Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
June 3, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Gelston; E Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: D. Dill; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Todd Gelston called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Board and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of May 20, 2026

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Gelston, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 20, 2026. Mr. Dill abstained from the vote and the motion passed by a majority ayes.

4. Correspondence

   A. Agriculture Recommendation for Farm Equipment and Farm Building Tax Exemption Ordinance: First Selectman Gelston presented correspondence from the Agriculture Commission recommending that the Town consider adopting local-option farm equipment and farm building tax exemptions authorized under Connecticut law.

      The Board discussed:
      - Potential exemptions for farm buildings and equipment.
      - Estimated impact on municipal tax revenue.
      - The need for an analysis by the Assessor regarding potential revenue loss.
      - The need for legal review and preparation of a local ordinance if the Board chooses to proceed.
      - Experiences of other Connecticut municipalities that have implemented similar exemptions.

      Selectman Dill recused himself from participation due to family farm interests.

<u>Additional Correspondence</u>

The Board reviewed correspondence from:

- Sarah Schutz regarding participation in the June 4 public hearing concerning the proposed private road ordinance.

- Charles Riordan regarding private road signage and snow plowing responsibilities.

The Board explained that comments and questions for the public hearing could be submitted by email and would be read into the record.

5. First Selectman's Report

First Selectman Gelston provided updates on:

- FY 2026-27 budget developments and supplemental state aid.
- Public Works road paving projects planned for later this summer.
- Traffic enforcement and speeding mitigation efforts.
- Firehouse planning and the recent public hearing.
- Ongoing ambulance service discussions.
- Redevelopment activities.
- Black Birch Golf Course Feasibility Study Committee activities.
- Vacancies on the Economic Development Commission.
- Planning for the July 11, 2026 Declaration of Independence reenactment event.

6. Public Comment: There were no members of the public present wishing to speak and no written public comments received.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Cell Tower Discussion – 440 Town Street or 7 Hood Lane: Mr. Gelston reported that both interested tower companies continue evaluating the Hood Lane site and remain interested. No further developments were reported.

B. Open Space Discussion – Sprecher Property Exchange Proposal – Shanaghan Road: Mr. Gelston reported that Jim Ventres will present the proposal request to the Board of Finance regarding the proposed exchange.

C. Open Space Discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road: Mr. Gelston reported that Mr. Ventres will also present information regarding this proposed acquisition to the Board of Finance.

D. Discussion of Potential Private Road Ordinance Public Hearing: The Board reviewed preparations for the June 4, 2026 public hearing.

Updates included:

- Distribution of the draft ordinance to private road residents.
- Inclusion of Laurel Cove Road and Laurel Cove Beach Road in the latest draft.
- Discussion of the process following the public hearing.

E. Conservation Commission Ordinance Discussion – Membership Amendment: The Board noted that the Conservation Commission has placed the proposed membership amendment on hold while it evaluates options.

F. Ethics Commission Discussion on Potential Changes to the Code of Ethics Ordinance: The Board reviewed the Ethics Commission's recommended revisions.

Discussion included:

- The need for legal review.
- Potential future public hearing.
- General support for moving the revisions forward for attorney review.

Consensus was reached to forward the proposed revisions to Town Counsel for review.

G. Connecticut Municipal Development Authority (CMDA) Presentation: The Board discussed the CMDA presentation received at its previous meeting.

Topics included:

- Potential benefits to East Haddam Village and Moodus.
- Availability of technical assistance and financing resources.
- Public comment requirements before adoption of a resolution.
- Potential future membership in CMDA.

The Board agreed to gather additional information and continue discussion at a future meeting.

8. New Business

A. Municipal and Education Aid FY27 Discussion: Finance Director Valerie Belles reviewed the supplemental municipal and educational aid package recently approved by the State.

Discussion included:

- Options available under OPM guidance.
- Potential budget amendments.
- Potential tax levy reductions.
- Impact on municipal staffing and services.
- Coordination with the Board of Finance and Board of Education.

The Board indicated support for continuing discussions with the Board of Finance before taking formal action.

B. Bid Waiver Request – Audit Services: Finance Director Valerie Belles requested a one-year waiver of the bid process for audit services and authorization to negotiate with Clifton Larson Allen (CLA).

Discussion included:

- Audit staffing challenges.
- Delayed audits due to finance office transitions.
- Lack of available municipal audit firms.
- Benefits of maintaining continuity with the current auditor.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to waive the bid process for Audit Services for one year and authorize the Finance Director, Valerie Belles, to negotiate with Clifton, Larson & Allen (CLA) per their quote for service with a 6% increase over last year's audit cost. Unanimous aye.

C. Board, Commission and Committee Changes (EDC): Mr. Gelston advised that a member of the Economic Development Commission had submitted his resignation.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Ryan Scully as an alternate member of the Economic Development Commission effective immediately. Unanimous aye.

D. Tax Refunds: There were no tax refunds presented for consideration.

9. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison Reports: Selectman Sevigny reported that the Redevelopment Agency formally adopted the East Haddam Village Master Plan and is moving into Phase II, including:

- Water and sewer evaluations.
- Streetscape planning.
- Coordination with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.
- Future outreach to developers.

B. Other

1. Neighborhood Assistance Act Public Hearing: First Selectman Gelston reminded the Board that the annual Neighborhood Assistance Act Public Hearing is scheduled for June 10, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at the Municipal Office Complex.

10. Public Comment: No public comments were offered.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary