Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
March 16, 2022
Via YouTube Live
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I. Haines; E. Dill; T. Govert
Also Present: Atty. R. Carella: D. Dill; R. Dill; J. Olin; A. Shaltiel; L. White; L. Zemienieski; and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines 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

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

3. Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting of March 2, 2022 and Regular Meeting of March 2, 2022

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 2, 2022, as written. Unanimous aye.

   Ms. Govert requested the following change be made to the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 2:

   - In response to a concern raised by ~~Ms. Govert~~ Mr. Dill, Ms. Haines agreed to circle back with the attorneys and request clarification of the proposed agency's eminent domain authority.

   Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 2, 2022, as amended. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence

   There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

5. First Selectmen's Report

   Ms. Haines stated that she has received a number of calls recently concerning the Town's road conditions. She noted that, in particular, the dirt and gravel roads are in bad shape due to freeze and thaw weather conditions. She advised that Public Works is aware of the road conditions; however, it would be premature to do any remediation work yet. She asked that the public be patient and encouraged them to drive slowly, especially on the dirt and gravel roads, so as to not worsen the problems.

   Ms. Haines reported that bids for the Swingbridge construction project are scheduled to be opened on March 23rd. She advised that a weight limit is going to be imposed and it will be posted by the bridge. Ms. Haines further stated that representatives from the towns of Haddam and East Haddam, emergency services, and the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce met to discuss plans for setting-up regular communications, that will be available to the public, regarding the project. She provided information about where citizens could find a link on the Town's website that will connect them to the DOT's informational site for the Swingbridge project.

6. Public Comment

In response to a question raised by Ms. White, Ms. Haines stated that she believes the weight limit on the Swingbridge will be 21 tons.

In response to comments and questions from Ms. Shaltiel, Ms. Haines agreed that the Swingbridge construction project will be impactful on local businesses. She stated that the project is planned to kick-off in June; however, there will be preliminary work done before one-lane traffic is implemented and, once the contractor is chosen, a work schedule will be made available to the public. Ms. Haines advised that a temporary bridge is not possible due to the environmental impact and, further, acquiring the necessary permits would delay the project 2-5 years, with no guarantee they would be granted.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Retail Cannabis Discussion: Ms. Haines and the board reviewed the draft ordinance. Ms. Govert noted that the previously discussed revision regarding adding language to comply with state statutes concerning not restricting the transportation of cannabis through the Town need to be included. Ms. Haines agreed to make the update and stated the next step is to move the draft ordinance to a Town Meeting.

B. Property Tax Exemption Request: The board reviewed the information provided by Tax Collector Dill and Ms. Haines stated that it is her recommendation not to create a special ordinance for this situation. Ms. Dill provided clarification regarding the information she had provided and agreed with Ms. Haines recommendation. The Selectmen agreed not to adopt a special ordinance for the current property tax exemption request.

C. Blue Earth Composting Discussion: Ms. Haines advised that the Town will be establishing a composting program and would like to contract with Blue Earth to haul away composted materials from the Transfer Station for approximately $60/mo. She stated that Blue Earth will assist with the Town's awareness campaign and that an informational sign will be posted at the Transfer Station.

Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to authorize Irene Haines, First Selectman, to enter into an agreement with Blue Earth Compost, Inc. for the collection of compostable food waste and acceptable compostable material for a two-year term. Unanimous aye.

D. Redevelopment Agency Ordinance Discussion: Ms. Haines provided some background on the decision to establish a Redevelopment Agency and noted that a draft of the ordinance was available at the meeting. She stated that once the ordinance is passed, the Board will appoint the agency members. She stated that, per statute, 10 members will be appointed, with no alternates.

Ms. Haines confirmed that the draft ordinance does not empower the Agency with the ability to impose eminent domain on private property. In response to a question raised by Mr. Dill, she advised that the Goodspeed Opera House and the Gelston house are not included in the redevelopment map because the parcels are not being considered for development. Atty. Carella clarified that the process for amending the redevelopment map after the ordinance is adopted is the same as amending the ordinance.

In response to a concern raised by Ms. Govert, Atty. Carella advised that language allowing the use of Town Meeting or referendum to authorize the sale/transfer of property had been discussed. He stated that, while it was understood that the citizens had voiced a preference that the transfer

of ownership of the 1 & 7 Main Street property should be decided through a referendum, the language applies to "any" property and, therefore, it had been his recommendation to retain the flexibility of the use of either Town Meeting or referendum in the ordinance.

In response to a comment from Ms. Haines stating that language should be included requiring meetings be open to the public and that minutes should be kept, Atty. Carella noted that the Redevelopment Agency is a public agency and as such, with or without the stated language in this ordinance, meetings are required to be open to the public and minutes must be retained.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Govert, Ms. Haines reviewed the process for obtaining additional funds from the BOF for contingencies.

The following public comments were heard:

- John Olin – In response to a question from Mr. Olin, Atty. Carella clarified the process necessary to adopt the Redevelopment Agency ordinance. Mr. Olin expressed concern that the draft ordinance is too constrained and limited in scope and narrows the Town's options for redevelopment. He stated there is a need for a master plan for the entire Town, not just the area outlined in the ordinance's map. Ms. Haines noted that the East Haddam Plan of Conservation and Development performs the function of a master plan for the Town. She encouraged him to read through Chapter 130 of the state statutes and bring any questions and concerns he has relevant to the draft ordinance to the Town Meeting.

- Amalia Shaltiel – Ms. Shaltiel stated that the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development is not a master plan. She stated that she supports creating a Redevelopment Agency but expressed concern with the current draft and process. She noted that much of the property on Main Street is owned by the Goodspeed and, therefore, not available for commerce and also expressed concern for what she perceived as a lack of planning for sufficient parking. Ms. Shaltiel disputed the value of many of the studies done on the old Town Office site and the Village, noting several were done more than 15 years ago. She also recommended increasing the agency's budget and allowing the public more time to review the draft ordinance.

- Randy Dill – Mr. Dill stated that this meeting is being portrayed as a public hearing. People are getting the opportunity to give you their comments and their information. This is a public hearing you are creating here. This is not right that these few people can direct you regarding what you are going to do and he objects to this and thinks it is terrible.

- Laurel White – Expressed her appreciation for the information that has been provided regarding the creation of a Redevelopment Agency; however, expressed concern about the "limited funds" set up to establish the agency. She recommended including the entirety of the Village in the map outlining the agency's area of responsibility to achieve a cohesive plan.

In response to an inquiry from Ms. Govert regarding a master plan, Atty. Carella stated that the Plan of Conservation and Development takes into account the entirety of the Town and the Redevelopment Agency is being established to redevelop the Village section of the Town as stipulated in the state statutes.

There was additional discussion regarding statements made by Ms. Shaltiel that, by statute, a redevelopment plan should not be made solely to increase the grand list. Atty. Carella advised that such language was added to the state statute after the Kelo v. City of New London eminent domain case and opined that a similar concern regarding this project would not apply because the

stated purpose of the draft ordinance is how to best develop the Village; it is the first step in creating a master plan for the area and is not being done purely to increase the grand list.

Ms. Haines emphasized that the ordinance requires public meetings, hearings, and referendums throughout the process. Mr. Dill noted that establishing a Redevelopment Agency adds one more tool to the Town's tool box for developing a plan for the Village. He also stated that he believes the Centerbridge proposal for the Village area should have been brought to referendum. Ms. Govert reviewed several checks and balances present in the ordinance.

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

RESOLVED, that the East Haddam Board of Selectmen recommend approval of "An Ordinance to Create the East Haddam Redevelopment Agency for the Redevelopment of the Former Town Office and Garage Property and Certain Surrounding Properties" and send to the next Special Town Meeting for approval.
Unanimous aye.

E. New Library Study Committee Discussion: Ms. Haines advised that she has received a number of applications for the Library Study Committee. She recommended creating a committee of 7 to 9 individuals and the Board agreed to create a committee with 7 regular members and 2 alternate positions. There was a general discussion regarding the timeframe in which the committee should submit its report to the Board of Selectmen and it was agreed that the charge should state 180 days.

The Board agreed to review the applications in an executive session. There was a general discussion regarding the upcoming schedule of Selectmen's meetings and it was agreed to cancel the regular meeting of April 6 and schedule a special meeting for 8:30 a.m. on April 13th and the executive session to review the Library Study Committee applications would follow the discussion of regular business.

8. New Business

A. Bid Waiver – Surplus Vehicles: Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to the surplus vehicles and equipment bid spreadsheet in their meeting packets. She advised that the sale of surplus equipment had resulted in total revenue of $12,672.00 for the Town and stated that the successful bidders are required to agree to certify that they are purchasing the equipment "as is".

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Govert, to award the bids for the Surplus Vehicles and Equipment as presented. Unanimous aye. (Award list included with these minutes.)

B. Call for Town Meeting: Ms. Haines advised that several items must be moved forward to a Town Meeting.

Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the following call for Town Meeting:

The Electors and citizens of the Town of East Haddam, Connecticut qualified to vote in Town Meeting are hereby warned and notified that a Special Town Meeting will be held in the Municipal Office Complex, Meeting Room 1 & 2 located on 1 Plains Road in Moodus, Connecticut on Tuesday, March 29, 2022 at 8:00 p.m., for the following purposes, to wit:

**Item 1:** To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen to approve an ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to Create the East Haddam Redevelopment Agency for the Redevelopment of the Former Town Office and Garage Property and Certain Surrounding Properties". Copies of said ordinance are on file in the Town Clerk's Office during normal business hours.

**Item 2:** To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to accept a grant in the amount of $5,000 from the Peach Pit Foundation/Community Foundation of Middlesex County for the East Haddam Library System (revenue account 28345-43000 and expense account 28345033-53010).
Unanimous aye.

C. Beer & Wine Approvals Rathbun Library: Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to an email from Michael Gilroy in their meeting packets, dated March 9, 2022, advising that the Rathbun Library is hosting three events from April 6 through June 1, 2022 and would like to serve beer and wine.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve beer and wine service at the Rathbun Library for the following 2022 events:

- Wednesday, April 6 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm (Art League Meeting),
- Friday, April 8 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm (Artists' Reception), and
- Wednesday, June 1 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm (Art League Meeting).

Unanimous aye.

D. Beer & Wine Approvals – Grange Hall: Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to an email in their meeting packet from Patrick Murray, Moodus Drum & Fife Corps, dated March 11, 2022, requesting permission to serve beer and wine at their annual Muster on October 14 and 15, 2022.

Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the serving of beer and wine at the Grange Hall for the "Moodus Drum & Fife Muster" on October 14 & 15, 2022. Unanimous aye.

E. Board/Commission/Committee Changes: There were no Board/Commission/Committee changes discussed at the meeting.

F. Tax Refunds: There were four tax refunds presented at the meeting.

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

- $336.73 to Vault Trust,
- $222.02 to Brian Pollock,
- $320.38 to JP Morgan Chase Bank NA, and
- $383.91 to Toyota Lease Trust.

Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment

In response to an inquiry raised by Mr. Olin, Ms. Haines confirmed that agenda item 7E meant it was a new committee, not that it had been decided to construct a new library. He stated that he feels it would be a mistake to charge the study committee with identifying a site, if it is determined a new

library building is needed. He stated he believes it would be more beneficial to include that responsibility in the Building Committee's charge.

10. Selectmen's Discussion

    A. Liaison Reports: Ms. Govert stated that she will attend an Open Space field walk on March 28th. Ms. Haines noted that she had attended the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses (IWWC) March 15th meeting. Mr. Dill noted that he had abstained from attending the IWWC meeting because of a conflict of interest concern.

    B. Other: In response to a request from Mr. Dill, Ms. Haines stated she would verify whether she can share with the Board the monthly State Police activity report she receives.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss Ms. Govert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary

## Surplus Vehicles and Equipment Bid

| Description | Bid Amount | Winner/Status |
|---|---|---|
| 1. 2001 Ford F550 Dump Truck | $1,251.00 | John Vasel |
| 2. 2011 Ford F350 Truck | $3,259.00 | Thomas Catucci |
| 3. 2006 Ford F350 White Truck | $1,501.00 | John Vasel |
| 4. 2003 Ford F550 Dump Truck | $2,751.00 | John Vasel |
| 5. 2006 Dodge Ram 1500 Reg Cab Pickup | $1,159.00 | Thomas Catucci |
| 6. Zodiac SM546 with Motor & Trailer | $1,500.00 | Christopher Pytlik |
| 7. 1977 Maxim Ladder Truck | $1,251.00 | John Vasel |
| | **$12,672.00** | |