

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

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

Also in attendance: Fire Chief Chuck Flynn, Town Planner Bill Hawkins, and Suffield Public Schools Business Manager Bill Hoff

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

Approval of the Minutes from the June 15, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Chafetz referred to the last page of the minutes where he initiated discussion about the Charter Revision and requested that it be added to the agenda. He noted that the First Selectman chose to add to the current agenda as “Discussion of Town Manager” which did not reflect his intent which was to have a discussion about Charter Revision.

The First Selectman’s understanding was that Selectman Chafetz wanted to have a discussion about convening a Charter Revision Commission for the purpose of implementing a Town Manager.

Selectman Chafetz noted that was his primary goal but it would really be up to the Charter Review Commission. The Board of Selectmen can give a charge to the Charter Review Commission but they can look at anything they so choose. He felt that the concept of Town Manager was not looked at in the previous Charter Review. His intent for tonight was to vote to reconvene Charter Review Commission.

First Selectmen Mack stated that the discussion could be whatever Selectman Chafetz desired it to be.

Selectman Sullivan made a motion to approve the Minutes from the June 15, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment

Warren Packard, 2 Oxford Drive, stated he was a previous First Selectman. He stated that there cannot be any assurance that if we had a Town Manager in the past few years that we would not have had the mess of the library, community center, town hall repairs, etc, but believes that if we had a Town Manager it wouldn’t be any worse. The discussion of Town Manager always threatens the First Selectman and Board of Selectmen as it seems to imply that they are not doing well. That is not the purpose, but rather continuity. On average, a selectman has served less than three years. The best of the selectmen have left because they had a better offer. Selectmen have entered office with visions for town but have not stayed long enough to see

major projects through completion. The other issue is accountability. Everybody is in charge because of so many commissions and boards involved in our government. Projects get terribly slowed down because of the lack of accountability. Professionalism is another concern. Not one selectman that he can remember has come into the job with specific town administrative experience so they learn on the job. Professionalism in that sense has been lacking. For all of these reasons the subject needs consideration. Mr. Warren has been involved with the CAPS group (Continuity Accountability Professionalism for Suffield) in the past and what pushes the subject forward is a dedicated selectperson(s). Without that, the select board, feeling threatened, can get in the way and slow things down. It is not an easy subject, requires push from the First Selectman's office. This requires looking at how our commissions/boards work and how they will function under the Town Manager/Administrator which is a big job. It will take a long time to look at properly but urges doing so.

Ernie Petkovich, 40 Valley View Drive, agreed with Mr. Packard but wanted to fill in some gaps. The Board of Selectmen does not lose authority with a Town Manager. They are still the directing body for town. The Town Manager runs day-to-day operations and provides continuity when every two years a new Board of Selectmen is elected. The Board of Selectmen are still running the show as far as direction. He is concerned with continuity as well, citing the example of union contract negotiations always involving new people which gives an advantage to the unions. Last Charter Revision Commission made some good changes but was directed to ignore the issue of Town Manager. If the Board of Selectmen chooses to put together another Charter Revision Commission, he recommends giving them some charges including Town Manager and then allowing them to do their job unfettered. He advocates not including any Board of Selectmen or any sitting commission/board member on the commission, nor allowing the First Selectman to attend meetings. He suggests the Board of Selectmen be open minded in reviewing the findings of the commission and not waste the time of those that volunteer. He stated that while there is a lot of work to do, he feels that 80% of the work was done seven years ago in regard to implementing the Town Manager.

Lauren Life, 2910 Mountain Road. She is delighted to see the item on the agenda and recognizes how "touchy" it can be. The Town Manager subject needs to be looked at and she encourages the Board of Selectmen to follow through with the discussion. She would include past First Selectmen and commission/board members on the Charter Revision Commission.

Gordon Stagg, 1575 North Stone Street, echoes words of Mr. Packard and Mr. Petkovich. He is interested in a Town Manager, but more interested in the democratic process which is essential to Suffield. The fact that the Board of Selectmen, led by the former First Selectman, actually charged the Charter Revision Commission with not bringing back anything to do with the Town Manager is offensive and unacceptable to the democratic process. The previous Charter Revision Commission did half the job so it needs to convene again even though it seems very recent. He advises being open minded, in-depth and taking it to the public.

Ed Basile, 528 Hale Street, previous Town Treasurer, School Business Manager and Selectman echoes what preceding speakers mentioned but believes that the Charter Revision Commission should be a one item project designed to look at Town Manager only. He suggests studying other towns with good examples of a Town Manager. It doesn't necessarily take away the

powers of the Board of Selectmen. The policies and procedures would still be put into effect by the Board of Selectmen but the day-to-day function and implementation would be continuous with the Town Manager. Mr. Basile is all for a Town Manager and would want a candidate with a great deal of experience and background for great success.

Tom Frenaye, Warnertown Road, one item that did not work well for past Charter Revision Commission was the forced deadline. He thinks it should be reconvened, include a good group and be provided sufficient time.

Scott Lingenfelter, 141 South Stone Street, commented that if the Charter Revision Commission is reconvened, it is vital that the right people are appointed. These people should have an open mind and be willing to meet with First Selectman, Finance Director, Chairs of Boards/Commissions and listen to them to learn where the current challenges exist. Some of the past commissions have not wanted to do that. They had an agenda and wanted to run with it. We want an open and fair look at Town Manager by people that have not already decided which course of action would be best for the Town. He suggested those appointed should include those outside of the Republican and Democratic Town Committees.

Charlie Watras, 32 Wendover Road, reiterated the importance of the democratic process. The issue has been raised through the years formally and informally but not once has it been brought to the public which he finds offensive. The public has expressed a great deal of interest. We need to get together a group of people that are fair and open minded and put together a proposal that the Board of Selectmen have the ability to comment on and influence at which point it could be sent to the public to vote on in referendum. To deny the public their constitutional right to decide their form of government is wrong and needs to be righted.

Mr. Petkovich clarified that there is an 18-month window for a Charter Revision Commission.

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

First Selectman Mack began by extending the Town of Suffield's gratitude to Alfano & Flynn for their years of service to the Town. The decision to change Town Counsel did not come lightly, but stemmed from the situation that the First Selectmen encountered more times than not when seeking legal counsel that Alfano & Flynn represented the other side of the transaction as well. This required looking elsewhere for counsel. For that reason, to be free from conflicts of interest, and to have good, sound and consistent counsel, she looked to make a change. She recommends appointing Derek Donnelly. During bond counsel interviews, First Selectman Mack, Town Treasurer Christine Davidson, Finance Director Deb Cerrato, Board of Finance Chair Justin Donnelly and Board of Finance member Chris Childs also requested proposals for Town Counsel. It became very clear that while those firms would provide excellent counsel they were out of the Town's price range. First Selectman Mack has seen Mr. Donnelly's work and commented on his experience having served as legislative advisor to a municipality, served on numerous Suffield boards and commissions and feels he will provide excellent counsel to the Town.

Derek Donnelly spoke noting that many knew him in one form or other but that he made a point of not calling any of the Board of Selectmen individually so that if they did have questions they would be made in public, on the record, and he could provide as much information as possible. Mr. Donnelly started his career in municipal government working for the City of Hartford as their Legislative Director. It was a great way to learn about municipal government and about the legislative process as well as providing a unique perspective on municipal law. He managed both legal and lobbying contracts. He is a lifelong Suffield resident. He has since moved on to Blackburn and O'Hara and the focus of his practice is primarily litigation. He does not represent a lot of residents in a legal capacity in town. While he has municipal background, his practice does not tend to have many conflicts. Blackburn and O'Hara are at a lower and more competitive rate than other firms. He benefits from experience and breadth of practice areas of other lawyers in his firm including Mark O'Hara and Stuart Blackburn. If he is appointed, Mr. Donnelly will step down from the Zoning Board of Appeals on which he sits and Mr. O'Hara will resign from the Planning and Zoning Commission to ensure the commissions are free from conflicts of interest.

Selectman Reynolds asked if his firm represents any other municipalities which they do not. Selectman Reynolds confirmed that his engagement letter is open-ended so the Town could end the relationship if it desired to do so. Mr. Donnelly confirmed.

Selectman Chafetz questioned the process. Selectman Mack stated there were four firms in total during the bond counsel interview with two firms choosing not to submit. She had hoped that maybe economies of scale for both bond and town counsel might work to the town's advantage during the bond interviews. She was unsure at the time if town counsel would be replaced. At that time, she mentioned the possibility of Mr. Donnelly as Town Counsel to the interviewing group which responded favorably. Justin Donnelly, Chair of the Board of Finance, in particular spoke highly of Attorney Donnelly and Mr. Blackburn. Attorney Donnelly noted that he is not related to Justin Donnelly.

Selectman Chafetz asked if Mr. Donnelly or his Firm had brought suit against the town in the past. Donnelly confirmed yes, twice. The most recent involved the plaza at the corner of High Street which was resolved. The second time, his firm represented a client for many years prior. He also represented a client in 2015, who gave notice of a potential suit, but the case did not move forward and all statutes of limitation for appeal on that potential case have run. He does not currently represent any party that is adverse to the Town of Suffield. Selectman Mack added that she made it very clear that she would be reluctant to waive any conflicts of interest if they were presented to the Town as she wants to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Selectman Holmes asked whether Mr. O'Hara's past involvement on First Selectman Mack's campaign committee would be a conflict of interest as a partner in the firm in which Mr. Donnelly works. Selectman Mack noted the history of Town Attorneys who were active in town politics pointing to former First Selectman McAnaney who served as Town Counsel and was active in the Republican Town Committee. She confirmed that Mr. O'Hara was active on her campaign committee but said she did not see a conflict of interest and elaborated on past history of Town Counsel appointments and their support/affiliation with other selectmen. She welcomed any other comments from the public whether they perceive somebody who supported

her in her campaign as a partner of Mr. Donnelly presented a conflict of interest and noted that the Town Attorney represents the Board of Selectmen and not Mrs. Mack personally.

Former First Selectmen Lingenfelter offered from the audience that historically the town attorney appointed had some previous affiliation with a town party or campaign so it is not abnormal.

Selectman Chafetz stated that he is not sure why we are changing counsel. First Selectman Mack stated that she had hoped not to have to disclose the list of conflicts in open forum as she did not want to cause any negative implications on the law firm of Alfano & Flynn whom she respects. First Selectman Mack disclosed the numerous times she sought legal assistance from Town Counsel and was unable to receive it because Alfano & Flynn represented the party that was adverse to the Town. She noted that she had never been asked by Alfano & Flynn to consider executing a conflict waiver that would have alerted her in advance to their conflict of interest in the matter. First Selectman Mack stated that she ran on a platform of implementing best governance practices free from conflicts of interest. After a lot of reflection and acknowledging her deep respect for Attorneys Charlie Alfano & Joe Flynn, she believes they cannot represent a majority of the residents and businesses doing business with and adverse to the Town of Suffield and the Town of Suffield. For those reasons she is making the change.

Selectman Chafetz remarked that it appeared that the conflicts were with only one of the attorneys at Alfano & Flynn. First Selectman Mack responded that conflicts of interest are imputed on the partners of a law firm. The rules of professional ethics to which Connecticut attorneys are bound require attorneys to disclose conflicts of interest and obtain waivers from their clients when conflicts exist. She repeated that it is for these reasons that she is making this change and recommends that the Board of Selectmen appoint Mr. Donnelly.

Selectman Sullivan noted that she had served on the Board of Finance in the past with Mr. Donnelly where he did a great job, has real estate dealings with him and has nothing but praise for him and he is certainly professional and well respected. But given the discussion tonight on continuity, she would like to see that we continue with Alfano & Flynn.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Derek Donnelly of Blackburn & O'Hara as new Town Counsel.

Selectman Holmes echoed Selectman Sullivan, stating her respect for Mr. Donnelly having dealt with him in real estate dealings but feels Attorney Alfano does a great job in representing us. If there is a true conflict, she would like to have Attorney Alfano speak to that for himself and have that conversation with the Board of Selectmen directly. Her vote would be no.

First Selectman Mack stated that she spoke to Alfano & Flynn earlier this week and they fully understood and as attorneys they recognize their duties under the CT Code of Professional Ethics and are not surprised about her decision. She stated that she will not be comfortable using them for town attorney and would view it as a breach of anyone's fiduciary duty to the Town of Suffield to continue using a law firm that has conflicts of interest with the Town. First Selectman Mack stated frankly that she was shocked by the comments of the Selectmen.

Selectman Reynolds added that First Selectman Mack noted several conflicts of interest that in and of themselves require a change. The conflicts have become an issue here and something has to be done about it.

Selectman Chafetz suggested tabling the motion. First Selectman Mack responded that this is the time to discuss it. Selectman Chafetz replied, "Then you are going to lose." At which point First Selectman Mack stated that it was unfortunate because she would have to refer it to the Ethics Committee. Selectman Holmes said it would be appropriate at the next meeting to have Attorney Flynn address it given this is the first time the Board of Selectmen are hearing about any of these conflicts. She noted that if these were issues they should have been brought up before. First Selectman Mack responded that she did not want to have to discuss this out in the public and had hoped they would take her recommendation as an attorney and as the CEO of the Town.

First Selectman Mack called the question asking for a show of hands in favor of Derek Donnelly serving as Town Attorney. The motion failed. Vote 2-3 with Selectman Chafetz, Holmes and Sullivan voting against.

First Selectman Mack apologized to Attorney Donnelly. Mr. Donnelly appreciated the consideration and was glad it was done in public. Selectman Holmes noted it was not personal as Mr. Donnelly is a fantastic attorney. Mr. Donnelly responded that he appreciated it.

Discuss and approve Dairy Farmer Tax Abatements

First Selectman Mack described the Town ordinance that provides a 50% tax abatement to dairy farms. She noted the evidence provided to Tax Collector Jill Schectman and Assessor Helen Totz on the Farms owned by Bielonko on East Street N., Coulter on Taintor Street and Hastings on Hill Street.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the Dairy Farmer Tax Abatements as presented. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discuss and approve Spaulding School Nurse's Bathroom Project

Bill Hoff, Suffield Public Schools Business Manager presented that two school bathroom projects were approved by ACCE (Advisory Council on Capital Expenditure) both to improve handicap accessibility. The bid for the two bathroom renovation projects at Spaulding School came in significantly higher than expected and higher than the amount approved in the town capital budget as follows:

	Approved	Bid
Nurse's Bathroom	\$35,000	\$48,500
Pre-k Bathroom	\$40,000	\$59,000

Based on the bid amounts, Mr. Hoff recommends moving forward with the Nurse's Bathroom, the greater need and impact on the school, and put the Pre-k Bathroom on hold. Mr. Hoff

requests that the town transfer a total of \$18,500 (\$13,500 + \$5,000 contingency) from the Pre-k Bathroom to the Nurse's Bathroom project.

Selectman Reynolds asked why the costs were off so much. Mr. Hoff stated that the initial architect did not do plans but just provided a rough estimate and the second architect did not provide a fixed cost which was the school's fault. First Selectman Mack noted that Public Works was not involved in the bidding process.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to transfer \$18,500 from the Pre-K Bathroom Project to the Nurse Handicap Access Project. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Appointment of Bill Hoff as Designated Member Representative and Deb Cerrato as Designated Alternative Representative to CT Prime, the Town's new stop-loss insurance carrier

Bill Hoff presented that the bylaws of CT Prime (the stop-loss captive) require each member town to designate an elected or appointed officer or employee to act as its representative. An alternative representative may also be designated who can act for the representative in the representative's absence. Mr. Hoff volunteered and Deb Cerrato is the logical back-up.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to appoint Bill Hoff as Designated Member Representative and Deb Cerrato as Designated Alternative Representative to CT Prime, Town's new stop-loss insurance carrier. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discuss and approve seasonal part-time gate attendant positions at Sunrise Park

First Selectman Mack noted that this came from the Conservation Commission. The issue of safety and who is coming in and out of our Town parks arose around the discussion of ESY (Extended School Year) and summer camp at Sunrise Park. The Conservation Commission is researching appropriate ways to charge non-Suffield residents for use of Town parks. Gate Attendant 1 would be responsible for ensuring all vehicles entering the town park have a valid resident sticker. The proposed hourly rate would be minimum wage of \$9.60/hour with hours of M-F 7:45am-5:45pm, Sat-Sun 10am-4pm, start date of 7/30/16 through end of August. Total cost of \$2,893 will come from the Conservation Commission budget.

Selectman Reynolds asked if next year this would start earlier. First Selectman Mack confirmed and added it would be a line item in the budget. Selectman Sullivan asked if there would be a charge to use the park. First Selectman Mack clarified that there would not be a charge for Suffield residents, but potentially for non-residents. First Selectman Mack stated that she is working on a town-wide policy for use of all town facilities that will incorporate resident and non-resident use, that will be consistent across all town properties and that is in-line with guidance from CCM and other municipal trade organizations to ensure we are following best practices.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to transfer \$2,894 from Conservation - Park Maintenance Tools & Equipment to Conservation – Park Maintenance – Payroll \$2,688, Conservation – Park Maintenance – Employee Benefits \$206. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discussion of Fire Apparatus Financing

First Selectman Mack explained that this request stemmed from the desire of the Board of Finance and ACCE to put together a financing plan to actively replace fire trucks before the end of their useful lives. Fire Chief Chuck Flynn presented that the trucks that need to be replaced are an aerial truck, rescue truck and engine. A ten-year lease purchase for all three would be just under \$300,000 a year.

First Selectman Mack noted that she would be reluctant to make any recommendations to the Board of Finance without input from the Fire Commission on whether it is beneficial to purchase new, refurbish or consider purchasing with surrounding Towns. Selected Chafetz suggested a Board of Finance member sit in on their meeting as well. First Selectman Mack said that the Board of Selectmen could approve after Fire Commission makes recommendations and then the Board of Finance can figure out how best to pay for it.

Fire Commissioner O’Hurley stated from the audience that he would much rather purchase the fire trucks in a controlled environment instead of being in a time crunch because the apparatus failed.

First Selectman Mack will ask the Fire Commission to report back on their recommendations before the next BOS meeting.

Discuss and approve payment of Fire Department overage from contingency

Chief Flynn presented his request for a transfer of funds for \$42,750.50 to cover year-end shortfall in his operating budget for fiscal year 2015-16. The deficit in the payroll line item (\$40,018.50) and employee benefits line item (\$2,732.00) is due to budgeted overtime projections for training, increased call responses, coverage for shifts due to cost of sick time, vacation time and holiday payouts based on current contract language.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to transfer \$42,750.50 from contingency to Fire Department - Payroll \$40,018.50 and to Fire Department - Employee Benefits \$2,732.00 and recommend to Board of Finance. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Approval of Don Miner to fill in for Art Groux as acting Emergency Management Director from July 21, 2016 – July 31, 2016 due to vacation

Selectman Sullivan made a motion for Don Miner to fill in for Art Groux as acting Emergency Management Director from July 21, 2016 – July 31, 2016 due to vacation.

Selectman Holmes asked whether there was a hierarchy in Art's absence. Chief Flynn added (from audience) there is a team in place. Discussion regarding providing flexibility for EMD to appoint as needed.

Selectman Sullivan amended the motion to allow Art Groux as Emergency Management Director to appoint his temporary replacement during his times of absence from the Town of Suffield for vacation purposes or other with the First Selectman's approval. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discussion and appointment of elector to Emergency Management Office for a term of four years expiring on July 30, 2020

First Selectman Mack noted that there were two interested candidates. Dan Vindigni is very qualified and currently an Emergency Management Consultant for Enterprise Continuity Planning Department at Mass Mutual Financial, prior to that he was Assistant Town Manager in Enfield. He is a volunteer firefighter in Suffield with high level certification in Emergency Management in the State of Connecticut. The Republican Town Committee recommendation is Denise Winiarski who was coordinator of Suffield mini-bus for 20 years and is familiar with the needs of many of the seniors in town as well as those with physical disabilities.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Dan Vindigni to Emergency Management Office for a term of four years expiring on July 30, 2020. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discussion and appointment of member to Retirement Commission to fill remainder of Ralph Takala's term expiring on August 31, 2018

First Selectman Mack asked for a motion to table this item as the Republican Town Committee recommendation has not been confirmed.

Selectman Chafetz made a motion to table appointment of member to Retirement Commission to fill remainder of Ralph Takala's term expiring on August 31, 2018. Vote 5-0 in favor.

Discuss and approve motion to rescind the approval of the Town of Suffield's grant of a water line easement to the Suffield Chase Subdivision approved at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on June 15, 2016

First Selectman Mack conveyed that after the last Board of Selectmen meeting it came to her attention that a family member of one of the Board of Selectmen may have an actual or perceived conflict of interest in a matter approved at the last meeting. Since granting an easement is an important action that runs with the land it is important that we get this right and we are acting free of conflicts of interest. It is imperative that our government run with best practices and without conflicts of interest. Accordingly, she requested that any selectman with potential conflicts of interest please disclose the interest, recuse themselves, and leave the room for discussion and vote so that the Board of Selectmen could proceed with this matter.

Selectman Holmes disclosed that First Selectman Mack contacted her yesterday, bringing this to her attention. Selectman Holmes stated for the Board and the record that the property is owned by T&M, the easement is being provided by the Town of Suffield. She has no financial relationship with T&M nor dealings with them so she does not believe there is a conflict of interest. Selectman Holmes' parents are developers who sold the property two years ago to T&M. 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. The vote was unanimous so her vote did not sway it in anyway. If anybody feels there is a perception of a conflict of interest, she is happy not to vote on the matter if that's what the board would like to do. Selectman Reynolds replied that Selectman Holmes needs to make that decision.

Selectman Chafetz asked if they were being asked to re-vote. First Selectman Mack recommended that they rescind their prior action and consider the matter anew without anyone voting who has a perceived or actual conflict of interest. The decision to disclose the conflict of interest is up to the person with the potential conflict and so the decision is entirely up to Selectman Holmes. Selectman Reynolds noted that perceived is the important word.

Selectman Holmes stated if it so pleases the First Selectman she is more than happy to recuse herself. First Selectman Mack noted she believes the decision is the right one and in the best interest of the Town.

Selectman Holmes officially recused herself and left the room at 8:31 p.m.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to rescind the approval of the Town of Suffield's grant of a water line easement to the Suffield Chase Subdivision approved at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on June 15, 2016. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Selectman Chafetz stated that this was the second time this whole idea of conflict of interest has come up during the meeting. He noted that Suffield is a small town and recommended caution in deciding what is perception and what is reality. He is concerned that there are a lot of different dealings on things in this town. He noted that he was on the Board of Selectmen in the past and it didn't seem to be that big of an issue as it is now. First Selectman Mack responded that conflicts of interest was one of the reasons she ran for office, because it is a big issue. She commented that being a small town does not relieve this Town of its duty to uphold the Code of Ethics and to operate with high governing standards. She offered that, if needed, she would go through the steps of why she has concerns and feels there is probable cause to conclude that Selectman Holmes had a conflict of interest in Board's action. Selectman Chafetz declined the offer.

First Selectman Mack called the question. **Vote 4-0.**

Discuss and approve Town of Suffield's grant of a water line easement to the Suffield Chase Subdivision

Town Planner Bill Hawkins presented a request regarding the 40 lot Suffield Chase subdivision approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission on July 15, 2013. The property has frontage on

Bridge Street as well as on the Wisteria Lane cul-de-sac. The development will connect Wisteria Lane to Bridge Street when fully built-out. The entire property was approximately 91 acres with the development occupying only 31 acres. The other 60 acres was approved as open space in two separate parcels which were accepted by the Town at the December 4, 2014 town meeting. A bridge was required as part of the road design approximately 115 feet into the development from Bridge Street in order to avoid impacts to wetland soils. The water line that will service the lots in the development is to be brought in from Bridge Street. There is no room for the water line to fit between the precast bridge structure and the road above, which forces it to be built out of the road right-of-way on Town owned open space north of the bridge.

Since the water line needs to be placed off the bridge, it needs to go in what is now town owned open space which requires an easement in favor of the Connecticut Water Company. The Town Charter states that conveyance of the easement requires town meeting approval. The firm that designed the subdivision should have indicated the need for easements on the plans that were approved by the town. However, the easements weren't shown, the subdivision was sold, and the current owner is planning on starting construction of the road, bridge, and utilities which brought the need for an easement to light. The total area needed for the easement is approximately 5,500 square feet. The use of the 12 acre open space parcel will not be impacted by granting the water company an easement. Much of the open space contains wetland soils and was intended to remain in its natural state to act as a buffer from Bridge Street for the homes in the subdivision. There would be no financial impact to the Town to convey the water line easement.

First Selectman Mack asked if there was any other way to run a water line easement to this property other than over Town property. Mr. Hawkins replied that, potentially, they could run the water line in through Wisteria Lane, but one of the problems they run into is having to stop it without an easement from the Town. That option is also against what Connecticut Water Company wants in terms of having what they call a "looped system". They like to have all the water lines connected in some capacity to keep the water flowing so there are no dead ends.

First Selectmen Mack followed with whether either option impacts wetlands to Mr. Hawkins' knowledge? Mr. Hawkins stated that coming in through Wisteria Lane would not impact wetlands. Coming in on the other side of the bridge would be open space in the future which is currently owned by the developer; however, the wetlands crossing would be greater there so there is no guarantee that the Conservation Commission would approve that option. Mr. Hawkins mentioned that option to the Conservation Commission a couple of months ago and they felt the wetlands impact was so close to the 5,000 square foot limit that it would trigger the Army Corp of Engineers review, which could delay the project for a couple of years. Accordingly, extending the utilities over the Town property on the west side of the bridge is the easiest and preferable way. Selectman Chafetz asked if the Town would ever need this line for anything. Mr. Hawkins replied that it would service for fire suppression, hydrants, etc. and that it is a sound practice to have it where it is.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion that the town convey a water line utility easement to Connecticut Water Company over town owned open space parcel Map 55H, Block 47, Lot 14-C41, which is adjacent to Bridge Street and Dylan Drive. Reference is made to Sheet 1

of the plan completed by Dutton Associates, LLC entitled “Property Boundary Survey – Easement Plan – Easement to be conveyed to the Connecticut Water Company over Lot 41 – Open Space – Suffield Chase, Dated 3/21/16 and recommend the action to a Town Meeting. Vote 4-0 in favor.

Selectman Holmes re-entered the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Discussion of Town Manager/ Convening a Charter Revision Commission

Selectman Chafetz stated that public comment was expressed tonight and what he found impressive was three former First Selectmen – a Republican, Democrat and Independent – as well as a former Chairman of the Board of Finance all spoke in favor. Selectman Chafetz is not proposing that we move to a Town Manager right now, but rather that we put together a Charter Review Commission together to look at it and present a proposal and then bring it to the Town for a vote. His concern is that the last Charter Revision Commission did not look at the issue of Town Manager at all and this is an issue that has been percolating in town for the last 30 years. He recommends having the time to do the job correctly and putting the appropriate people on the commission who can look at it objectively. A large part of the map is drawn already. We know that some towns have adopted a Town Manager and others have not. It is time to put together a Charter Revision Commission, look at the issue, and let the town vote on it.

Selectman Reynolds questioned whether we had voted on this in the past. Selectman Reynolds wanted more information on what surrounding towns have done, why, pros and cons as well as costs before he makes a decision and votes on whether to form a Charter Revision Commission. Selectman Holmes questioned whether those questions would indeed be the job of the Charter Revision Commission. Selectman Holmes considers this a very long process and the cost of getting people to discuss and research is \$0. Getting an attorney involved could be part of next year’s budget. There are ways that we could have \$10,000-\$20,000 to have an attorney be part of the process.

First Selectman Mack noted that she has always stated that she is interested in a Town Manager form of government, but thinks it has to be the right time. Currently the town is working on getting their ordinances together. To start down this path before we have a good idea about the status of the ordinances, which will impact what we are dealing with and how we proceed would be premature especially because we are limited by the 18 month time period allowed for the Charter Revision Commission to do its work. She has concerns about the expense for the attorneys who would be essential to change our entire form of government. She wishes it would cost only \$10,000-\$20,000, but is certain that it would cost much more as we need to make sure the new Charter is consistent with our ordinances, special acts, State statutes, etc. It will be a cumbersome process. She also noted that getting the right volunteers to serve on this commission is critical. She personally does not think this is the right time, but that does not mean that during the next budget cycle that she wouldn’t be willing to consider it, budget for it, and do it right. At that time, she believe the ordinances will be in order and we will have a better understanding of our starting point. As many have pointed out, we do not even have a clear understanding of who has the authority to do what in this town. The ordinance project will help with that in determining what is consistent, what is antiquated, what special acts apply to

Suffield, etc. It is a process and we are not there yet. If we were go to a Town Manager now, that person would be reporting to commissions that might not necessarily have the skill sets we want them to have. One of the things she has been trying very hard to do is to look at each commission to see what they need to provide good, informed advice to run the town. We are being very diligent in who we put on the commissions going beyond the two political parties and we need more time to do effectively. First Selectman Mack reiterated that she is fully interested in a Town Manager and does not consider it a threat to her or the office. It is where the town needs to go, but is not supportive of convening a Charter Revision Commission at this time.

Selectman Chafetz commented that if we waited until the next budget cycle, we would be headed for another election and could end up with a different First Selectmen so we would have to go through this turmoil again. First Selectman Mack noted that in that case, the Charter Revision Commission would already be convened. Selectman Holmes added at that point it would then become a political issue. Selectman Chafetz stated that there is never a good time. November 2017 would be a good time to have it on the ballot and make it effective whenever decided.

A conversation regarding cost ensued with First Selectman Mack adding that the town will be required to either amend or repeal ordinances, revamp the way our commissions and boards work, ensure compliance with state statutes, examine special acts passed by the State that apply to Suffield, etc. This is a large, cumbersome, expensive project and we don't want an attorney who is not an expert in this area doing it. First Selectman Mack is for it, but wants to do it right. She reiterated that we need a little bit more time to get our housekeeping ducks in a row and the ordinance project is step #1. She would hate to pay an outside attorney to muddle through this project. That was her recommendation and why she is not in favor of convening another Charter Revision Commission at this time.

Selectman Holmes would like to continue the conversation at the next Board of Selectmen meeting. She disagrees with waiting a year. She noted that the Board of Selectmen is here to listen to what the voters want and she heard very loud and clear at the board meeting that this was an elephant left unsaid. To wait another year is not prudent and irresponsible of the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Sullivan asked who is on the committee working on the ordinances. Town Clerk Kathy Dunai, answered from the audience, that she signed a contract with a company to begin the project on July 1 since funds were appropriated by the Board of Selectman. This will be a one to two-year project. The company we contracted with will take into account our ordinances, special acts and anything that is in conflict with each other. It will be a comprehensive overhaul of our ordinances, which have not been updated since the 1990's. Ultimately, we will print one comprehensive ordinance book with indexes that will also be available on-line on the Town website. First Selectman Mack added that until this project is done, we can't start making changes and doing drafting because we don't know where we are starting from. Until we get our hands on our governing instruments we cannot move to the next step. She pointed out again that this will be a large and expensive project.

Selectman Holmes disagreed stating that the big expense of hiring an attorney wouldn't happen until the town votes and says they want a Town Manager which is years away. Having a

committee doing the research with how to move forward with proposing a Town Manager is irrespective of the ordinance housekeeping issue. First Selectman Mack countered by saying that if we go to a Town Meeting and tell residents that this is where we want to go, the next question is going to be how it impacts our current structure. We will need to have those answers. There are so many different varieties of a Town Manager form of government that we would have to know what we are proposing so that people can make an informed decision.

Selectman Reynolds requested Kathy Dunai to relay if a vote is not done during a regular election what percentage of people need to participate in order for it be valid. He also asked for when the last vote on Town Manager took place and the outcome of that vote.

Selectman Chafetz will be compiling information on other towns that have discussed or moved to Town Manager government. He would like the discussion to continue at the next Board of Selectmen meeting. First Selectman Mack added that CRCOG and CCM could be a resource on the topic as well.

Selectmen Updates

First Selectman Mack reported on the following items:

- Captain Brown was recently promoted by the Police Commission to Deputy Chief
- New Director of Human Resources, Karen Ziemba, started on July 18, 2016
- Met with School Superintendent Karen Berasi to discuss opportunities for collaboration between the Town and BOE with respect to new HR Director
- After a review of the Town's insurance coverage and by not utilizing an independent insurance agency, which is common practice with insurance through CIRMA, the anticipated savings for the Town, BOE and WPCA combined is \$31,000.
- The Town did not renew the separate \$7,500 annual premium volunteer firefighter disability policy because it was primarily a duplication of the complementary CIRMA coverage.
- We obtained an increase in coverage for the Town's employee crime policy by going through CIRMA and realized an annual savings of \$1,200.
- The liability and property insurance changes result in a an annual savings of approximately \$40,000
- Met with the Fire Commission and Chief regarding the report and changes have begun
- Kent Memorial Library – with respect to the pcbs, we are waiting on a report from Fuss & O'Neil, which we will have by the tri-board meeting
- The community is enjoying continued improvement to Babb's – flowers, picnic benches, stone walls; looking for lifeguards. Waiting for ADA paved road; may delay grand opening to the public a week or two
- Security Vestibules Upgrades – McAlister, Spaulding, Middle School and High School

All four schools entrances were upgraded by installing additional doors, cameras, card readers in the interior to create a controlled vestibule at each school. Concrete bollards and planters were installed at the exterior of the Middle School and High School.

Aresco Builders was the lowest qualified bidder. The company was great to work with and did a great job. Construction began on April 18, 2016 and was completed by June 30, 2016.

The Permanent Building Commission was in charge of the project and DPW led the oversight of the construction and was the clerk of the works (Handled all the prevailing wage paperwork, requests for payment, Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) requirements, lien waivers etc). The successful project came in on time and under budget.

Overall training for the administrative assistant and maintenance staff was conducted on June 29, 2016 for the schools to operate the new systems.

Kaestle Boos Architects issued the letter of completion on July 11, 2016.

Final inspection by the Building Inspector and Fire Marshal was completed on Friday, July 8, 2016.

Overall costs for the project were:

Original contract sum	\$425,700.00
Approved Change orders	\$12,439.00
Kaestle Boos Architects	\$48,800.00
Farrelly	\$674.00
Total	\$487,613.00
Under Budget	-\$12,387.00

Congratulations to all who made the project a success.

- Suffield received Member Equity Distribution check in the amount of \$25,353 from CIRMA
- Suffield was awarded an Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grant in the amount of \$20,000 for the Windsor Locks Canal Capital Needs and Hydropower Study
- Suffield was awarded \$5,940 from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for the Recycling Rewards Program
- Ellington was awarded \$450,000 of Small Cities CDBG funds for its regional housing rehabilitation program in which Suffield is a member; LMI residents of Suffield are eligible to apply for housing upgrades by contacting the Emergency Aid Association
- Four Seasons Farm (the potential hydroponic greenhouse operation on Poole Rd.) is making progress with DECD. Their next step is a meeting with the Army Corp of Engineers to resolve wetlands issues
- We are continuing negotiations on the Lodestar Virtual Net Metering Agreement
- \$5,000 recycling grant; Selectman Sullivan suggested more hazardous waste collection; First Selectman Mack would like to increase composting

- Beginning August 1st, First Selectman Mack will be on vacation for two weeks with Selectman Reynolds filling in for her during her absence

Public Comment

Warren Packard, 2 Oxford Drive, asked how aggressively are we looking at inter-town cooperation, particularly for high budget items like aerial trucks. Will they look at this regionally?

First Selectman Mack replied that is precisely why she wants the Fire Commission to comment on the purchase of apparatus and hopes there will be inter-town opportunities. With respect to other areas, currently we are negotiating with Windsor Locks and East Granby for a regionalized animal control officer. CRCOG has put some money into exploring regionalization as well and First Selectman would be open to their recommendations.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, August 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim M. Worthington
Recording Secretary