Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Room 3
January 21, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Gelston; E Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: M. Callahan; J. Miller; J. Moreau; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Gelston called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 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 presented. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of January 7, 2025 and Special Meeting of January 12, 2026

   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 January 7, 2026 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 12, 2026 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

5. First Selectmen's Report

   A. America 250 Discussion: Mr. Gelston reported on the plans for East Haddam's America 250 Celebration. He advised that an East Haddam logo has been created for the occasion. He stated that the Town's official kick-off event will be the Memorial Day parade and that activities are planned for throughout the summer. He stated that there will be a press release on January 29th soliciting volunteers for the event.

6. Public Comment

   Mr. Moreau referenced his comments at the January 12th Tri-Board meeting encouraging the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance to be prudent when creating the FY2026-2027 budget. He distributed a handout with information on fire apparatus, including options for savings, and urged the Board to read the materials.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Cell Tower Discussion – 440 Town Street: Mr. Gelston advised that the Town has been approached by a second company regarding constructing a cell tower at Fire Company No. 1. He further stated that Fire Company No. 1 has informed him that they do not need to place its communications system on the proposed tower and, consequently, he investigated using the Public Works site on Hood Lane as an alternative locations for a new cell tower. He responded to questions from the Board.

B. Open Space Discussion – Sprecher Property Exchange Proposal – Shanaghan Road: There was no update on this agenda item.

C. Open Space Discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road: There was no update on this agenda item.

D. Black Birch Golf Course Feasibility Study Committee Discussion: Mr. Gelston advised that 21 candidates have submitted applications for the seven seats on the Golf Course Feasibility Study Committee. He stated that the Board of Selectmen will interview the applicants on January 28th and 29th.

8. New Business

A. Board/Commission/Committee Changes: There were no Board, Commission or Committee changes considered at the meeting.

B. Tax Refunds: There were no tax refunds considered at the meeting.

9. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison's Reports: Mr. Sevigny reported the following:

- The Broadband Committee meeting has been changed to January 30th.
- At tomorrow's Redevelopment Agency meeting, consultants will present their economic analysis regarding commercial and mixed use development plans.

Mr. Sevigny stated that the Town will need funds to implement the master plans for Moodus and the Village. He stated that the Redevelopment Agency has had a positive experience with using a grant writer and he encouraged the Board of Selectmen to include $25-$30k in the FY26-27 budget to hire a municipal grant writing firm to research and write infrastructure grants for the Town.

There was a general discussion about the benefits of retaining a grant writer and it was the consensus of the Board that Ms. Zemienieski should refresh the Town's FY2025-2026 budget request of $50k to retain a grant writer for resubmission during the current budget development process.

B. Other

Mr. Dill reported that he had spent a day in Hartford protesting the latest five-year state reassessment of farmland values that towns use as a basis for local property taxes on farms. He thanked all the signers of the Save Our Farms petition. He also thanked Representative Haines and Jess Stone for their efforts on behalf of farmers.

10. Public Comment

The following public comments were heard:

- Mr. Callahan noted the Grand List's importance to the budget creation cycle and expressed his disappointment that there wasn't more discussion of the Grand List at the January 12th Tri-Board meeting.

- Mr. Miller stated that he is Chairman of the Town's Redevelopment Agency's Finance Committee and spoke in support of the Town retaining the services of a grant writing firm.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m. .

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary