

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
JANUARY 6, 2016**

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

Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon was also in attendance. First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to add item 3a to the agenda titled Approve the split of the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) from 1 full time (35 hour) position to 2 positions of 17.5 hours each. Vote 5-0 in favor to add to the agenda.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to add item 12a to the agenda titled a possible vote on Negotiation of Real Estate Matter. Vote 5-0 in favor to add to the agenda.

**Approval of the Minutes from the December 16, 2015 Regular Meeting**

Selectman Holmes made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2015 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote 5-0 in favor.

**Public Comment**

*Bruce Rietberg of 12 Devine Road* spoke in support of the use of Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP) funds for a fiber optic installation project.

Dave Gauthier of 3219 Phelps Road recommended that statutory requirements be identified in the budget as separate line items and highlighted as such. He said that the book of ordinances is not compliant since it hasn't been updated in more than 20 years due to budget reductions. Mr. Gauthier also suggested that Town Department Head salary increases should follow federal and state compensation cost of living adjustments (COLA) rather than having each individual department head make a recommendation to the BoS and Board of Finance (BoF).

**Presentation by Suffield Volunteer Ambulance**

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to table this item until later in the meeting. Vote 5-0 in favor to table the item.

**Approve the split of the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) from 1 full time (35 hour) position to 2 positions of 17.5 hours each and recommend to the Board of Finance**

Selectman Holmes made the motion to approve the split of the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen (BoS) from 1 full time (35 hour) position to 2 positions of 17.5 hours each and recommend to the Board of Finance.

First Selectman Mack explained that Lisa Trase had resigned her position and she would like to fill the position with two part-time employees who she has identified. She said the position can be filled at the discretion of the First Selectman and she had met with the Human Resource Director to discuss the job sharing concept. Ms. Mack may re-evaluate the position at a future date but there is a benefit to the Town since no benefits would be paid. Selectman Chafetz said this was done in the Education Department and job descriptions were developed to clearly define the roles. First Selectman Mack said that both employees would be responsible for all duties. She introduced Kris Lambert and Kim Worthington, the two potential employees, who were in the audience. Vote 5-0 in favor.

### **Presentation by Suffield Volunteer Ambulance**

Dr. Andrew Wakefield, the president of the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association (SVAA), made a presentation to the BoS supported by Ambulance Chief, Art Groux, and SVAA Board member, Don Miner. Dr. Wakefield began by saying he appreciates the support that the Town provides to the Association. The SVAA has about 90 volunteers who contribute over 25,000 hours per year providing patient care. The SVAA responds to about 1500 calls for service each year and 80% of these result in a trip to the hospital. He noted they are financially secure and put money into savings to replace their assets when they wear out. He said they are more than just Emergency Medical Services. The SVAA provides medical supplies for the Police and Fire Department at no cost. They provide mutual aid to other towns. The SVAA is starting a program to promote pedestrian and bicycle visibility in the wake of seven serious accidents in the last ten years. They provide outreach to schools with “Blinky” the ambulance. The Selectmen asked questions about the number of calls with the prison and fundraising efforts. The BoS thanked Dr. Wakefield for his presentation.

### **Appoint Benjamin Rodriguez, Jr. to the North Central District Health Department through June 30, 2017 to fill a vacancy due to the resignation of Faith Roebelen**

Selectman Holmes made the motion to appoint Benjamin Rodriguez, Jr. to the North Central District Health Department through June 30, 2017 to fill a vacancy due to the resignation of Faith Roebelen. Vote 5-0 in favor.

### **Discussion and approval of the Emergency Management Director (EMD) Agreement between the Town and the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association**

First Selectman Mack announced that EMD duties had been reorganized based on a financial decision. The former EMD had a salary of \$25,000 that was the highest paid in our peer group. She also announced plans to replace the CODERED emergency alert

system with the Everbridge system which is provided by the State at no cost to save \$6,000 annually. She spoke to the three chiefs of emergency services and then made the decision to select Ambulance Chief, Art Groux, and to pay him a \$5,000 stipend to assume EMD duties. She also noted that we will apply for the annual Emergency Management Performance Grant which will offset EMD costs by \$7,873.50. Selectman Chafetz made the motion to approve the Emergency Management Director (EMD) Agreement between the Town and the Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association and recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

**Authorize a pay increase for Police Captain and recommend to the Board of Finance**

First Selectman Mack explained the Police Captain position was currently budgeted at one figure and the agreement with the new Police Captain was for \$95,000. The currently budgeted amount is \$93,810.20 so the increase was about \$1,200. She said the increase reflected by the Police Commission was reflective of the responsibilities of the captain and consistent with her desire to retain and attract high quality employees. Selectman Sullivan made the motion to authorize the pay increase for the Police Captain to \$95,000 and recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

**Approve the authorizing resolution for the Emergency Management Performance Grant**

First Selectman Mack explained that the authorizing resolution was required when there is a change of First Selectman. Selectman Holmes read the resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Suffield Board of Selectmen may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Melissa M. Mack, as First Selectman of the Town of Suffield is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Suffield Board of Selectmen and to do and perform all acts and things which she deems necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents.

Vote 5-0 in favor.

**Approve the authorization for application for a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) Grant for Hilltop Farm and Babbs Beach improvements**

Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon was in attendance to make a presentation. The STEAP grant application deadline for this year is January 15<sup>th</sup>. The Town can apply for up to \$500,000. Mr. McMahon is seeking Board of Selectmen approval to submit applications for Babbs Beach and Hilltop Farm.

The application would be for \$250,000 for site improvements to the Babbs Beach Recreation Area. The project would entail improved access to the beach area, gravel parking areas, new walkways and beach restoration. We are showing a \$25,000 match for the Babbs Beach Improvements which would need to come from Town funds or donations. In order to get the beach operational there would be approximately \$48,000 in start-up costs for equipment. There would also be approximately \$18,300 in yearly operational costs that might be defrayed by user fees.

An application is being proposed for \$250,000 for Hilltop Farm Barn Restoration. The monies would be used for installation of a fire suppression system and other life-safety improvements in the large dairy barn. Hilltop Farm would also have a match that would be covered by Friends of the Farm at Hilltop.

Selectman Reynolds would prefer to see the grants used for town owned purposes like relocation of the Town highway garage rather than for a non-profit. Selectman Chafetz said that Selectman Reynolds raised a good point but acknowledged that we are not ready to apply for funds for highway garage by the January 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. It was agreed that obtaining grants for the highway garage would be a future priority.

Selectman Sullivan made the motion to approve of the submission of STEAP grant application for Babbs Beach Improvements and that the First Selectman is authorized to execute grant-related documents and to recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Selectman Chafetz made the motion to approve of the submission of STEAP grant application for Hilltop Farm Barn Restoration and that the First Selectman is authorized to execute grant-related documents and to recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

### **Approve the use of Local Capital Improvement Program (LOCIP) funds for a fiber optic installation project and recommend to the Board of Finance**

Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon was in attendance to make a presentation. The Town Center Fiber Extension Project would extend fiber from its current terminus at the library by the Bridge Street school site and then to the ambulance facility. Fiber would also be extended from the ambulance facility to the Senior Center. This project would allow these important facilities to be a part of the Town's network. It would increase speeds for computers at each of these locations. Most importantly, it would link our Ambulance facility to our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which is located at our Town Hall so that all of our safety services can communicate effectively. This project would include trenching, placing of conduit, backfilling and connecting the network. Our proposed funding source for this project is a state reimbursable grant program known as the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP). The Town has accrued \$183,043 in unallocated annual entitlements that can be used for eligible projects that are included in a Town's Capital Improvement Plan. Eligible projects

include road reconstruction or repair, sidewalks, sewer facilities, public buildings, bridges, emergency communications, as well as other items.

Selectman Chafetz noted that the Library Foundation agreed to fund the fiber optic installation costs since there was no other funding source. He asked that the estimated cost of \$25,000 be included in this request. Selectmen Chafetz recused himself from further discussion since he is the Library Foundation president.

Selectman Reynolds made the motion to approve of the use of \$123,000.00 plus the cost of fiber installation for the Library in Local Capital Improvement Program funds for the Town Center Fiber Extension Project and to recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 4-0 in favor with Selectman Chafetz recused.

### **Selectmen Updates**

#### **Town Meeting Results**

First Selectman Mack reported that all items passed unanimously at Town Meeting. These included the expenditure from the open space fund for the purchase of development rights to the Stiles and Bielonko Farms; the sale of 2.631 acres of industrial land on the corner of East Street and Bennett Road to CS Landscape Design and Construction, Inc.; and the authorization of an amendment to the Right of Way and Easement to Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, LLC pursuant to the development rights owned by the Town of Suffield on the Andrew Fish Jr. Farm subject to review of legal documents.

#### **Budget Development Update and Salary Strategy**

First Selectman Mack reported that departmental budgets are due on January 7<sup>th</sup>. She will begin scheduling departmental reviews and provide the schedule to other Selectmen so they can attend. She acknowledged Mr. Gauthier's recommended salary strategy, but explained that she is in the process of reviewing executive salaries as they compare to our peer Towns based on population. She hopes to use this strategy to begin to move our executive salaries in ranges that are in line with our peers in order to attract and retain skilled employees.

#### **Tri-board meeting to be held on January 13, 2016 to discuss a timeline for capital projects subject of the bonding**

The BoS, BoF, Permanent Building Commission and other stakeholders will meet to discuss a construction and finance timeline for the 3 approved bonding projects.

#### **Technology Committee Update**

First Selectman Mack met with Michael Stevens to review and revise the mission statement from the previous Technology Committee. She is seeking a committee with

members from diverse technological backgrounds. She will solicit more candidates from the Town Committees.

### **FOI Workshop**

The Freedom of Information workshop was attended by about 50 people. All in attendance believed that it was a worthwhile event.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a Security matter. Vote 5-0 in favor. Executive session convened at 8:25 p.m. and included the Selectmen , Superintendent Berasi, Jeanne Gee (Board of Education Chair), Bill Hoff (School Business Manager), Larry Plano (Director of Facilities), Art Groux (Ambulance Chief) and Fire Chief Flynn.

At 8:58 p.m. Executive Session ended. Selectman Holmes made a motion to add an agenda item to vote on security updates to vestibules in the schools. Vote 5-0 in favor to amend the agenda.

Selectman Reynolds made the motion to approve the expenditure of \$500,000 for vestibule improvements in all four schools with a 52% reimbursement from the State of Connecticut and to recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

At 8:59 Selectman Reynolds made the motion to enter Executive Session for the negotiation of Real Estate. Vote 5-0 in favor. Executive session convened at 8:59 and included the Selectmen and Patrick McMahon.

At 9:19 Executive Session ended. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to add an agenda item to approve the submission of a Responsible Growth and Transit-Oriented Development Grant. Vote 5-0 in favor to amend the agenda.

Selectman Reynolds made the motion to approve of the submission of a Responsible Growth and Transit-Oriented Development Grant in the amount of \$2 million for the following purposes: 1) to pursue the acquisition of 123 Austin Street for use as the Town's highway facility; 2) design and construct an addition to the existing building and 3) construct a new sand/salt shed. Further Move: That the Board of Selectmen authorizes the First Selectman to negotiate a Purchase and Sale agreement for 123 Austin Street. Further move: to recommend the approval of the submission to the BoF. Vote 5-0 in favor.

At 9:22 Selectman Reynolds made the motion to enter executive session for a Personnel Matter regarding the Interim Police Chief. Vote 5-0 in favor. Executive session convened at 9:22 and included only the Board of Selectmen.

At 9:40 Executive Session ended. Selectman Holmes made the motion to table item #14 titled the discussion and possible approval of a contract with Interim Police Chief Anthony Riello and recommend to the Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor to table.

At 9:40 Selectman Holmes made a motion to amend the agenda and add an Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter regarding the Minibus Coordinator position. Vote 5-0 to amend the agenda.

At 9:41 Selectman Holmes made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter regarding the Minibus Coordinator position. Executive Session convened at 9:41 and included only the Board of Selectmen.

At 9:57 Executive Session ended.

**Public Comment**

*None*

Selectman Reynolds moved to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, January 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Trase  
Recording Secretary