Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
April 1, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: T. Gelston; E Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: L. D'Aquila; J. Bielot; M. Callahan; M. Cohen; S. Cohen; X. Coulter; D. DiStefano; W. Hunt; P. Lacy; J. Leatherbee; M. Mordecai; A. Nero; C. Nero; M. Sewell; K. Tosi; J. Ventres; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Gelston called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

3. Approval of Minutes - Regular Meeting of March 18, 2026 and Special Meeting of March 30, 2026

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 18, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 30, 2026. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: Mr. Gelston reviewed the following:

   - Correspondence from the Conservation Commission requesting an increase in the number of members on the Commission. He noted that such a change will require a revision to the relevant ordinance and the revised ordinance will have to come before a Town Meeting. Mr. Gelston advised that he would add their requests to the Board of Selectmen's next meeting agenda.

   - Correspondence from the Sustainability Team requesting an amendment to the make up of the membership on the resolution establishing the Sustainability Team. They would like to change from 10 regular members to 7 regular members and 3 alternates. Mr. Gelston advised that he would add their requests to the Board of Selectmen's next meeting agenda.

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

- The Board of Finance asked the Town to reduce their FY2026-2027 budget by $370k to comply with their request for a budget with no increase over the FY2025-2026 budget.
- Public Works will have a change in its previous FY2026-2027 road paving schedule to address the poor condition of storm drainage on several roads in the schedule.
- The Town is still working on reducing speeding on the roads and Mr. Gelston encourages citizens to reach out to the Police Department if they would like one of the Town's speed monitors posted on their road.
- The Ambulance Association and Fire Department have completed six workshops and are planning a seventh.
- Two contractors are interested in constructing a cell tower on Hood Lane, contingent upon positive feedback from the cell phone companies and the Siting Council.
- The Black Birch Golf Course Feasibility Study Committee is meeting and will submit its report to the Board of Selectmen in late June.
- He provided updates on the Town's planning for its America 250 celebration.

A. East Haddam Ambulance Association Presentation: Mr. Tosi and Ms. D'Aquila distributed materials to the members of the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Tosi reviewed current performance statistics and the financial status of the Ambulance Association through February 26, 2026. He advised that the Association's funding request for FY2026-2027 is $78,620.00 and provided background information on how they had arrived at that figure. He discussed the challenge of carrying the funding for the Ambulance Association in the Board of Finance's contingency budget line and stated that they would prefer to arrive at a process whereby the Association could access the funds in "real time", similar to the way the Town supports other local public-service non-profits.

Mr. Tosi responded to questions from the Board and it was noted that no decision had yet been made regarding what the Town would include in its reductions to its FY2026-2027 budget as requested by the Board of Finance. There was a brief discussion about the potential impacts of any cuts made to the Town's proposed budget. Ms. D'Aquila discussed fundraising efforts undertaken by the Ambulance Association.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to support and recommend to the Board of Finance the East Haddam Ambulance Association's request for $78,620.00 in funding for their FY2025-2026 shortfall. Unanimous aye.

Mr. Tosi reviewed the status of the Ambulance Association's and Fire Department's workshops, as moderated by First Selectman Gelston. He noted that the goal of the workshops is to put together a long-term agreement that will improve operational performance related to emergency medical responses and reduce costs. He reviewed the current status of the discussions which include consideration of a long-range plan for the Association to merge with the Fire Department in September of 2027. He emphasized that any long-term agreement would have no impact on the Association's request for

funding for FY2025-2026. He again emphasized the Association's desire for the Board of Finance to implement a process that would allow them to draw on funds in real time.

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

   Jim Leatherbee – in response to a question raised by Mr. Leatherbee, Ms. D'Aquila confirmed that donations and contributions to the Ambulance Association are deposited into the Association's accounts. Mr. Leatherbee suggested the Ambulance Association talk about citizens' leaving bequests for the Association in their fundraising letters and made several other fundraising suggestions.

7. Unfinished Business

   A. Cell Tower Discussion – 440 Town Street or 7 Hood Lane: Mr. Gelston advised that he had provided an update about this agenda item earlier in the meeting during his First Selectmen's Report. His comments are covered in the above minutes.

