

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
OCTOBER, 2016**

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

Also in attendance: Town Planner Bill Hawkins, Town Attorney Derek Donnelly

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

Approval of the Minutes from the September 26, 2016 Tri-Board Special Meeting

First Selectman Mack noted that there was an error in the recording of a public comment by resident Ernie Petkovich which appeared on page 10 of the meeting minutes. The word “not” had inadvertently been omitted from his statement. The correct verbiage was read by First Selectman Mack. “I can assure you that if you take an \$8.4 million project that is now \$10 million and you try to value engineer it back down to \$1.6 million you will end up with something that does NOT even begin to resemble what you thought you were getting in the first place.” Apologies were extended to Mr. Petkovich for the omission. Selectman Holmes pointed out a grammatical error on page 4 of the meeting minutes. The final sentence should read “The PBC is being proactive and cautious, hiring a second contractor to *do* hazardous assessments and putting out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for contractors who actually do the abatement.” The original version included the word *due*. Selectman Chafetz asked a question regarding the inclusion of comments made during a meeting and whether there was a rule of thumb as far as what was or was not to be included. First Selectman Mack asked for an example. Selectman Chafetz mentioned Brian Kost’s comments and Selectman Holmes reiterated a specific comment by Mr. Kost pertaining to the Town Hall project where he said “this building will cost twice as much by the time the project is completed.” She felt that this comment was very “speculative.” Selectman Chafetz expressed concern as to the interpretations that can be made by individuals who were unable to attend a meeting and only read the minutes. First Selectman Mack referred this question to Town Attorney Derek Donnelly who was seated in the audience. Attorney Donnelly explained that from a Freedom of Information perspective and the training that is provided, the minutes are meant to capture what transpired in the meeting as completely as possible, however, the minutes are not meant to be a transcript that would be admissible in court. It often falls upon the recording secretary to determine what is included in the minutes. It can be a very difficult task at times, especially when the meeting is large. This is why meeting minutes are reviewed and approved. The process allows individuals to make changes and/or include information that may have been overlooked but is valuable to the conversation. Selectman Reynolds noted that there are tapes available if any individual wanted a word for word playback. Selectman Chafetz said his question was not meant as a criticism and he appreciated the time and effort that went into the meeting minutes. He extended his compliments to Recording Secretary Kim Worthington as it was a tough meeting.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended from the September 26, 2016 Tri-Board Special Meeting. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Approval of the Minutes from the October 5, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the Minutes from the October 5, 2016 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 4 in favor. Selectman Reynolds abstained.

Public Comment

Robert Brooks, 418 North Main Street wanted to clarify his understanding of Freedom of Information (FOI) and directed his question to Tom Frenaye, DTC Chairman, who was in the audience. He noted that his understanding of FOI is to capture the gist of the conversation and not every statement. Mr. Frenaye clarified that the only information required is who was in attendance from the Board, how the vote went on resolutions that were made and how each individual voted. First Selectman Mack explained that she chooses to use the minutes as a way for the public to know what the Board of Selectmen are considering, how they made a decision, and to have the details accurately reflect the deliberations. She feels the public wants to know this information and in the spirit of transparency this allows them to pick up the minutes and see what happened. She agreed that the Board could simply follow the requirements and leave it at that, however, she does not agree with that and feels that is not good enough. Attorney Donnelly mentioned that FOI training says you should go somewhat beyond the requirements, noting that “fulfilling the requirements of the law and doing a good job for the public are quite different.”

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

First Selectman Mack introduced two applicants. The first was Thomas Elmore, who is unaffiliated and has been recommended by the Conservation Commission Chair and Consultant. The second applicant was Kacy Colston, who was recommended by the Democratic Town Committee.

Selectman Reynolds motioned to nominate Tom Elmore due to his vast knowledge in this area. Selectman Chafetz noted that he had been absent during previous discussions of this particular appointment and wanted to know if it would be fair to consult Art Christian, Chair of the Conservation Commission, to gain his perspective on the committee. Selectman Chafetz asked Mr. Christian, who was seated in the audience, about the Commission’s skill base. Mr. Christian said he would welcome working with either candidate; however, the one thing they are missing is a landscape architect. Currently, the Commission consists of a very diverse group which includes farmers, engineers and project managers. The Commission is often involved with projects that relate to wetlands and an individual with expertise in planting around wetlands, retaining walls and septic systems would be an asset. Mr. Elmore’s resume reflected the skill set the Commission is looking for. Mr. Christian wanted to emphasize that his comments in no way

were meant to imply that Mrs. Colston would not be an equally qualified candidate capable of occupying the position.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Tom Elmore as alternate member to Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of Beth Fanous' term through June 30, 2018. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Discussion and appointment of alternate member to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of Jeff Peak's term through November 19, 2019

First Selectman Mack introduced two candidates and explained that this is an elected position which was vacated by a Democrat therefore it needs to be filled by a Democrat. The first candidate was Erin Golembiewski. She was recommended by Mark O'Hara, a former member of the Planning and Zoning Commission. The second candidate was Jason Trombly who was recommended by the Democratic Town Committee. There were also two additional individuals who were interested in the position however they were both unaffiliated voters which made them ineligible at this time.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Jason Trombly as alternate member to Planning & Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of Jeff Peak's term through November 19, 2019. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Discussion and appointment of member to Technology Committee to fill the remainder of Keith Woods term through February 29, 2020

First Selectman Mack introduced the four candidates. The first candidate was Eric Baranski who was recommended by Michael Stevens, the Chairman of the Technology Committee. Mr. Baranski is a Republican. The second candidate was Steve McKeen who was recommended by the Democratic Town Committee. The third candidate was Jeffrey Greer who is a Republican and the fourth candidate was Tracy McDonagh who is also a Republican. Selectman Holmes asked if there was only one opening on the Technology Committee? At the current time there is only one opening, however, a resignation is expected in the next few weeks and First Selectman Mack expects to be in a position to appoint another member in the near future. She will hold the resumes of the remaining candidates for consideration. First Selectman Mack mentioned that Mr. Baranski has been attending the Technology Committee meetings to remain current, provides input and seems to be experienced. Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Eric Baranski as he was the recommendation of the Technology Committee Chair and the Republican Town Committee. Selectman Chafetz noted that he has worked with Mrs. McDonagh on the Board of the Suffield Public Library where she handles all of their technology issues. She is "very knowledgeable, very pragmatic, down to earth and comes with a large skill base in terms of understanding technology and how to use it." His recommendation would be Tracy McDonagh based on his experience working with her.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to appoint Eric Baranski as member to Technology Committee to fill the remainder of Keith Woods term through February 29, 2020. Vote: 3 in favor (Mack, Reynolds and Sullivan.) 2 Against (Holmes and Chafetz.) Motion carried.

Approval of Eversource Easement for Suffield Chase Subdivision and refer to Town Meeting

Selectman Holmes recused herself in order to follow the precedent that was set at the last Suffield Chase vote. She explained that although she did not feel as though she had a conflict of interest in this easement she did feel that she should follow suit and be consistent. Town Planner Bill Hawkins explained that T&M Builders, the current owners of the Suffield Chase Subdivision, notified the Town of Suffield that Eversource is now requiring them to have a 70 foot wide easement for their electrical utility lines. A typical right of way is 50 feet and then 10 feet on either side of the road. That ten feet crosses over what is now town owned open space in two sections of the subdivision. Ten feet is required in the event the road is widened, a sidewalk is moved and they need to get to their lines outside of the pavement area. They have the right to do this. In this particular case, the Town accepted open space prior to easements being identified on the plans. First Selectman Mack asked that since we have had to deal with easements on this property twice at this point, how the Town can avoid being in this situation again. Mr. Hawkins explained that this was an odd scenario with no precedent on how to proceed. The original developer sold all pieces, but kept the open space. They eventually came to the Town and expressed interest in getting rid of it. The lesson learned is that moving forward the Town will not accept open space prior to having all easements in place. It appears that all required easements are now in place and the easement items can be referred to Town Meeting. First Selectman Mack stressed the importance of having everything in place as she does not want to postpone the Town Meeting again. A discussion ensued as to the exact locations of the open space in question and where the easements will be required. There is no cost impact to the town involved.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to recommend sending the following to Town Meeting: that the Town convey an electric utility easement over town owned open space parcels Map 55H, Block 47, Lot 14-C41, and Map 55H, block 47, Lot 14-C46 to Eversource for the Suffield Chase Subdivision as shown on the easement compilation plan completed by Dutton Associates, LLC dated 9/29/2016. **Vote: 4 in favor (Mack, Reynolds, Sullivan and Chafetz.) Selectman Holmes abstained. Motion carried.**

Approval of submission of Assistance to Firefighters Grant/FEMA Application and refer to Board of Finance

First Selectman Mack explained that last year the Town applied for the grant, however it was not awarded to us. This will be a resubmission for 2 thermal imaging cameras and two multi-gas meters. As an update, she advised that Suffield was not awarded the FEMA Safer grant which would have covered salary and benefits of an additional firefighter for two years.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to approve the 2016 FEMA grant and refer to the Board of Finance subject to approval by the Fire Commission. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Animal Control Officer

- a. Approval of creation of two part-time animal control officers and refer to Board of Finance**
- b. Approve transfer for salary and employee benefits for the estimated amounts for the 2016/2017 fiscal year out of Selectmen Contracted Services line item and refer to Board of Finance**

First Selectman Mack explained that she had been in discussions with Windsor Locks and East Granby to work on a Tri-town Animal Control Collaboration. Windsor Locks did not have an appetite for this proposal; however, East Granby is still interested in continuing with Suffield. Based on call volume data collected by Deputy Chief Rick Brown, she is looking to create two part-time Animal Control positions. First Selectman Mack feels confident that the needs of both Towns can be met with this structure. We are currently paying \$13.00 per hour which is considered to be underpaid based on comparability data that she and DC Brown reviewed. Moving forward we propose to pay \$17.00 per hour which is more appropriate for the work. The two 19-hours per week positions will have an estimated cost of \$36,162 a year, including social security and Medicare. This will be an almost \$40,000 annual savings over what we were paying in prior years. Our animal control facility will need to continue running for the foreseeable future, however we will be looking for other opportunities. The Route 75 kennel, upon completion, may be an option. Selectman Holmes asked if the Town had reached out to the kennel as of yet? First Selectman Mack responded that we have not, but she plans to do this soon. A discussion ensued as to the size of East Granby and the current arrangement with the Town as far as coverage of calls. First Selectman Mack explained that East Granby currently pays the Town of Suffield \$16,000 and we cover the calls and do the appropriate reporting. As we are experiencing a substantial savings by moving to two part-time positions she feels it might be fair to charge them a bit less and pass some of the savings on to them. Selectman Chafetz asked if we have had any complaints. There has been one issue from East Granby involving a possum in a garage. Technically, the Animal Control Officer's job is to handle domesticated animals. Selectman Holmes inquired as to the number of calls to East Granby versus Suffield. First Selectman Mack explained the estimations were made during this process. Data collected prior to Deputy Chief Brown's recent study was extremely sparse and unreliable. Selectman Holmes discussed Customer Service and expressed her hope that it will improve as we move to the two part-time ACO model. She had spoken with two individuals who had experienced dog bites and claimed that the response time was quite long with regard to obtaining information on the animal in question. Waiting days for knowledge such as up-to-date rabies vaccines is not acceptable. This position will report to Deputy Chief Rick Brown. First Selectman Sullivan asked if there was a time element involved or will the arrangement with East Granby renew annually. An annual assessment will be done to determine fees and re-evaluate if necessary. First Selectman Chafetz asked for an update in six months.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve two part-time Animal Control Officers and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to approve the transfer for salary and employee benefits for the estimated amounts for the 2016/2017 fiscal year out of Selectmen contracted Services line item and refer to the Board of Finance. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Selectmen Updates

- Chris McKee – New Police Captain will be starting on October 31, 2016.
- Suffield was not awarded the SAFER grant submitted earlier this year. This grant would have allowed for the hiring of one additional firefighter and covered salary and benefits for two years.
- Town of Suffield was awarded the Main Street Investment Fund grant in the amount of \$500,000 for Bridge Street Community Site Enhancements from the Department of Housing. Evonne Klein, Commissioner of the Department of Housing recently noted that the Town of Suffield is considered to be good stewards of grant funds based on its work in managing a Housing Authority improvement grant. First Selectman Mack recognized Linda Zaffetti from Suffield's Public Works Department for her diligence and hard work. Selectman Chafetz inquired as to whether there was a timeframe in which the money must be spent. First Selectman Mack was uncertain as she only has the award letter and it does not outline the specific terms. Documents are forthcoming.
- On October 18th the WPCA held a special meeting to select a vendor to complete a Rate Study. They will be looking at their rates and reviewing them to determine how the Town of Suffield compares to other towns with regards to charges. The hope is that this will provide us with positive opportunities for economic development in the future.
- Sergeant. Geoff Miner and Dispatcher Nicholas Fasano – honored by the U.S. Attorney's Office for their work in Community Policing.
- Chris McKee, New Police Captain – Received the Chief Michael J. Fallon Memorial Award for his long term service to the Crisis Intervention Team. He is already taking an active role in our local narcotics prevention group. First Selectman Mack expects that he will do some really great things with regard to Community Policing for the Town of Suffield.
- Town of Suffield will be getting the Bullet Proof Vest Partnership Award for 2016 which will allow us to replenish the Town's supply of vests.
- Broad Brook Brewery has been approved by the Planning and Zoning and the Conservation Commissions. The next step will be the permitting process and some minor adjustments to the site plan. Zoning and Planning had a concern with regard to traffic flow. Deputy Chief Brown will be working with them to discuss traffic issues. It is a state road however so there will be limited authority in this area.
- Zoning and planning is considering a blight ordinance at the request of First Selectman Mack. Town Planner Bill Hawkins has been researching this topic for quite some time. The Town of Suffield does receive quite a few calls regarding blight. We are reviewing our Blight policies/ordinances and those of other towns in an effort to create a very carefully constructed ordinance as a tool to use in appropriate circumstances, to maintain certain standards and to take care of properties that have become blighted. First Selectman Mack stressed her desire to ensure that the ordinance not be overreaching. The enforcer is still to be determined depending on how the ordinance is constructed. Zoning Enforcement Officer Jim Taylor presently handles these cases based on our

current ordinance structure. Conversation ensued surrounding a spin off issue which is hoarding and the complications that are involved.

- The Technology Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, October 18th which included an Online Permitting presentation by a company endorsed by CRCOG (Capitol Region Council of Governments.) They are currently doing online permitting for approximately 37 municipalities. We would not be a pilot program. It has been tested and the response has been extremely positive. This program can be used in the following areas: Building Department, Department of Public Works, Conservation, Zoning and Planning, Town Clerk dog licenses and the Assessor's Office. The Department of Finance would also be able to utilize it in order to keep track of final payments to contractors only when permits are closed. The company has been invited to the November 2, 2016 Board of Selectmen's meeting. All Town Department Head's will be asked to attend this meeting in order to learn more about the program and how beneficial it can be to our municipal offices. It is First Selectman Mack's understanding that the Town should be able to take advantage of attractive pricing based on CRCOG discounts. It is something we can utilize money already in the 2016-2017 budget to get this program off the ground.
- The last large paving project for 2016 will be completed in the next week which includes paving on Ratley Road, Kingfisher Lane, Magnolia Drive, Suffield Street and Bennett Road. Additional paving projects will resume in the Spring of 2017.
- Selectman Chafetz had an update on the Library. He noted that John Cloonan's office (Department of Public Works) submitted the air quality to the state for the HVAC balancing. They are currently waiting for a modification from the state. Assuming that the modification is approved in the near future, a consultant will then be able to do an in depth study to determine what remediation is required and what the cost would be.
- "Scare-It-Up-Suffield" will be held on Saturday, October 22nd at the Senior Center.

Executive Session for the purpose of Town of Suffield v. Blue Sky Builders legal matter

Selectman Holmes made a motion to go into executive session at 8:00 p.m. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Executive Session ended at 8:19 p.m.

Selectman Holmes made a motion to add two agenda items; 11a which would be a motion to vote on the Executive Session and 11b to postpone the Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

11a. Motion to have a vote on Executive Session for the purpose of Town of Suffield vs Blue Sky Legal Matter

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to ask the First Selectman and Town Counsel to put into detail an agreement with Blue Sky Builders as far as tax balances due on certain parcels of property that are delinquent. Vote: 5-0 in favor

11b. Postpone the October 24, 2016 Town Meeting

Selectman Holmes made a motion to postpone the October 24, 2016 Town Meeting. Vote: 5-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Selectman Reynolds made a motion to adjourn and by unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary