Board of Selectmen
On-Line Via Zoom & YouTube Live
April 7, 2021
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: R. Smith; T. Govert; C. Quinn
Also Present: 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

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

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of March 17, 2021

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

4. Correspondence

   Mr. Smith reviewed a communication he had received from Recreation Director Lisa Conroy advising that the Board of Education had approved the Recreation Commission's request to hold its Music on the River events on the Middle School grounds. Mr. Smith advised that the concerts will begin on the first Monday in August.

5. First Selectmen's Report

   A. COVID-19 Reopening Report: Mr. Smith reported that he had hoped to have this meeting in-person and open to the public; however, the Town's positive COVID cases had increased recently. He also noted that there were a number of cases in the schools. Mr. Smith stated that he would like to have the next BOS meeting in-person.

      Ms. Govert provided updated statistics regarding the rate of vaccinations among Town residents.

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

   Mr. Smith reported that, earlier in the day, he and Haddam's First Selectman had met with representatives from the CT Department of Transportation to discuss the DOT's proposal to install round-abouts at the intersections of Bridge Road and Route 154, and Route 154 and the Route 82 connector to Route 9. He provided information about the proposed project and advised that the towns and DOT will hold a follow-up meeting in May with businesses in the area, the Business Associations and the Economic Development Commissions.

   In response to a question raised by Ms. Quinn, Mr. Smith provided information about DOT's rationale for proposing the round-abouts and confirmed that he had raised his concerns to them about traffic backing-up at the round-abouts when the Swingbridge is open.

Mr. Smith also provided information about a meeting with the businesses concerning the planned Swingbridge repair project. He provided an overview of the concerns raised by business owners about proposed closures and stated that DOT is planning to hold a public meeting to review the project and respond to questions.

Mr. Smith reviewed several staffing changes.

6. Citizens' Concerns: There were no citizens' concerns discussed at the meeting.

7. Unfinished Business

   A. East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee Update: Mr. Smith reported that there is an article in the East Haddam News about the Centerbridge Group's plan for revitalization of the old town office site in the Village and, also, that the developer has posted a presentation of their proposal on-line at http://swingbridgelanding.com.

      Mr. Smith advised that he has received a draft of the sale/purchase agreement back from the Town's attorney and stated that a public meeting is planned for the late April/May timeframe to present the proposal to citizens.

   B. Ordinance Amendment Request: There was no new update on this agenda item.

   C. Comprehensive Energy Efficient Facility Upgrade (PW) – Multi-year Contracts: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

8. New Business

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

      East Haddam Commission on Aging
      Mr. Smith reviewed a letter received from Alice D. Sabo, dated March 25, 2021, advising of her decision to resign from the Commission on Aging due to health issues.

      Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Alice Sabo from the East Haddam Commission on Aging effective April 25, 2021. Unanimous aye.

   B. Tax Refunds: Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to four tax refunds.

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

      - $933.66 to Joseph Weaver,
      - $102.78 to Gary Wargo,
      - $136.29 to Jaimie Wargo, and
      - $259.32 to Kenneth Gowac.

      Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: No public comments were submitted to the meeting.

10. Selectmen's Discussion

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

    B. Other: Mr. Smith reported that the Board of Fire Commissioners is meeting with the volunteer fire fighters and paid staff to work through the issues raised at the March 11th meeting.

        1. Memorial Day Parade Discussion: Mr. Smith advised that the American Legion had informed him that, in lieu of hosting the Memorial Day parade, they had decided to hold a memorial ceremony for veterans at their ball park and, also, that the High School band instructor had inquired about the parade, noting the difficulty of performing while maintaining the state's mandated social distance of 12' for marching bands. Consequently, he recommends cancelling the plans for a Memorial Day parade this year.

    In response to an inquiry from Ms. Govert, Mr. Smith confirmed that the Town is being awarded $2.6M from the federal government's America Rescue Plan. He stated that it is not clear how some of the funds can be used and, since it won't be clarified for about 30-days, the Town has decided to push out the deadline for finalizing its budget.

    Mr. Smith reported that the Town has also been awarded approximately $100k for the clean-up work related to Tropical Storm Isaias. He reviewed the status of several road projects and noted that the Public Works road crew is down two staff members due to health issues and a planned retirement.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made Mr. Smith by seconded by Ms. Quinn, to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Govert, Secretary