

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SEPTEMBER 7, 2016**

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

Also in attendance: Town Engineer Gerry Turbet, Public Works Director John Cloonan, IT Director Dan Beaudoin, Technology Committee Chairman Michael Stevens, Town Planner Bill Hawkins, Town Clerk Kathy Dunai

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. First Selectman Mack offered condolences on behalf of the Town to Fire Chief Flynn on the loss of his father.

Approval of the Minutes from the August 17, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

First Selectman Mack read an email submitted by Director of Emergency Management Art Groux, "In the minutes from August 17th First Selectman Mack mentioned the re-designation of Suffield as a Heart Safe community. The minutes state that Director of Emergency Management Art Groux was responsible for this designation. While it was the effort of many members of the ambulance that contributed to this, the overwhelming majority of the work needed for the town to accomplish this was done by Lisa Shelanskas. I appreciate the accolades but they deserve to be with Lisa and the volunteers of Suffield Ambulance and not with me."

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Minutes, as amended, for the August 17, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 4-0 in Favor. Selectman Holmes abstained.

Public Comment

Bobbie Kling appreciated the opportunity to read an email she had forwarded to the Board of Selectmen and the chairmen of the commissions on which she serves as secretary.

"I want to let you know I am extremely distressed about the recent, arbitrary, unilateral and uniformed budget cuts in my fees as Secretary of your various commissions.

What is more upsetting was that our commission budgets were submitted to the Selectman's budget process, (the same budgets as last year) and no changes were made, and they were incorporated into the 2016-17 budget as approved by the Town Meeting, May 11. Later in May, the First Selectman presented a set of revised fees to the BoS and the Board of Finance. I can tell you that **none** [of the] commission chairman that I work for, were consulted or notified of the fee changes.

I am the only person, impacted by these cuts. No one notified me. I note that both the BoS and BoF have approved her changes; and note that these cuts were made after the full fees included

in the Town Budget were approved. Had I known, you can be sure that I would have been there to speak to this issue.

At the Selectmen's meeting, the First Selectman stated a reason for the revision was "she created new per meeting schedule which she feels fair and will provide consistency moving forward." It is interesting that this "fair" schedule resulted in across the board reductions for 1.6% for the Economic Development Commission to 33.5% for the Zoning Board of Appeals. As you can note by the chart provided in this email; you can see the exact cuts for my commissions. Other boards and Commissions have their minutes, etc. prepared by paid staff.

The main reasons for the inconsistency in my fees are: 1) I was hired in different years for the positions by different Selectmen and 2) the Commissions recognized the differences in secretarial effort required. While the revised fees do recognize that the secretarial effort required is larger some commissions vs. others, it does not recognize that the secretarial effort for the Zoning Board of Appeals is much larger than any of the other commissions because of the additional notifications and legal requirements for this commission.

When Selectman Reynolds asked if there were any complaints due to these 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 BoS and then forward them to the BoF to review as well.' I work for 5 commissions; 3 out of the 5 fees were drastically reduced and I was not informed. I do know that the BoS and BoF did approve the revised fees.

Consider this email as a "complaint" due to these unwarranted reductions. Had I known about these reductions, I would have been at the meetings and strongly defended the fees that were approved in the Town Budget approved May 11. My many years of service for each commission (from 10 years to 29 years) were not made known to the BoS and BoF, nor considered.

I did not become aware of the fee changes until the \$225.53 bill I submitted for a July 26 ZBA meeting and which was approved by its Vice Chairman, was reduced [to] \$150.00.

I want to point out that the maximum expected savings due to these cuts is less than \$1600. In reality, there will be probably be equivalent savings because of the number of actual meetings has been decreasing over the years. I could have made that fact known.

While I have not decided how I will respond to these unwarranted budget cuts, I now find it difficult to consider continuing as Secretary to your various commissions at these unreasonable rates.

Please let me know what can be done to return my fees to the reasonable levels as approved by the Town Meeting on the budget May 11."

Rob Michalman, 719 East Street South, read a prepared statement regarding his disapproval of the change in board secretarial fees. He noted as Chair of the Social Services Commission he had not been consulted.

First Selectman Mack stated that once Ms. Kling's issue was brought to her attention by Selectman Holmes and Selectman Reynolds, she personally called Mrs. Kling to apologize for the oversight of not providing Ms. Kling with personal notice of the changes in the rates to be paid to board secretaries. It was an inadvertent oversight and she apologized. However, as was explained to Ms. Kling, this was a decision made in the best interests of the Town to pay reasonable compensation for services and to provide an administrative board secretary pay scale that is consistent and uniformly applied. This was in no way meant to be personal and does not diminish the value Ms. Kling has and continues to provide to the Town for serving in her capacity as board secretary. First Selectman Mack also relayed starting hourly rates for police at \$25.24, fire at \$21.73 and dispatcher at \$21.61 as a point of reference. This compares to the new board secretarial fees of \$25-\$30/hour based on a per meeting estimate of 5 hours of work that have been determined as fair compensation for services rendered.

Selectman Chafetz suggested the matter should be taken up in executive session at the next meeting as this is a personnel matter.

Update Roads

Town Engineer Gerry Turbet presented. Galasso Materials LLC performed the mill and paving at the Briarwood Subdivision. This has been completed. Selectman Reynolds asked for clarification if all the work was performed by one company. Mr. Turbet said the work required different contractors to perform different parts of the job. Three projects and 16 miles of roadway were completed which is more than Mr. Turbet has ever completed in the past. The last three projects to be done are bid projects to be designed for construction. Blossom, Hale, Taintor and Ratley Roads are included and will be pushed until 2017. The remaining two projects (Austin, Bennett, Firestone, Kenny Roberts, Spencer, Winter; and Alexander, Dara, Day, Magnolia, Paper, Partridge Meadow, Settlement, Stony Brook, Sunset, Woods Hollow) still need to be designed. The total dollars for the road work that has been spent out of bond money is approximately \$2.8 million.

Selectman Holmes asked if there was any time stipulation to the bond. This is a question for bond counsel and will be brought up at the tri-board meeting.

Mr. Turbet confirmed Suffield has approximately 78 miles of road. Selectman Chafetz asked if the worst roads have been completed. Mr. Turbet stated the worst roads remaining are industrial roads. First Selectman Mack noted that the Highway Department and Mr. Turbet have worked very well together to keep the projects progressing. Residents have been pleased with the work.

Selectman Sullivan wanted to know how long until these roads needed to be paved again. Mr. Turbet said it is an ongoing process but keeping an eye on the roads and doing crack sealing will prolong the work. The effects of salt on the roads also has an effect as well. Selectman Sullivan

suggested that changes be made to subdivision regulations to regulate pavement to ensure longevity. First Selectman Mack applauded the idea.

Selectman Holmes asked and Mr. Turbet confirmed that data was being taken so they could measure how long the work held up. First Selectman Mack asked about how truck traffic affected roads. Mr. Turbet indicated that heavier loads and higher frequency would take a toll on roads.

Update on Fiber Project

Public Works Director John Cloonan and IT Director Dan Beaudoin presented. Mr. Cloonan noted that the Town funded \$185,000 in the 2017 budget to install approximately 3,000 feet of conduit and fiber to the library, to Bridge Street School, along Bridge Street to the ambulance, then to the Senior Center. Included is a vacant conduit with a pull string to the Bridge Street School. A mandatory walk through with contractors took place on September 6th. Only two of four bidders showed up. Bids are due back on Sept. 14th with awards anticipated on Sept. 15th so that work can begin and end by October 15th. In order to get the library moved to the senior center the fiber needs to be completed. All abutters that are affected by the fiber line will be notified. They are meeting with the fiber optic company tomorrow to show the layout of conduit and cost to install fiber and connect to each building. October 31st is the scheduled completion date with fiber pulled and terminated at each building.

Selectman Chafetz asked if this would mean the ambulance would be connected. First Selectman Mack confirmed and expanded stating that it would enhance communications among the Town's three emergency services agencies and would provide another phone line to the Senior Center.

Selectman Reynolds asked why only two of the bidders showed up. Mr. Cloonan was not certain but said it is a busy time of year.

IT Director Dan Beaudoin talked about the benefits of the fiber link. Putting the fiber in now gives the town many options going forward.

Selectman Holmes asked if there was the possibility for the Town to profit from residents who did not have access to internet. Mr. Beaudoin said that could potentially be the case in the future and Selectman Mack noted that the Technology Committee is exploring this opportunity.

Update from Technology Committee

Technology Committee Chair Michael Stevens presented. Mr. Stevens began by saying that technology is like the roads; it's never done. The benefits of the Technology Committee so far are very good. Year to date, the Technology Committee has been working on the following projects:

- Video and security updates and upgrades at the police station that can be applied to the Town and Schools
- VoIP phone system for the Town and School

- New laptops for the Police Department
- Internet usage policies for the Town and School
- Bulk scanning of documents within the Town
- Fiber for the Town

He expanded on the purchase of new police laptops through the Board of Education process which allowed for discounts and resulted in complete cost to Town being approximately 2/3 of the budgeted forecast. They were able to do more with less money for the police.

First Selectman Mack noted one of the issues they are trying to correct is the police department's issue with 911. The new phone system should enable 911 to determine location of callers from any phone.

Selectman Chafetz asked where they are with laptop purchases. Mr. Stevens said the Tech Committee is starting to standardize computers purchased by the Town.

Approve a tax rebate for Brent and Kristen Soto in the amount of \$6,247.85 due to accidental overpayment

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve a tax rebate in the amount of \$6,247.85 due to accidental overpayment. Vote: 5-0 in Favor.

Approval of the receipt of donation of 2.1 acres of land as preserved replacement for the expanded gas pipeline easement on the adjacent Fish Farm per request of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and send to Town Meeting

Town Planner Bill Hawkins presented.

BACKGROUND:

Tennessee Gas Company/Kinder Morgan plans to build a portion of its proposed Connecticut Expansion project through Suffield. Suffield has an existing 16 inch gas transmission line traversing the town entering from East Grant east of South Grand Street and exiting into Agawam, MA north of Hickory Street. The expansion project involves burying a 24 inch gas transmission line adjacent to the existing 16 inch line. Accordingly, Tennessee Gas has been acquiring an expanded easement from landowners to accommodate the proposed pipeline.

A portion of the pipeline crosses the Andrew J. Fish property located at 410 Taintor Street. In 2006, the property was preserved under the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) which included funding from the State and Town. In December 2015, the Town agreed to the expanded easement through the Fish property and accepted \$8,000 from the gas company. Similarly, the State Department of Agriculture agreed to the expanded easement and accepted a cash payment. The NRCS did not accept money for the expanded easement and instead required replacement acreage to ensure there is no overall reduction in preserved land. As a result, the NRCS has agreed to allow the expanded easement on the original Fish farm provided they get acceptable replacement acreage to offset the newly encumbered land.

DISCUSSION:

Tennessee Gas identified a 2.1 acre (MBL 24-26-103-1) landlocked parcel adjacent to the preserved Fish farm and proposed it to the NRCS as the replacement acreage. The NRCS agreed that the offered parcel would satisfy their requirement for replacement acreage. The parcel in question is also owned by Andrew Fish. The Town was not involved in any of these discussions as this process was initiated by the NRCS as part of their negotiations with Tennessee Gas. However, since the replacement acreage would become part of the preserved farmland the Town was asked to be on the deed as a responsible entity holding the conservation easement.

The State Department of Agriculture was also asked to be a part of this transaction because they were involved with the original preserved farm. However, the state declined to be involved because their process of accepting additional acreage and amending the easement can be time consuming and also because the need for replacement acreage was not their requirement. While the Town is not required to be a part of this transaction it would help the NRCS since they need an entity on the deed with them for the additional preserved land.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The 2.1 acre property is being acquired by the gas company and then offered to the NRCS and Town as replacement acres to offset the already preserved land that will be encumbered by the expanded easement for the new pipeline. The 2.1 acres will be added to the preserved Fish farm property. There is no financial impact to the Town to accept the additional acreage as preserved land.

Selectman Sullivan asked if Tennessee Gas has all of the lands purchased at this point. Mr. Hawkins said he is not sure.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion that the Board of Selectmen approves the acquisition of the development rights to the 2.1 acres (MBL 24-26-103-1) of land located off of Taintor Street for no consideration for the purpose of serving as preserved replacement acres for the expanded gas pipeline easement on the adjacent Fish Farm per the NRCS requirements and send the acquisition to a town meeting. Vote: 5-0 in Favor.

Approval of Master Municipal Agreement for Design Projects funded by state or federal grants

Town Engineer Gerry Turbet presented. The state has developed a master agreement for municipally administered design projects funded by state or federal grants. A town's approval of the agreement, through the First Selectman's signature (certified to sign by resolution of the Board of Selectmen) will permit the Department of Transportation to issue a Project Authorization Letter for a preliminary engineering project, such as the Remington Street Bridge replacement project. The executed agreement with DOT will cover a 10-year permitting DOT Project Authorization Letter for any funded projects (with update submittals for change of First Selectman).

Town Attorney Derek Donnelly remarked that he did a preliminary review of the document and noted that the state took great pains to make sure it was protected. The State is setting up a process for all projects in which the Town will have the ability to select initial contractors at the beginning of design phase of a project or utilize DOT contractors. The process is streamlined but it requires the Town to enter a 10-year contract. Mr. Donnelly said this would help with quick access to funds and bidding. He used the past October snowstorm as an example of where this agreement would have been helpful. Mr. Donnelly suggested tabling this item for another meeting to allow him to do a more thorough review of the agreement before the Board of Selectmen decides to authorize its execution.

Selectman Chafetz suggested asking other municipalities for their feedback on the agreement.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to table the approval of Master Municipal Agreement for Design Projects funded by state or federal grants Vote: 5-0 in Favor.

Discussion and appointment of members to Retirement Commission

First Selectman Mack noted the four candidates and their party affiliations including Glenn Gazdik (Republican recommended by Republican Town Committee), Charles Roumas (Democrat recommended by Democratic Town Committee); Eric Remington (R) and Kate Rietberg (U) both current members up for reappointment. She added that Ms. Rietberg was a Democrat at the time she was first appointed to the Retirement Commission but has since changed her party to Unaffiliated. She also noted that the Chairman of the Retirement Commission recommended Ms. Rietberg's reappointment.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to reappoint Eric Remington and Kate Rietberg to the Retirement Commission through August 31, 2020. Vote 5-0 in Favor.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to appoint Charles Roumas to the Retirement Commission to fill the remainder of Ralph Takala's term expiring on August 31, 2018. Vote 1-4 Against. Selectman Holmes in Favor; Selectmen Chafetz, Mack, Reynolds and Sullivan Against.

The Board of Selectmen discussed the qualifications of Mr. Gazdik and Mr. Roumas. First Selectman Mack noted that each were excellent candidates, but she had first approached Mr. Gazdik who is a financial vice president and actuary at the Hartford Insurance Company to serve on the Commission on the recommendation of Tracy Eccles, Board of Finance member. Her opinion is that Mr. Gazdik's actuarial background will be an asset to the Commission because it deals with actuarial assumptions in making pension funding decisions.

Selectman Holmes mentioned that she thought there was discussion in the past that a member does not necessarily have to have expertise/specific skill set to be considered for a board. Ms. Rietberg, a member of the Retirement Commission, stated from the audience that currently an actuary is a missing skill set on the commission.

Mr. Brooks, RTC Chair, also noted from the audience that Chair Remington had spoken with Mr. Gazdik today who was very interested in serving on the commission.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion for Glenn Gazdik to be appointed to the Retirement Commission to fill the remainder of Ralph Takala's term expiring on August 31, 2018. Vote 4-1 in Favor. Selectmen Chafetz, Mack, Reynolds and Sullivan in favor. Selectman Holmes against.

Discussion of Charter Revision Commission

Selectman Chafetz believes it is time to discuss a Charter Review Commission charged with looking at Town Manager and put it to the public for a vote. Time period from inception to Charter recommendation was discussed at being 14 months. Town Counsel stated that he would double-check that time period.

Selectman Reynolds agreed it is worth looking into and would support the Charter Review at some point. However given all of the current items on the Town's plate he does not feel now is the best time.

Town Clerk Kathy Dunai said all systems are go for the ordinance project. Audits have already begun. The document will be searchable on-line.

Mr. Brooks, RTC Chair and former Charter Review Commission member, noted from the audience that once the ordinance project is complete there will be a lot of sorting that needs to be done to get those ordinances in line with the way the Town operates, the way the Town Charter is drafted and how the people want things to operate. There's a lot of work to be done.

Selectman Holmes asked if Mr. Brooks's statement was not a reason to begin the process now; Mr. Brooks responded that you can't amend the Charter if you don't really know the rest of the background. How can you decide in what form the police department would report to town manager without the ordinances? Selectman Chafetz argued you could look up those ordinances now. Mr. Brooks responded that if you have 14 months to do a charter review and you do not know what form the ordinances are in, it is a difficult project to tackle. Selectman Chafetz said we have to go ahead or it will be years out again and we will still be talking about this issue.

Selectman Chafetz made a motion to create a Charter Review Commission. Selectman Sullivan commented that the agenda item was for discussion only tonight. First Selectman Mack stated that the agenda would need to be amended and 2/3 of the board would need to approve it being added to the agenda. Town Counsel Derek Donnelly confirmed. Selectman Chafetz requested that the October 5th, Board of Selectmen Meeting include on the agenda the vote on the Charter Revision Commission. First Selectman Mack said she is not in favor of it and would not agree to put it on the agenda. Selectman Chafetz stated he does not believe she has a choice. First Selectman Mack stated that any board member can initiate a discussion on an item without a second, but the First Selectman creates the agenda. If the agenda doesn't include the approval of an action, Town Counsel confirmed that adding an item to the agenda to be voted on requires 2/3 majority vote (4 out of 5 selectmen). First Selectman Mack stated that she is not saying she will

never put it on the agenda but she is not ready to do so until the ordinance project is completed. She confirmed that she is open to the idea of Town Manager but there is a time and place to do it and she's not convinced that now is the time to do it. Selectman Holmes commented that she felt it would take some time to select the right group of people who were willing, able and had the skill set to serve on the Charter Review. Selectman Reynolds and First Selectman Mack agreed to start the process now of looking for qualified candidates who are willing to serve on a Charter Revision Commission if and when one is convened in the future. She requested residents interested in serving forward resumes to her attention so vetting can begin.

Selectmen Updates

- The transition to “.gov” as the domain name for the Town website and emails should be completed in two weeks. The current “.com” email addresses will continue for one year and Town emails will note the change for recipients. The change was requested by the Police Department because .com often resulted in public agencies not responding promptly to their requests. The .gov domain name provides a level of credibility to the Town when dealing with State and Federal agencies.
- To increase compliance with law and parliamentary procedure, training materials for boards and commissions and board secretaries will be provided by Town Clerk Kathy Dunai including info on FOIA and Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure
- The State's DOT Center Line Rumble Strip Project impacted a few Suffield Roads (including Spruce and Warnertown) as noted by Town Engineer Gerry Turbet. These measures were undertaken for added safety
- Virtual Net Metering Contract between Town of Suffield and Lodestar Energy for Suffield to purchase discounted net metering credits from solar energy production. Final revisions to the documents have been made; Town should receive approximately \$1,500,000 in savings over 20 years
- Four Seasons (hydroponic tomato farm) – making progress
 - First Selectman Mack going to tour Joey Geremia's Wallingford facility in a few weeks and receive another update on status at that time.
- Tri-Board Meeting scheduled for Monday, September 26th at 7:00 p.m. at Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association to discuss status and next steps for capital projects
- The First Selectman is in various stages of union negotiations with the Town Hall, Dispatchers, Firefighters & Police Unions
- Dedication Ceremony for Babb's Beach is on September 16th at the platform at 12:30
- Suffield on the Green is this weekend. The Town looks forward to welcoming residents. Eversource Lightbulb exchange- each household may exchange for 5 LED lightbulbs; sign up for compost bins to be purchased with our recycling grant money to start working toward reducing our annual \$1,000,000 garbage bill. Town of Farms items available for purchase.
- Wednesday, September 21st, the Suffield Economic Development Commission hosts our annual familiarization event to highlight Planned Development Industrial Park land (light industrial/office/distribution) in the vicinity of Bradley International Airport, Industrial land off Route 159, and a mixed-use opportunity in our Town Center. The tour leaves Suffield Country Club at 10:30.

Public Comment

Warren Packard, 2 Oxford Drive, asked that when the fiber optic line is installed that the town consider a dual line along the entire length so that if the town wants to get into residential usage there is a completely separate line that won't interrupt emergency services; not expensive to do when the trench is open. He also suggests an amplification system for the Board of Selectmen meetings because it is difficult to hear.

Wendy Mitzel, 173 Kent Avenue, questioned what she voted on at the last Charter Revision. She assumed that the entire Charter had been reviewed. Why did that commission not include the Town Manager discussion? Is there a statute on how often the Charter can be reviewed? Why wouldn't we wait until that time to review these issues? She wondered what the last Charter Revision Commission covered and how often one is convened. She asked why one would be reconvened if it was just done.

Melissa Finnigan, 50 Cedar Crest Lane, thanked Ms. Mitzel for asking her question. She asked if anybody has researched surrounding towns and whether they have chosen town manager, was it beneficial? What happened to towns that switched to it, did they like it, what is the current status? She would like to see more of that research. She advocates trusting in what First Selectman Mack is advocating to wait until the ordinances are done and look into the matter at a later date. She wants to see the Charter Review done the right way so everybody understands the impact of the decision so that it is not a quick town vote to get it in there before next November election. She does not want it to be a rush job and believes the town needs to be careful.

Lester Smith wanted to know why Babb's is a re-dedication? When was it ever dedicated before? First Selectman Mack thanked him for his comment and noted that she will call it a dedication or whatever he wants. She is just happy that there is something involving Babb's to celebrate!

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim M. Worthington
Recording Secretary