   B. Open Space Discussion – Sprecher Property Exchange Proposal – Shanaghan Road: Land Use Administrator Ventres reviewed the Sprecher property parcel and noted that the Town would not have to expend any funds to acquire the property. He provided additional information about the project and reviewed the next steps in the process.

   C. Open Space Discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road: Land Use Administrator Ventres reviewed the Dale King property and noted that the Town's purchase price will be $15,000 which is less than the appraised value of the parcel. He responded to several questions from the Board.

   D. New Library Discussion – Charge for Exploratory Committee: Mr. Gelston presented the following porposed charge for the New Library Exploratory Committee, with the amendments discussed at the March 18th Board of Selectmen meeting.

      Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to recommend the adoption of the following resolution for a charge for the New Library Exploratory Committee:

      RESOLVED, That the New Library Exploratory Committee is hereby established for the purpose of reviewing and updating the 2022 report from the New Library Study Committee and creating a charge, estimated construction budget, and recommended site(s) needed to form an official New Library Building Committee. The work of the Exploratory Committee will be presented to the Board of Library Trustees for approval then to the Board of Selectmen for implementation.

      As recommended by the Study Committee, the new library would consolidate the services and personnel of the two current one-hundred year old library buildings into one 21st century library that is easily accessible and large enough to offer a variety of gathering spaces for all ages, new technology spaces with public access, sustainable

efficient HVAC systems, adequate parking spaces, and surrounding green spaces. The location should allow room for expansion of the building if needed in future decades.

Section 1. The Committee shall consist of seven (7) members and two (2) alternates, to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The term of office of said members shall continue until the project is complete and report presented to the Board of Selectmen, except that any member may resign or be removed by a vote of the Board of Selectmen for just cause. Any vacancy on the Committee shall be filled by the Board of Selectmen. The Committee shall select its own chairman, vice chairman and secretary. This committee shall answer to the Board of Selectmen and shall make quarterly progress reports to the Board of Selectmen.

Section 2. The members of the Committee shall not receive any compensation for their services. The Exploratory Committee will begin meeting in April of 2026 and finalize their work in February of 2027. The committee will meet on an as needed basis. All records of the Committee shall be filed with the Town Clerk and open to public inspection in accordance with applicable state statutes. The committee shall not obligate the town for any cost in their duties but should minor funding be required for minimal clerical costs funding should be requested by the committee to the Board of Selectmen.

Section 3. The Town of East Haddam Library Director, Facilities Director, Finance Director, and Land Use Administrator will serve as advisory staff to the committee. The New Library Exploratory Committee may reach out to any town department, commission or committee, as well as any outside agency or organization that they feel will assist in their decision-making process. The First Selectman shall be an Ex-officio member.

Section 4. The Committee shall have the following duties:

a) Review current accessibility guidelines and update those in the 2022 Study Report if needed.
b) Review current CT State Library guidelines such as recommended square footage for a town with our population.
c) Review available Town owned property to see what could be recommended as a potential site for new library.
d) Review additional sites that might be purchased if necessary.
e) Should the Committee recommend the purchase of privately owned property for the new library, the estimated cost of the property should be indicated. Should the Committee recommend use of a Town-owned property, the committee should specify any programs, activities or personnel potentially impacted by this recommendation.
f) Recommend one site on town owned property, and a second one that would be on acquired property.
g) Enlist the assistance of architects and space planners who have offered pro bono services to draft exterior and interior plans.
h) Interview architectural and construction firms and ask for estimated costs based on drafted plans.

i) Explore and recommend funding options including sales price of current two buildings, available grants through the CT State Library, CT Legislature or other grant funding sources and fundraising opportunities.
j) Present draft plans and descriptions to community groups for their input and make adjustments if needed.
k) Propose a timeline for implementation of resulting plans.
l) The Committee shall report their findings and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, in writing, within the 11-month period (April of 2026 through Feb of 2027)

Section 5: Once the draft plans and descriptions are completed, budgets and estimated construction costs, fund raising and grant opportunities presented and the plan is approved by the Library Board of Trustees, the New Library Exploratory Committee will present their work to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen would review, and if approved, use the recommended charge, budget, and draft drawings to form a New Library Building Committee.
Unanimous aye.

Ms. Zemienieski stated that applications from individuals wishing to serve on the Exploratory Committee are still being received.

8. New Business

A. Discussion Regarding Potential Private Road Ordinance: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to an updated draft of a private roads maintenance ordinance contained in their meeting packets. He advised that suggested changes to the ordinance had been presented to the Town's Attorney who made the revisions in the document. Mr. Gelston stated that, if the ordinance is acceptable to the Selectmen, the next step is to send the proposed ordinance to a public hearing for discussion.

In response to a question from the floor, Ms. Zemienieski advised that the members of the Board of Selectmen had intended to present the revised draft ordinance to the private road associations and discuss it with them prior to holding a public hearing. The Board of Selectmen responded to several questions from Town's private road residents present at the meeting. It was agreed to schedule a Special Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:00 p.m. on April 29th to discuss the revised ordinance.

B. Gift Acceptance – Bequest from Estate of Ruth M. Gruenberg – Rathbun Library: Mr. Gelston advised that the Town was recently notified by the Probate Court regarding a bequest to the Rathbun Library.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to accept a bequest from the Estate of Ruth M. Gruenberg to be used exclusively for the Rathbun Free Memorial Library in the amount of $10,000.00 and send acceptance of said bequest to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting for approval. Unanimous aye.

C. Approval for Beer & Wine Service – Senior Center – Annual Beer & Wine Tasting: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to a request from Senior Center Director Brad Parker for permission to host a beer & wine tasting at the Senior Center.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve and permit the Senior Center to host a beer and wine tasting event at the Senior Center on May 1, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Unanimous aye

D. Approval for Beer & Wine Service – Rathbun Library – Art League Spring Reception: Mr. Gelston called the Selectmen's attention to an email in their meeting packets from Library Director Morgen, dated March 27, 2026, advising that the Rathbun Library is hosting an Art League Spring Reception on Friday, April 10, 2026 and would like to serve beer and wine.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve beer and wine service at the Rathbun Library for the "Art League Spring Reception" on Friday, April 10, 2025. Unanimous aye.

E. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (RA): The following Board, Commission or Committee changes were considered at the meeting:

Redevelopment Agency

Mr. Gelston advised that the Board of Selectmen held interviews for two open positions on the Redevelopment Agency on Monday, March 31st, and now needs to move forward the two selected candidates to fill the vacancies. He noted that the appointments will need to be ratified at a Town Meeting.

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

RESOLVED: Pursuant to Chapter 130, of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the "Town of East Haddam Ordinance to Create the East Haddam Redevelopment Agency for the Development of the Former Town Office and Garage Property and Certain Surrounding Properties" the Board of Selectmen hereby appoints Scott Brown, elector of the Town of East Haddam, to the Town of East Haddam Redevelopment Agency, to serve and fill a vacant term expiring August 31, 2027 and Daniel Cobleigh, elector of the Town of East Haddam, to the Town of East Haddam Redevelopment Agency, to serve and fill a vacant term expiring August 31, 2029, and subject to approval at the next scheduled Town Meeting. Unanimous aye.

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

9. Selectmen's Discussion

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

B. Other

1. Budget Public Hearing followed by Boards of Finance and Selectmen Meetings (April 7, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.): Mr. Gelston called the Board's and public's attention to the scheduled Public Hearing, Board of Finance, and Board of Selectmen meetings on the FY2026-2027 budget. He advised the Hearing will be held in the High School Auditorium.

2. Budget Town Meeting (April 21, 2026 at 8:00 p.m.): Mr. Gelston called the Board's and public's attention to the scheduled Town Meeting on the FY2026-2027 budget.

3. Budget Referendum (May 5, 2026): Mr. Gelston called the Board's and public's attention to the scheduled referendum on the FY2026-2027 budget.

10. Public Comment

There were no additional public comments raised at the meeting.

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 8:38 p.m. .

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary