Board of Selectmen
On-Line Via Zoom & YouTube Live
March 3, 2021
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Govert; C. Quinn; R. Smith
Also Present: K. Blaschik; J. Reynolds; T. Reynolds; R. Roberts; R. Tremblay; S. Wheeler; L. Zemienieski, and other members of the public via virtual media

1. First Selectman Smith called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He provided information on how the public could submit their questions, comments and concerns to the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Smith advised that he would like to add the Board of Fire Commissioners to Agenda item 8.C. Board/Commission/Committee Changes.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the agenda as amended. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting of February 8, 2021, Special Meeting of February 13, 2021, Special Meeting of February 17, 2021, Regular Meeting of February 17, 2021, Special Meeting of February 18, 2021 and Special Meeting of February 20, 2021, Special Meeting of February 24, 2021, Special Meeting of February 25, 2021, Special Meeting of February 27, 2021, Special Meeting of March 1, 2021,

   The review and approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 8, 2021 was postponed.

   Ms. Govert requested the following revision be made to the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 13, 2021:

   > Page 1, Item 4: " *…the primary impact of the Governor's budget is a decrease of ~~$8,35.00~~ $8,350.00*…"

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 13, 2021 as amended. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 17, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 17, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 18, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 20, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 24, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 25, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 27, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 1, 2021 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence

   A. Letter of Appreciation – ACO: Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to a letter in their meeting packets from TFC Patrick Hawes, commending Animal Control Officer Olzacki on his "*hard work and dedication*". Trooper Hawes' letter further stated that, "*Mr. Olzacki always presents himself in a professional manner …arrives at the appropriate conclusion …[and] has always appeared to be fair and understanding*".

5. First Selectmen's Report

   A. COVID-19 Reopening Report: Mr. Smith reported that, although the Town's COVID numbers had increased recently, they have stabilized over the past several days. He stated that there has been a total of 354 cumulative positive cases and 17 related deaths among Town residents. He stated that the recent decrease in new positive cases has resulted in a change of the Town's designation of red to orange in the state's color-coded COVID alert system designation.

      Mr. Smith noted the efforts of Nutmeg Pharmacy and the Senior Center in getting Town residents vaccinated. He stated that Chatham Health District's March 8th town wide vaccination clinic has been postponed. Ms. Govert provided updated statistics regarding the Town's rate of vaccinated residents.

   B. Responses to Previous Meeting Questions: There were no responses to previous meeting questions discussed at the meeting.

   Mr. Smith reported that the two new businesses, Hometown Market and the Tavern on the Hill, recently opened in Moodus.

6. Citizens' Concerns: The following citizens' concerns discussed at the meeting:

   - Karin Blaschik: Good Evening, I am highly concerned about the abrupt resignations of the Fire Chief-Deputy Chief and Captain. This very unfortunate event has put the safety of our community at risk. What led to this drastic decision made by such qualified volunteers who have served our town for many years?? Who and how will their boots be filled? When will they be filled? The qualifications that are needed to fill these positions are not easy to attain. This is not to be taken lightly and I would like to know "now what?"

   - Jennifer and Timothy Reynolds: Last Night, to the dismay of the East Haddam Fire Department, Chief Brian Auld, Deputy Chief Shawn Daigle and Captain Ray Swol stepped down as officers. These men have put in countless hours of volunteer time to the town of East Haddam. They have led the Fire Department to a level of excellence.

As residents East Haddam we have been extremely grateful to have a Fire Chief with true leadership qualities which are also instilled in his officers!

The safety of the citizens, property and fellow firefighters is solely in their hands.

When multiple officers step down we need to take a hard look at WHY this has happened. We need these officers to be supported by everyone for the sake of the citizens of East Haddam. We would like to know what is going to be done to correct this grave situation. Many may not realize how important having a volunteer department with strong leadership that leads by example is, until their services are required. Thank you.

Mr. Smith stated that he had had no previous knowledge that the officers were going to resign. Ms. Quinn said she was saddened by the news but hoped that a different resolution could be found.

7. Unfinished Business

A. East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee Update: Mr. Smith reiterated that a joint meeting of the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen, the East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee, and the Centerbridge Group will be held on March 8, 2021 to review the contractor's proposal and address questions.

B. Ordinance Amendment Request: Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets regarding this agenda item. He reviewed the proposed changes to the ordinance and stated that an updated draft would be returned to Mr. Delgato at the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for a last review. Mr. Smith reviewed the challenges presented by the pandemic to holding a Public Meeting for the purpose of adopting the revised ordinance.

C. State of Connecticut – Proposed Property Acquisition – Bridge No. 06887 Replacement Project on Route 151 over Shady Brook: Mr. Smith reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission had approved CT Department of Transportation's request to purchase two small parcels related to its bridge project on Route 151 over Shady Brook under 8-24 review. He stated that Mr. Silva, of the CT DOT, had told him that if the transactions are not approved by March 26, 2021, the state will take the parcels by eminent domain.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Quinn, Mr. Smith confirmed that the state will pay $500.00 for each parcel. He noted; however, that if the properties are taken by eminent domain, it could cost the Town in legal expenses.

Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to adopt the following resolution:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN RESOLUTIONS ACTING IN LIEU OF TOWN MEETING
FOR CONVEYANCE OF PARCELS TO CT DOT

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has received correspondence from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation ("CTDOT") indicating that CTDOT intends to acquire property rights affecting two parcels of real estate owned by the Town of East Haddam in conjunction with a bridge replacement project on Route 151 over Shady Brook; and

WHEREAS, one of the parcels is identified as S/S Wigwam Road and the property rights to be acquired are a 2,141 square foot area as a partial taking, a temporary construction easement for

one year over a temporary construction easement area of 3,078 square feet ("Wigwam Parcel"); and

WHEREAS, the second parcel is identified as 1 Plains Road and the property rights to be acquired are a drainage right of way consisting of 191 square feet, a temporary construction easement for a period of one year over a temporary construction easement area of 924 square feet, the right to install a sedimentation control system over 270+/- linear feet, and the right to grade, construct a sidewalk, install curbing and mill and pave a driveway over an area of approximately 3,904 square feet ("Plains Road Parcel")(the Wigwam Parcel and the Plains Road Parcel are collectively referred to herein as the "Parcels")

WHEREAS, CTDOT has offered the sum of $500 as compensation for each of the Parcels;

WHEREAS, the Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed and approved the proposed conveyance under CGS 8-24 at its February 23, 2021 meeting; and

WHEREAS, it would ordinarily require a special town meeting to authorize the conveyance to CTDOT of the property rights in and to the Parcels; and

WHEREAS, in light of the current Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness emergencies in the State of Connecticut and executive orders issued by Governor Lamont in conjunction with such declaration the holding of a town meeting would not be prudent; and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of Executive Order 7JJ issued by Governor Lamont on May 6, 2020 permits the Board of Selectmen, upon finding that taking such action in a timely manner serves an important public interest or to avoid financial loss, to take action to convey interests in real property without complying with the statutory requirement to hold a town meeting or referendum to approve such conveyances; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has determined that delaying the conveyance of the above-referenced property rights affecting the Parcels could potentially adversely impact the transaction and delay the bridge replacement project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the authority granted under Section 4 of Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7JJ, the Board of Selectmen does hereby authorize the conveyance to CTDOT of the above-described property rights in the Parcels for the aggregate sum of $1,000 and that the First Selectman is hereby authorized to execute and deliver any deeds, easements, instruments or agreements necessary to carry out the intent of the foregoing resolution.
Unanimous aye.

D. Comprehensive Energy Efficient Facility Upgrade (Co#1, Co#2, GH, PW) – Multi-year Contracts: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

8. New Business

A. Grant Acceptance – FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program-COVID-19 Supplemental: Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to a copy of an email in their meeting packets from Finance Director Varricchio regarding this agenda item. Ms. Varricchio's email advised of the grant award and stated that, as a condition of this grant, the Town is required to contribute non-

Federal funds equal to or greater than 5.00% or $496.44 for a total approved budget of $10,425.21.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to accept a grant in the amount of $9,928.77 for the Fiscal Year 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program – COVID-19 Supplemental (AFG-S) from the US Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and send acceptance of said grant to the Board of Finance for approval. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response, the Governor's Executive Order 7CC issued April, 21, 2020 permits the municipality's legislative body (Board of Selectmen) and budget-making authority (Board of Finance) to authorize certain actions by a majority vote of each such body to include (i) the application for or acceptance of any grants, funding or gifts. Unanimous aye.

B. C-PACE Agreement Change: Mr. Smith stated that the Connecticut Green Bank is making some changes to the Commercial-Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program and would like to shift responsibility for billing and collecting C-PACE tax assessments from the Town to the Connecticut Green Bank beginning with the July 2021 tax collection cycle. He noted that, in order to make the change, the Town must execute a release document, that frees it from the billing and collection aspects of program participation.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to adopt the following Resolution:

BOARD OF SELECTMEN RESOLUTIONS ACTING IN LIEU OF TOWN MEETING FOR PARTIAL RELEASE OF C-PACE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Section 157 of Public Act No. 12-2 of the June 12, 2012 Special Session of the Connecticut General Assembly (the "Act") established a program, known as the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program, to facilitate loan financing for clean energy improvements to commercial properties by utilizing a state or local assessment mechanism to provide security for repayment of the loans; and

WHEREAS, the Act authorizes the Connecticut Green Bank, formerly known as the Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority (the "Green Bank"), a public instrumentality and political subdivision of the State charged with implementing the C-PACE program on behalf of the State, to enter into a written agreement with participating municipalities pursuant to which the municipality may agree to assess, collect, remit and assign, benefit assessments to the Green Bank in return for energy improvements for benefited property owners within the municipality and for costs reasonably incurred by the municipality in performing such duties; and

WHEREAS, the Town and the Green Bank entered into that certain Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy ("C-PACE") Agreement (the "C-PACE Agreement") dated as of August 1, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Green Bank has requested an amendment to the C-PACE Agreement pursuant to which the Green Bank will release the Town from certain billing and collection obligations under the C-PACE Agreement to facilitate the billing and collection of benefit assessment liens; and

WHEREAS, this proposed amendment will relieve the Town of certain administrative burdens associated with the C-PACE program; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment is reflected in a certain C-PACE Partial Release Agreement (the "Partial Release Agreement"); and

WHEREAS, it would ordinarily require a special town meeting to authorize the execution and delivery of the Partial Release Agreement; and

WHEREAS, in light of the current Declaration of Public Health and Civil Preparedness emergencies in the State of Connecticut and executive orders issued by Governor Lamont in conjunction with such declaration the holding of a town meeting would not be prudent; and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of Executive Order 7JJ issued by Governor Lamont on May 6, 2020 permits the Board of Selectmen, upon finding that taking such action in a timely manner serves an important public interest or to avoid financial loss, to amend contracts or agreements without complying with the statutory requirement to hold a town meeting or referendum to approve such amendment; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has determined that it is in the best interests of the Town to promptly execute the Partial Release Agreement to promote the orderly operation of the C-PACE program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the authority granted under Section 4 of Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7JJ, the Board of Selectmen does hereby approve the Partial Release Agreement and hereby authorizes the First Selectman to execute and deliver the Partial Release Agreement and any other instruments or agreements necessary to carry out the intent of the foregoing resolution.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Quinn, Ms. Zemienieski provided clarification about the Town's current participation in the program. She stated that, in exchange for a small stipend, the Town participates in the billing and tax collection aspect of the program and passes through the funds collected to CT Green Bank. Ms. Zemienieski advised that the Town's Tax Collector and Director of Finance are in favor of the change.

Unanimous aye.

C. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (EHSCIP, BOFC): Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets related to this agenda item.

East Haddam Schools Capital Improvement Projects Committee

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Gary Albanese, dated February 10, 2021, advising of his resignation from the Capital Improvement Projects Committee effective March 15, 2021.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Gary Albanese from the East Haddam Schools Capital Improvement Building Committee effective March 15, 2021. Unanimous aye.

Board of Fire Commissioners

Mr. Smith reviewed a letter from Howard Bogue, dated March 1, 2021, advising of his resignation from the Board of Fire Commissioners effective March 1, 2021.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Howard Bogue from the Board of Fire Commissioners effective March 1, 2021. Unanimous aye.

D. Tax Refunds: There were two tax refunds discussed at the meeting.

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

- $478.48 to Honda Lease Trust, and
- $ 44.14 to Susanne Onatah.

Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment

The following public comments were submitted to the meeting:

- Ronald Tremblay - Why have the three ranking officers of the East Haddam Fire Department Resigned? What are the Board of Selectman's plan to address this public safety issue?

- Ronald Tremblay - Why have the three ranking officers of the East Haddam Volunteer Fire Department resigned on the same meeting night? This is clearly an issue that effects public safety and I DEMAND a response from the BOARD OF SELECTMAN to reply or comment on this failure of the public safety system.

- Ronald Tremblay - Thank You to Carleen for being the only selectman to have a set of morals that wants to discuss this issue that affects every citizen of East Haddam.

Mr. Smith stated that he has not received any information about the reasons behind the resignations. He noted that the Board of Fire Commissioners will work with the volunteers to fill the vacant positions and expressed his hopes that the Commissioners will assist in resolving whatever issues lie behind the resignations as soon as possible. Ms. Quinn recommended scheduling a special meeting to see if a resolution can be found and Mr. Smith stated he would reach out to the Board of Fire Commissioners and East Haddam Volunteer Fire Department to discuss her suggestion. Mr. Smith noted that although the officers had resigned from their executive positions, they had not resigned from the Fire Department.

10. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison Reports: There were no liaison reports discussed at the meeting.

B. Other: Ms. Govert stated that the Town may receive funds from the federal government's stimulus program and the prospect of that should be part of the Board's budget discussions.

Mr. Smith provided an update on the Neptune Avenue repairs and reiterated that a May 1st completion for the work is still expected.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made Mr. Smith by seconded by Ms. Govert, to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Govert, Secretary