end, Ff Tyler Place meets all of the requirements for the town offices. Unfortunately, this requires moving KML to another temporary location, the Suffield Senior Center. First Selectman Mack understands this is an inconvenience; however, it would be a significant expense if the town rented additional swing space and incurred buildout costs to make alternative spaces feasible for the town offices. The Senior Center has restrictions on its use for senior activities as part of the state funding the Town received for its renovation. The Town has, however, received permission from CT DECD to use it for temporary swing space.

First Selectman Mack shared the projected move schedule at this point:

- Plan new library space at Senior Center over next two weeks
- Connect fiber optics to Senior Center, Library and Ambulance by mid-October
- Assess telephone, data, and electrical needs in new space once layout is determined
- Timing of the moves was discussed and First Selectman Mack noted that Town Clerk and Registrar cannot move out of Town Hall until after the November elections.

First Selectman Mack added that once the Town has the Fuss & O'Neil report with cost estimates, the Town will apply for an Urban Act Grant for financial assistance. She and Director of Economic and Community Development, Patrick McMahon, have already met with the state historic preservation officer and the Deputy Commissioner of DECD to discuss the library situation. Both state officials were very sympathetic and recommended pursuing an Urban Act Grant. First Selectman Mack promised to advocate strongly on behalf of the Town for funding that will limit the impact to the taxpayers of Suffield. The Town will demonstrate that it is complying with state and federal regulators, has done the work to determine what is required to get the job done, that the taxpayers have already invested over \$5,000,000 in the building, as well as significant private donor funds, and that the Town needs assistance to see the project through to completion. The entire Town has had to bear this situation, but it cannot hold up the activities of the rest of the capital projects that are of equal importance as the library. To-date, the Town has relocated half of Town Hall and is paying additional rent at 230C Mountain Road so renovations need to keep moving forward. First Selectman Mack stated that once library remediation figures are available, she will try her hardest to get third-party funding. However, despite her best efforts, she may have to ask the taxpayers for additional funding. In that event, she wants to be able to represent that the Town has saved as much money as possible by not duplicating rent and build-out expenses at alternate swing space facilities. Selectman Mack also confirmed that there is nothing in the plan to furlough library staff.

### **Discussion and approval of proposal by Technology Committee for Video/Audio System replacement upgrade at Police Department and recommend to Board of Finance**

Michael Stevens, Chairman of the Technology Committee, requested that excess funds from the Police Department's laptop capital project be reallocated to provide a temporary fix to the failing

video/audio system at the Police Department. The Technology Committee saved the Police Department a significant amount of money on laptops purchased earlier in the year. This upgrade will allow the system to function properly while a permanent solution is explored. First Selectman Mack stressed that this is money left over from a separate ACCE project and is simply a reallocation from one capital project to another.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the proposal by Technology Committee for Video/Audio replacement upgrade and recommend to the Board of Finance in the amount of \$1,310.00. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss terms of employment for Police Captain position. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

Executive session convened at 8:21 p.m.  
Executive session ended at 8:32 p.m.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss terms of Kathie Bond settlement. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

Executive session convened at 8:32 p.m.  
Executive Session ended at 8:40 p.m.

#### **Potential Approval of Terms of Employment for Police Captain Position**

No action necessary.

#### **Potential Approval of Terms of Kathie Bond Settlement**

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the agreed upon terms of the Kathie Bond settlement. Vote: 4-0 in Favor.**

#### **Public Comment**

*None*

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary