Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
September 20, 2023
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I. Haines; E. Dill; T. Govert

Also Present: E. Blaschik; T. Bourgoin; L. D'Aquila; D. Dill; B. Harris; G. Lazarus; R. Smith; J. Christensen (EntryPoint); N. Banyai (EntryPoint), and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and apologized for the late start. She stated there had been technology problems getting the meeting up on YouTube. 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.

   Ms. Haines stated she would like to move item 5A, EntryPoint's presentation, up to this point in the agenda to accommodate Mr. Christensen's and Ms. Banyai's time.

5. First Selectman's Report

   A. Broadband Implementation Committee – Presentation of Open Access Turnkey (OAT) Network: Mr. Christensen and Ms. Banyai participated in the meeting remotely. Mr. Christensen reported that Ms. Banyai is working with the East Haddam Broadband Committee to organize community engagement in the project and he is researching federal programs for non-recourse financing to build the network. He noted that East Haddam qualifies for federal programs and it remains to be determined whether the Town applies for the financing or a non-profit is established to apply.

      Mr. Christensen stated that EntryPoint will oversee the design and construction work, operate the network, and provide customer service; however, their contract would give the Town the right to assume those responsibilities in the future if it wanted to do so.

      Mr. Christensen reviewed the projection of costs, system features, and open access advantages. In response to a question raised by Mr. Dill, there was a general discussion regarding whether or not there is space on the telephone poles for the network and whether the Town could access existing conduit in neighborhoods where the power is underground. Mr. Christensen stated that more research should be done concerning who owns the conduit in the neighborhoods where power lines are buried. He said that the project will have to be engineered to determine whether there is space on the poles for the network.

      Ms. Banyai provided an update on her work with the Broadband Committee regarding creating community engagement in the project. Ms. Haines advised that a community information meeting is scheduled for October 26th in the Municipal Office Complex.

      Ms. Haines thanked Mr. Christensen and Ms. Banyai for their presentation.

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of September 6, 2023

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Haines, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 6, 2023, as written. Ms. Govert abstained from the vote. The motion passed by a majority of ayes.

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

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

   - L. D'Aquila – reviewed information in the East Haddam Ambulance Association's annual report. She stated that their second ambulance had been refurbished and is back on the road and they have a response rate of 96% with an average response time of 4 minutes. She advised that they no longer use temporary staffing services and had responded to 939 calls, 118 of which were mutual aid calls. Ms. D'Aquila noted the Association has applied for grants, started a fundraising campaign, and noted several community events in which they had participated over the past year.

     Ms. D'Aquila invited the Board and the public to the Association's Board of Director's Annual Meeting on September 25th at the Grange Hall.

   - R. Smith – raised the following questions:

     - He asked why the new Transfer Station stickers are not facility permits, whether or not they could be issued by the Town Clerk as well as at the Public Works Department, and how often they would be re-issued and Ms. Haines responded to his questions.

     - He asked how many miles of roads are being chip-sealed this year and Ms. Haines stated that chip-sealing is not being done this year because Public Works instituted a more comprehensive reclamation project for several roads instead. She stated she would provide him with the appropriate metrics.

     - He noted that there had been a sewer break at the intersection Routes 82 and 149 two years ago and he asked when the temporary patch would be replaced with a permanent repair. He suggested the work could be done while the Swingbridge construction project is occurring since there would be less traffic to manage. Ms. Haines thanked him for his suggestion and stated she would look into it.

     - He asked about the number of hours the former Human Resources Director worked on personnel issues, whether he had participated in any employee contract negotiations, and if the employee handbook he was working on had been completed and if it is available to the public. Ms. Haines confirmed the HR Director had participated in employee contract negotiations, that Ms. Zemienieski is working on consolidating the Director's input into the existing employee handbook and she will check to see if the final version can be made public. She stated she would send him information on the Director's hours spent on personnel issues.

     - He asked if the Fire Department's new command vehicle was a hybrid and commented on its color and there was a general discussion about the command vehicle and the Fire Marshal's vehicle.

6. Unfinished Business

   A. Board of Selectmen and Treasurer Term Length Ordinance Discussion: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

   B. Open Space Award Discussion – Kronberg Property: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

   C. Bond Authorization for Open Space: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

   D. Eversource Aerial Easement Request: Ms. Haines reported that Eversource has informed the Town that the easement requirements for their power lines have been lowered and, consequently, the easement fee they will pay the Town has been reduced to $1,500.00.

7. New Business

   A. Beer & Cider Request – Grange Hall – Moodus Drum & Fife Corps: Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to a copy of an email from Patrick Murray, Moodus Drum & Fife Corps, dated September 18, 2023, in their meeting packets, requesting permission to serve beer and cider at their annual Muster on October 20, 2023.

      Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the serving of beer and cider at the Grange Hall for the "Moodus Drum & Fife Muster" on October 20 & 21, 2023. Unanimous aye.

   B. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (IWWC, EDC): The following commission changes were considered:

      Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission
      Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to a letter in their meeting packets recommending an appointment for the IWWC.

      Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Govert, to appoint David Walls as an alternate member to fill a vacant two-year term, to expire June 30, 2025, on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission. Unanimous aye.

      Economic Development Commission
      Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to the minutes of the EDC meeting of June 15, 2023, noting a resignation from the Commission. She also noted the passing of EDC Commissioner Don Bergeron.

      Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to accept, with regret, the resignation of Elizabeth Glidden from the Economic Development Commission. Unanimous aye.

   C. Tax Refunds: Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to two tax refunds.

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

      - $ 58.58 to Darrell Castor, and
      - $276.53 to Hyundai Lease Titling Trust.

Unanimous aye.

8. Public Comment: There were no additional public comments made.

9. Selectmen's Discussion

   A. Liaison Reports: Ms. Govert reported that Youth & Family Services has hired a Social Services Coordinator to help residents navigate local, state, and federal assistance services. She noted the position is being paid for by an endowment.

   B. Other: Mr. Dill stated he is waiting to speak with Michelle Velez regarding a Transfer Station update.

10. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary