

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2016**

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

**Absent:** Mel Chafetz

Also in attendance: Youth Services Director Leslie Offenbach

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

**Approval of the Minutes from the September 7, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen**

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Minutes from the September 7, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. **Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

**Public Comment**

**Tom Frenaye, 489 Warnertown Road** noted that he was in attendance to support the Democratic candidates currently up for appointment to various boards and commissions. He also wanted to comment on the presentation by the Town Clerk at the September 7, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen where she provided detail on new information packets that will be distributed to all Board and Commission secretaries. He feels it will be beneficial to all and would like to encourage the Board of Selectman to have meeting minutes out within a week and set the standard for the Town.

**Discussion and approval of Fire Apparatus Recommendations from Fire Commission and recommend to Board of Finance**

First Selectman Mack gave a brief overview of her original request to the Board of Fire Commissioners looking for guidance on the proposed Fire Apparatus purchases. Jeremiah Mahoney, Chairman of the Board of Fire Commissioners, was asked to provide the recommendations to the Selectmen. He addressed the option of cost sharing with another town and explained that there was a unanimous feeling among the Commission and Fire Department members that it would not be viable alternative. He cited an example of a neighboring town with an aerial truck that is currently sitting in a garage with a broken transmission. If a town is unwilling to put forth funds to fix a transmission it is unlikely they would want to partner to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a new vehicle. In terms of specific apparatus being considered, it was unanimous among the Commission that the fire rescue vehicle would be an appropriate purchase. The current rescue vehicle is 27 years old and the oldest in the Town's fleet. Due to the frequency of its use and types of missions, it requires many pieces of additional apparatus that were not part of its original design. According to Chairman Mahoney, the Commission had differing opinions on the aerial truck. Two Commission members with career firefighter experience felt strongly for purchasing it currently. They have concerns about age and

should the vehicle start to fail it would require lead time of approximately 12-18 months between building the vehicle and delivery to the town. However, the majority of the Fire Commissioners were not convinced that a new aerial is needed immediately. Chairman Mahoney noted that although the aerial is older, it is functional and is used infrequently. Should it go down for a significant time period there are options to lease. The 1999 engine was described as a frequently used “workhorse vehicle”. It is currently in good shape and well-maintained. The Commission determined that there is no need for replacement at this time. Chairman Mahoney would like the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance to assess if there are significant expenditures in the future that will impact purchasing these vehicles now even if they are not currently in urgent need of being replaced. He feels that they may be in a better position to assess the situation as far as whether to purchase now or not. First Selectman Mack inquired as to the life expectancy of the 1999 engine. Chief Flynn responded that the life expectancy is 20 years for engines and 25 for aerial trucks; however, it is recommended that after 15 years vehicles be used as “reserve apparatus.” First Selectman Mack asked Chief Flynn if he had anything he wanted to add to Chairman Mahoney’s evaluation. He said he did not. Selectman Reynolds expressed his interest in approving the rescue truck as that seems to be a vehicle that all parties agree needs to be replaced. Selectman Holmes requested permission for Kate Reitberg, who was in the audience, to speak on behalf of ACCE. Mrs. Reitberg explained that the apparatus purchases currently being discussed have been approved for the last two years. The Board of Selectmen has recommended them to the Board of Finance for further review and it would appear that once it reaches the Board of Finance the debate about how to fund the purchases continues without resolution. First Selectman Mack agreed that the subject has been kicked around long enough and needs to be completed and recommends that it should move to Board of Finance. Mrs. Reitberg also noted that two of the prior Board of Fire Commissions did not share the same opinion as the current Commission does. With clear priorities from the Commission, First Selectman Mack feels it is appropriate to move forward and figure out a financing schedule that takes into consideration the remaining life expectancy of the vehicles. Discussion continued among the Selectmen regarding lead time required to build vehicles, differing finance options, possible economies of scale and the general price range for purchasing each piece of equipment new. The ranges include an Aerial/Ladder between \$1.1 and 1.3 million, an Engine/Pumper between \$500,000 and \$750,000 and a Rescue between \$500,000 and \$700,000.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to recommend to the Board of Finance to have the financing arranged to replace the 1999 Engine 4, purchase a Rescue truck and new Aerial/Ladder truck. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

#### **Update from Youth Services Director – Leslie Offenbach**

Youth Services Director Leslie Offenbach offered an update on the North Central Opioid Addiction Task Force which was initiated by the Town of Enfield at the end of January 2016. Member towns include Enfield, Suffield, Ellington, South Windsor, Windsor, Windsor Locks and Somers. The group is comprised of medical professionals, Police, Ambulance, Emergency Aid and Youth Services. There are numerous Suffield members included on the Task Force. The meetings are town hall style and committee driven. Town hall meetings have included the provision of vital information from officials from around the State of CT. Ms. Offenbach is currently on the Prevention Subcommittee where towns share strategies used in their efforts to

combat the opioid addiction problem. The Prevention Subcommittee's focus is on reaching younger aged children as research indicates that the longer a youth can be kept from experimenting with substances, the more likely they are to avoid developing a substance addiction later in life. The Task Force applied for a Partnership for Success Grant but was not selected for an award. Based on feedback from the State, the Task Force will need to track data regarding substance abuse trends by town and create more collaborative relationships to be eligible for the grant in the future. First Selectman Mack extended her thanks to Ernie Petkovich who has been the driving force behind the Suffield Local Prevention Council. He has done a lot of work to raise awareness and advance the cause thus far and the council will be a valuable resource for the Town of Suffield.

### **Discussion and approval of Master Municipal Agreement for Design Projects funded by state or federal grants**

First Selectman Mack noted that this topic had been discussed briefly at the September 7, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. At that time it was agreed that Town Attorney Derek Donnelly would do some additional review and report back to the group. Attorney Donnelly is much more comfortable with the agreement now. He has had an opportunity to study the agreement extensively and has also spoken with the attorneys for the State of CT who drafted the agreement. In addition, he has met with the Town Engineer, Gerry Turbet and together they reviewed the document and discussed its potential impact on the Town of Suffield. At the September 7, 2016 meeting Selectman Chafetz had asked the question "What if we do not sign it?" The answer to this question is a delay in the design of various projects. Most projects have an extensive process including design work, selection of an architect and engineer followed by approval of the state. This agreement will streamline the process. We will have the ability to opt-out at any time if we wish to set the agreement aside as provisions for this are included. Selectman Reynolds asked "can it come back into play?" Attorney Donnelly said "yes, at any time over the ten year period." There are still a few aspects of the agreement that are concerning, however, Attorney Donnelly feels that with the opt-out provisions and good oversight and management by the Town we should feel comfortable moving forward with the agreement. First Selectman Mack asked and Attorney Donnelly confirmed that the Town Engineer would be the individual responsible for determining whether the opt-out provision would be utilized on a specific project and for monitoring the Town's compliance with the contract. First Selectman Mack noted that she had spoken with Kevin Maloney from CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities) to inquire as to what other towns were doing. He responded that other towns were signing the agreement and he did not have any major concerns with it based on discussions with other Towns. Selectman Holmes wanted to know what kinds of projects this agreement would affect. This only impacts state roads, and/or other parts of roads that the state has interest in such as bridges, state authority rail lines and transportation alternatives. An example of a transportation alternative would be a "rails to trails" project.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the Master Municipal Agreement for Design Projects funded by state or federal grants and authorize the First Selectman to sign the agreement on behalf of the town as presented at the September 7, 2016 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

## **Discussion of Lodestar Virtual Net Metering Contract and possible recommendation to Town Meeting**

First Selectman Mack announced that an agreement had been reached on the terms of the Lodestar Virtual Net Metering Contract and the Town is ready to proceed with its execution. This contract has been in the works for approximately a year, having been started by the prior First Selectman. Due to the 20 year duration of the contract she thought it would be a good idea to bring it back to the Board of Selectman to determine if it should go to Town Meeting. Town Attorney Derek Donnelly clarified that although a Town Meeting is not required, the Board of Selectman has the purview to send anything they feel should be brought before the Town to a Town Meeting for discussion and approval. The terms allow the Town essentially to purchase energy at 85 cents on the dollar. Savings projections are based on a host of variables including the blended R30 rate which is the rate to purchase energy, as well as transmission and distribution rates which all fluctuate depending on certain factors. The Town is estimated to save \$1,457,560 over 20 years. The original contract did not allow for early termination; however, the revised contract allows for early termination with termination fees. First Selectman Mack worked with Energy Attorney, Florence Davis of Day Pitney, who represented another municipality in a VNM contract with Lodestar. She expressed her comfort level in the contract, but stressed that she wants the Board of Selectman to help in this decision. Selectman Holmes felt that it should go to Town Meeting especially in order to help residents have a clear understanding of the proposed contract. Selectman Sullivan and Selectman Reynolds agreed.

**Selectman Holmes made a motion that the discussion and approval to enter into the Lodestar Virtual Net Metering Contract be sent to Town Meeting. Vote: 4-0 in favor**

## **Discussion and approval of leasing of Town open space (Hilltop West) as farmland to Sunny Hill Farm**

Based on a memo from Economic Director Patrick McMahon there are approximately 32 acres of existing agricultural fields on a town-owned Open Space known as Hilltop West off of Mapleton Avenue. Approval is being sought to lease this parcel for five years to grow hay. The subject land was in need of restoration to bring it back into production. Sunny Hill Farms is planning to make improvements to Hilltop West including the removal of broken down fencing. The lease rate will be \$1 for the first two years and then increase to \$500 per year. No option to renew would be provided. Selectman Holmes thought it important to note that proposals were sought; however, Sunny Hill Farm was the only party who expressed interest.

**Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the leasing of Town open space to Hilltop West as farmland to Sunny Hill Farm. Vote: 4-0 in favor**

## **Discussion and approval of transfer from Contingency to cover fiscal year 2015/2016 Police Budget overages and recommend to Board of Finance**

Deputy Chief Brown gave an accounting of the budget overages in question. He noted that they were working under an inadequate budget prepared by the prior police administration and that most of the items are one-time expenses which are a result of trying to reorganize the agency and

bring the Police Department to appropriate standards. Selectman Reynolds asked what the overage amount was in total. Deputy Chief Brown reported \$108,000 on the Salary side and \$17,000 on the Expense side for a total of \$125,000. Selectman Reynolds and Holmes asked the Deputy Chief to review the larger impact items. The former Chief's settlement, sick payouts, payroll miscalculations, administrative shortages resulting in employees working overtime to cover an additional position, injuries, and staff shortages. Meetings, trainings and the expansion of critical community programs accounted for the expense overages. Selectman Reynolds inquired as to how much was in contingency, First Selectman Mack did not have an exact number but assured the Board that there was plenty to cover this transfer based on a conversation she had with Finance Director Deb Cerrato. Selectman Sullivan asked who was responsible for preparing the 2015-2016 budget in question. The prior Police Captain and Police Chief were responsible. Deputy Chief Brown is responsible for preparing the current 2016-2017 budget.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the transfer from Contingency to cover fiscal year 2015/2016 Police Budget overages and recommend to Board of Finance.**

**Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

**Discussion and approval for change in rate to the Library Assistant 1 position and recommend to Board of Finance**

There is currently one Library Assistant 1 position earning an hourly rate of \$13.50 and two additional Library Assistant 1 positions earning an hourly rate of \$14.50. Library Director Hemond wants them all to be consistent at \$14.50 an hour and has the amount to cover the increase in her budget already.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to change the rate of the Library Assistant 1 position to \$14.50 and recommend it to the Board of Finance. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

**Discussion and appointment of Sean Sheridan as alternate member to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of Gina Pastula's term through November 30, 2019**

Bob Brooks, Chairman of the RTC, provided a recommendation for Sean Sheridan. He noted that Sean is a life-long Suffield resident, a business owner, leader and overall good candidate to fulfill the alternate member position on the Planning & Zoning Commission. He has interviewed him and he has been recommended by the RTC.

**Selectman Sullivan made a motion to appoint Sean Sheridan as alternate member to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of Gina Pastula's term through November 30, 2019. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

**Discussion and appointment of Jeff Peak as full member to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of Mark O'Hara's term through November 30, 2017**

Tom Frenaye, Chairman of the DTC says he is a good candidate. He has been an alternate for a year or so and is feeling as though he is enjoying it.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion for Jeff Peak to be appointed as full member to the Planning & Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of Mark O’Hara’s term expiring approximately on November 30, 2017. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

**Discussion and appointment of Elizabeth Fanous as full member to Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Brian Casinghino’s term through June 30, 2019**

This was a recommendation by Art Christian who is the Chair of the Conservation Commission. It was noted by Tom Frenaye, Chairman of the DTC, that in April the DTC recommended her for a full member position and still feel she would be a great candidate for full member.

**Selectman Holmes made a motion for Elizabeth Fanous to be appointed as full member to the Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Brian Casinghino’s term expiring on June 30, 2019. Vote 4-0 in favor.**

**Discussion and appointment of alternate member to Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Elizabeth Fanous’s term through June 30, 2018**

First Selectman Mack says there are two excellent candidates up for possible appointment. Tom Elmore is a Landscape Architect. He is unaffiliated and would bring much experience to the group. He is recommended by the Chair of the Conservation Commission Art Christian and also by Conservation Consultant Keith Morris. They both feel his skillset would be excellent on this Commission. The second candidate is Kacy Colston who is being recommended by the DTC. First Selectman Mack states that Kacy Colston is a person who is very dedicated to Hilltop Farm and would be a wonderful addition as well. Selectman Holmes also noted that both candidates are excellent and Kacy Colston has done a lot for the community. Selectman Reynolds agreed but said his decision was based on candidate Elmore’s experience.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Tom Elmore as alternate member to Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Elizabeth Fanous’s term through June 30, 2018. Vote: 2-2. Reynolds and Mack in favor. Holmes and Sullivan against. Motion fails.**

**Selectman Holmes made a motion to appoint Kacy Colston as alternate member to Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Elizabeth Fanous’s term through June 30, 2018. Vote: 2-2. Holmes and Sullivan in favor. Mack and Reynolds against. Motion fails.**

**Discussion and appointment of William Boucher as alternate member to Parks & Recreation Commission through September 30, 2020.**

In support of the DTC’s recommendation, Chairman Tom Frenaye noted that Mr. Boucher has been interested in Town government for the last year or so. Mr. Boucher has a Masters’ Degree in Public Administration, coaches’ baseball and soccer and is involved in the Parks and Recreation program in Town. Mr. Frenaye thinks he would be a great asset to the Commission.

**Selectman Sullivan made a motion for William Boucher to be appointed as alternate member to Parks & Recreation Commission through September 30, 2020. Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

### **Call Town Meeting for October 24, 2016**

First Selectman Mack requested that the proposed date of the Town Meeting be changed from October 12, 2016 to Monday, October 24, 2016 in recognition of the Yom Kippur holiday.

**Selectman Holmes made a motion to Call Town Meeting for Monday, October 24, 2016 at the Suffield Middle School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m.:**

- 1) To authorize 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.**
- 2) To authorize that the Town convey a water line utility easement to Connecticut Water Company over town owned open space parcel Map 55H, Block47, 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 3/21/2016”**
- 3) To authorize a contract entering into a virtual net metering credit agreement with Lodestar Energy LLC.**

**Vote: 4-0 in favor.**

### **Selectmen Updates**

- Attorney Donnelly confirmed after the 9/7/16 BOS Meeting that Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 7-190 requires 16 months from appointment to report for a Charter Review Commission
- Scare-it-up-Suffield! The Town’s Parks and Recreation, Library, Senior Center and Youth Services Departments collaborated to plan an activity to engage all residents during the upcoming Fall season. They have planned events including scary movies for teens, zombie make-up, snacks and finally a scarecrow contest in which scarecrows will be displayed and judged and prizes awarded in front of the Senior Center.
- Bill Hawkins and Wendy LaMontagne were point persons for the Town with a special project the North Central Health District implemented. As a result, Suffield received two donated bike racks with the intent to promote wellness. The racks are to be placed where biking can be encouraged. Potential locations include Babb’s Beach and Kent Memorial Library.
- On September 16<sup>th</sup> there was an excellent celebration at Babb’s to commemorate all the hard work that was done at Babb’s Beach over the last for months. Special notice went to the Highway Department for all they did for this project. In addition, Suffield on the

Green was a huge success. Again, special notice goes to the Highway Department for all their assistance and Kris Lambert for creating a welcoming Town Hall booth.

- The Familiarization Tour run by the Economic Development Commission and Economic Development Director Patrick McMahon was a huge success. The event allowed a bus full of interested realtors, developers, commercial finance and other professionals to tour Suffield and view all available properties in our area. Congratulations to the Economic Development Commission.
- Scott Silvia, one of the Town's Mini Bus drivers, is a hero. He was at the Foxwoods Casino with a minibus of seniors during the shooting incident on September 20, 2016 which resulted in the facility being placed in lockdown. Scott ran around the casino to locate the seniors who had been displaced from familiar surroundings due to the lockdown and escorted them safely back to Suffield. Thank you and congratulations to Scott!
- First Selectman Mack received an email from Beth Chafetz commending the Highway Department on their assistance with the Friends of the Library book sale.
- The town is transferring to the .gov domain name. The transition was rocky, but we hope to have all bugs worked out quickly. The .com domain name will continue to work during a transition period.

#### **Executive Session regarding personnel matter related to board secretary rates**

First Selectman Mack recognized Bobbie Kling as the subject of the personnel matter. She noted that Mrs. Kling has the option to hold the discussion in open session or executive session. Mrs. Kling expressed her desire to proceed in executive session with her representative being present. First Selectman Mack agreed.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to go into executive session at 8:35 p.m.**

**The Board returned to regular session at 8:53 p.m.**

#### **Public Comment**

First Selectman Mack introduced Leslie Welker, a potential student intern. Leslie looks forward to learning more about Town Government and enjoyed the opportunity to sit in on the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting.

**Selectman Reynolds made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.**

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, October 5, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary