Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Room 1 & 2
December 3, 2025
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Gelston; E Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: M. Callahan; D. Denette; R. Smith; J. Ventres; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Gelston called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Gelston reviewed the meeting agenda.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of November 19, 2025: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to draft minutes in their meeting packets.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 19, 2025 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: Mr. Gelston reviewed the following correspondence:

   - To Selectman Dill from Thomas Smith, who recommended installing a 3-way stop sign at the junction of Falls Bashan Road and Route 149.
   - To First Selectman Gelston from Michael Callahan, who volunteered to participate on the proposed Golf Course Study Committee and/or the East Haddam Redevelopment Agency.

5. First Selectmen's Report: Mr. Gelston reported on the following:

   - A letter was received from the Board of Finance providing budget guidance for FY2026-2027. Mr. Gelston read pertinent sentences from the letter. At this time, the Board of Finance is not prepared to consider any increase to next year's budget beyond this year's approved amount.
   - Smith, Alger, and Daniels Roads have been repaved; however, Public Works still needs to wrap-up some detail work. These three roads will be the last roads to be paved until Spring 2026.
   - Public Works Director Velez submitted her resignation, effective December 3, 2025. The position will be posted and, until it is filled, Facilities Director Angersola will provide primary coverage for Public Works and Mr. Gelston will provide backup coverage.
   - The Town has been interviewing applicants for the Public Works' Driver-Laborer position.

- The vacant Public Works Road Foreman position will also be posted.
- He had reviewed the proposed contract for a cell tower at Fire Company #1 with the leasing company. The contract will need to be reviewed by the Town's attorney and the project will have to undergo several regulatory reviews before bringing it to a Town Meeting.

6. Public Comment: The following public comment was raised at the meeting:

- Rob Smith – questioned the proposed location of a 150' cell tower in a "scenic area" of Town. He suggested the Town consider the Public Works site which, he said, is at a higher elevation and in more of an "industrial" area.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices (ATESD) Discussion: Mr. Gelston advised that he would like to put consideration of installing ATESDs around Town on a pause. He stated that his decision is based primarily on public opposition to the plan and concerns about the potential for data transfer. He noted that he would like to see if the state is going to update its legislation to address data transfer concerns before making any decision on installing ATESDs.

   Mr. Gelston acknowledged that the Town does have a problem with speeding drivers. He encouraged the police to continue to monitor and address the problem and mentioned several other methods that the Town is considering to reduce speeding on its roads. There was a brief discussion among the Board regarding the need to reduce speeding on the Town roads.

B. Cell Tower Discussion – 440 Town Street: Mr. Gelston reviewed the proposed location for a new cell tower at Fire Company No. 1 and the particulars of a potential lease agreement with Phoenix Partnership, LLC. In response to a question raised by Mr. Dill, Ms. Zemienieski stated that Finance Director Belles would have information about the monthly lease payment the Town receives for the cell tower located at the Transfer Station.

C. 2026 Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to a list of proposed 2026 Board of Selectmen meeting dates in their meeting packets.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the following dates as the meeting schedule for the Board of Selectmen for the 2026 calendar year: January 7 & 21, February 4 & 18, March 4 & 18, April 1 & 15, May 6 & 20, June 3 & 17, July 15, August 5 & 19, September 2 & 16, October 7 & 21, November 4 & 18, December 2 & 16, and January 6 & 20, 2027. Meetings will be held at 7:00 p.m. All meetings will be held in the Municipal Office Complex, Meeting Rooms 1 & 2. Unanimous aye.

8. New Business

A. Open Space Discussion – Sprecher Property Exchange Proposal – Shanaghan Road: Mr. Gelston recognized Land Use Administrator Ventres. Mr. Ventres distributed informational materials and reviewed the proposal for an exchange of property with the Sprechers. He responded to several questions from the Board. In response to a question from Mr. Ventres, the Board agreed that he should use the Land Use attorney for this project.

B. Open Space Discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road: Land Use Administrator Ventres reviewed the details about the proposed purchase of the Dale King property for Open Space. He noted the property is currently under a conservation easement and, as such, cannot be developed. He responded to questions from the Board and, in response to an inquiry from Ms. Zemienieski, Mr. Ventres recommended having the purchase and sales agreements drafted prior to bringing the issue before a Town Meeting.

C. Tree Warden Resignation/Deputy Tree Warden Appointment: Mr. Gelston advised that Former Public Works Director Michele Velez had been the Town's Tree Warden prior to resigning her position. He stated that Shawn Daigle, who is a CT Licensed Arborist, has expressed interest in becoming involved in the Tree Warden duties for the Town. Mr. Gelston reviewed Mr. Daigle's qualifications and noted that he has completed the necessary Tree Warden training as part of his education to be a CT Licensed Arborist. Mr. Gelston explained that Mr. Daigle would be compensated for his Tree Warden work with a $2,500.00 stipend for the rest of this fiscal year.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to appoint Shawn Daigle as Deputy Tree Warden for the Town of East Haddam. Unanimous aye.

D. Cemetery Committee Ordinance Amendment Request: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to a copy of a letter in their meeting packets from Karl Stofko, Chairman of the Cemetery Committee, requesting that the Town amend the Cemetery Committee Ordinance membership section to include two alternates. He advised that the change would require Town Meeting approval.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to recommend that Chapter 12 Boards, Commission, Committees and Agencies, Article X Cemetery Committee, Section 12-36 Membership and terms, Item A adopted by Town Meeting, October 28, 2021, be amended to add section A (1) Alternate members as follows and that said amendment be sent to Town Meeting for approval:

   **(1) Alternate Members: There shall be two alternate members who shall be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The initial terms of appointment for the two alternate members shall be as follows: one member shall be appointed for a term of one year and one member shall be appointed for a term of two years. An alternate member in attendance at a meeting shall be counted in the determination of a quorum. Whenever a member is absent or recuses himself/herself from participation or voting on a matter before the Committee,**

**the Chairman or the person serving as Acting Chairman of the meeting shall appoint an alternate member to take the place of the absent or recused member, which alternate member shall be invested with all powers and attributes of full membership on the Commission for the duration of the meeting or on the matter from which the regular member has recused himself/herself, including the right to participate in any discussion and the right to vote.**

In response to a question from Mr. Gelston, Ms. Denette provided clarification about the reason for the requested amendment. Ms. Denette explained that the addition of the two alternate positions would help assure quorum at every meeting.

Motion carried by a unanimous aye vote.

E. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (AGC, BOFC, EDC, IWWC, SUSCT)

**Agriculture Commission**

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packets, dated December 2, 2025, from Aaron Taylor advising of changes to the Agriculture Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to reappoint Aaron Taylor for a three-year term, to expire January 1, 2028, as a regular member on the Agriculture Commission. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to change the status of Shaleen Thody from alternate member to regular member, to fill a vacant term to expire January 1, 2027, on the Agriculture Commission.

Mr. Gelston noted that Carleen Quinn and Bonnie Buongiorne are not seeking reappointment to the commission.

**Board of Fire Commissioners**

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packets, dated December 2, 2025, from Craig Mansfield noting the BOFC's recommendation to reappoint John Cotter for a second three-year term on the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to reappoint John Cotter for a second three-year term, to expire January 1, 2029, as a member of the Board of Fire Commissioners. Unanimous aye.

**Economic Development Commission**

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packets, dated November 24, 2025, from Bob Casner noting a resignation from the Economic Development Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Hayley Scully as a regular member of the Economic Development Commission. Unanimous aye.

**Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission**

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of a letter in their meeting packets, dated November 23, 2025, from Randy Dill noting an alternate member appointment on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to appoint Toni Dumaine as an alternate member to fill a vacant two-year term, to expire June 30, 2026, on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission. Unanimous aye.

**Sustainability Team**

Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of a minutes in their meeting packets from the June 17, 2025 Sustainability Team meeting noting a resignation.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill to accept, with regret, the resignation of Wade Tomlinson as a member of the Sustainability Team. Unanimous aye.

F. Tax Refunds: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to two tax refunds.

Motion made by Ms. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to award tax refunds in the amounts as presented.

- $ 60.27 to Vault Trust, and
- $1,666.61 to Nissan Infinity LT LLC.

Unanimous aye.

9. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison's Reports: There were no liaison reports provided at the meeting.

B. Other
   1. Kids Night on Moodus Green (12/5/25 at 5:30 p.m.): Mr. Gelston called the Board's and public's attention to this event.
   2. Stuff a Cruiser Toy Drive (12/6/25 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.): Mr. Gelston called the Board's and public's attention to this event.
   3. Christmas in the Village – Rescheduled (12/8/25 at 5:30 p.m.): Mr. Gelston advised that this event had been rescheduled due to inclement weather on the original December 2nd date.
   4. Freedom of Information Workshop (12/22/25 at 7:00 p.m.): Mr. Gelston called the Board's and public's attention to this workshop.

10. Public Comment: The following public comments were raised at the meeting:

- Rob Smith – clarified that being issued a speeding ticket is not considered an arrest but is rather an infraction. He advised that, as a result of illegal activity in Town involving motor vehicles, the installation of traffic cameras on the Swingbridge and at the Hadlyme 4-corners location had been previously discussed; he suggested that the Town might consider revisiting those options. Regarding cell towers, he noted that Ballek's Farm has towers inconspicuously located on several of their silos and he reiterated his concern with constructing a 150' tower in the scenic area of Town. Mr. Smith also pointed out that the Town's current tree removal project is not being conducted in compliance with existing legislation and that it should be addressed.

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 8:24 p.m. .

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary