**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM**
**Board of Finance**
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2023
Municipal Office Building – Room 1 & 2
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

Participating:

Board of Finance Members:

Eric Kolasinski
Joseph Corbett
Todd Gelston
Tracey Gionta
Harvey Thomas
Rebecca Whatley

Others: Don Angersola, Facilities Director
Valeria Belles, Finance Director
Rob Funk, Former Finance Director
Irene Haines, First Selectwoman
Nan Haslam, Acting School Superintendent
Cindy Hughson, BOE Business Manager
James Ventres, Land Use Administrator
Linda Zemienieski, Executive Manager
And other members of the public

## CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Gionta called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the pledge of allegiance.

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairwoman Gionta advised that, after 20 years of serving on the Board of Education and then Board of Finance, she has submitted her resignation, effective December 15, 2023. She further noted that Secretary Dutch is no longer serving on the Board and, consequently, she solicited nominations for the positions of Chairman and Secretary.

Mr. Thomas thanked Ms. Gionta for her service to the Town and stated that he hopes the citizens appreciate all the hard work she has put in on the Boards of Education and Finance. Mr. Thomas nominated Joseph Corbett for Chairman and Ms. Whatley nominated Todd Gelson for the position. Ms. Gionta called for a show of hands for each individual and Mr. Corbett received four votes and Mr. Gelston received two votes. Mr. Corbett was accordingly elected Chairman of the Board of Finance.

Ms. Whatley nominated Todd Gelston for Secretary of the Board of Finance and he was unanimously elected to that position.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Corbett called the Board's attention to a copy of the minutes of the Special Meeting of November 14, 2023 in their meeting packets.

**Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of November 14, 2023 as written. Ms. Gionta seconded the motion. Mr. Kolasinski abstained from the vote and the motion passed by a majority of ayes. Motion carried.**

Mr. Corbett stated he would like to amend the agenda to discuss the following items next:

- Old Business: (a) Approval of Open Space of Bond Authorization relating to purchase of the Kronberg property
- Old Business: (b) Approval of $5million Open Space Bonding Authorization

**Motion made by Ms. Gionta to amend the agenda as stated by Mr. Corbett. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

## OLD BUSINESS

a. Approval of Open Space of Bond Authorization relating to purchase of the Kronberg property – Mr. Ventres distributed handouts to the Board and provided information regarding this request, including, specifics of the property and the state grant that was approved to supplement the cost of the Town's purchase of the parcel.

Mr. Corbett solicited input from the Board and the general consensus was in support of the purchase of the Kronberg property. Mr. Ventres responded to questions from the Board.

**Motion made by Mr. Gelston seconded by Mr. Todd, to adopt the following resolution:**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF $514,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE KRONBERG PROPERTY AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $514,000, OR SO MUCH AS MAY BE NECESSARY AFTER DEDUCTING GRANTS THEREFOR**

*RESOLVED*, that the Board of Finance (the "Board") of the Town of East Haddam (the "Town") hereby accepts the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen, adopted at its meeting held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, and recommends to the electors and citizens eligible to vote at town meetings of the Town, with respect to the following:

(1) That the Town (i) appropriate the sum of $514,000 for costs related to the acquisition of approximately 95.8 acres of land or rights therein located on North Moodus Road

from Joanne Woodward, as Trustee of the Lois A. Kronberg Revocable Trust of 2015, and Keith Kronberg (collectively, the "Seller") in East Haddam, Connecticut, shown and designated as Lot #63 on the East Haddam Assessor's Map #73 and Lot #06 on the East Haddam Assessor's Map #74 (the "Property") for (i) open space purposes such as, but not limited to, preservation, conservation, recreation, hiking, cross country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, farming and other agricultural purposes, and (ii) municipal purposes (the "Project"), including, without limitation, the costs of land acquisition, site work, demolition and removal, easement acquisition, signage, engineering, legal, administration, temporary and permanent financing and any other costs and expenses related thereto, including the costs of printing explanatory text and any other materials in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes, and (ii) authorize the Board of Selectmen, through the actions of the First Selectman, to acquire the Property from the Seller pursuant to the terms of a certain purchase and sale agreement dated as of September 27, 2022, provided that no acquisition shall be undertaken until after referral of the proposed purchase to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a report pursuant to Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(2) That to finance said appropriation for the Project, the Town issue general obligation bonds and notes pursuant to Chapter 109 of the Connecticut General Statutes, Revision of 1958, as amended (the "Connecticut General Statutes"), or any other applicable provision of law thereto enabling, in an amount not to exceed $514,000 (or so much thereof as may be necessary after the deduction of grants or other sources of funds available therefor, including, but not limited to, a grant from the State of Connecticut in the amount of $243,100).

(3) That the Town issue and renew notes from time to time in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of the bonds or notes for the Project or the receipt of grants for the Project. The amount of the notes outstanding at any time shall not exceed $514,000. The notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-378 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Town shall comply with the provisions of Section 7-378a of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to any notes that do not mature within the time permitted by said Section 7-378.

(4) That the First Selectman, or a majority of the Board of Selectmen, and the Treasurer (the "Officials") be authorized to issue and sell bonds and notes secured by the full faith and credit of the Town in an amount not to exceed $514,000 (or so much thereof as may be necessary after the deduction of grants or other sources of funds available therefor, including, but not limited to, a grant from the State of Connecticut in the amount of $243,100), pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes or any other applicable provision of law thereto enabling, to finance the appropriation for such project having been made by this resolution; that the Officials are hereby authorized to appoint a bank or trust company to be the certifying agent, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for such bonds and notes; that Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., Hartford, Connecticut is designated as the attorneys at law to render an opinion approving the legality of such issue or issues; that the Officials be authorized to sign any bonds or notes by their manual or facsimile signatures; and that the Officials be authorized to determine the rate or rates of interest for such bonds and notes, their date or dates, the dates of principal and interest payments on such bonds and notes, the form of such bonds and notes, the provisions for protecting and enforcing the rights and remedies of the holders of such bonds and notes and all other terms, conditions and particular matters regarding the issuance and securing of such bonds and notes and to sell and deliver the same, in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and any other act of the General Assembly thereto enabling.

(5) That the Officials are authorized to sell the bonds or notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes. If the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution are issued on a tax-exempt basis, the Officials are authorized to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

(6) That the Town reasonably expects to incur expenditures (the "Expenditures") in connection with the Project described above. The Town reasonably expects to reimburse itself for the cost of the Expenditures with the proceeds of general obligation bonds and notes of the Town described above. The maximum principal amount of such debt (both bonds and notes) is not expected to exceed $514,000. This declaration of official intent is a declaration of official intent made pursuant to Federal Income Tax Regulations Section 1.150-2. The Officials are authorized to amend such declaration or official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the notes authorized by this resolution, if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

(7) That the Officials are authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws of rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes.

(8) That the First Selectman is hereby authorized, on behalf of the Town, to execute any agreements, documents and instruments necessary or in furtherance of the acquisition of the Property, and to execute and file any grant application or enter into any grant agreement or other obligations prescribed by such granting authority, including the State of Connecticut.

(9) That the Officials are authorized to take all other actions which are necessary or desirable to complete the Project consistent with the foregoing and to issue bonds or notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.

(10) That this resolution shall become effective after approval at referendum vote.

**The motion passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

b. Approval of $5million Open Space of Bonding Authorization – Mr. Ventres reviewed the history of the previous $5M bond authorization and noted that, overall, the cost per household to purchase approximately 7,500 acres of open space was $50/yr., or "less than $1 per week". He stated that the Town had partnered with the state, the Nature Conservancy, and Land Trust in pursuit of its open space agenda. He noted that the bond authorization showed that the Town was committed to the program and, consequently, encouraged others to also provide financial support.

Mr. Corbett solicited the Board's input and the majority of the Board supported this request; however, Mr. Kolasinski stated that his discussions with the public indicated they are not in favor of approving another $5M bond authorization. Mr. Ventres responded to the concern raised by Mr. Kolasinski.

**Motion made by Mr. Gelston seconded by Ms. Whatley, to adopt the following resolution:**

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPROPRIATION OF $5,000,000 FOR OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION AND THE FINANCING OF SAID APPROPRIATION BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE TOWN AND NOTES IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $5,000,000, OR SO MUCH AS MAY BE NECESSARY AFTER DEDUCTING GRANTS THEREFOR**

*RESOLVED*, that the Board of Finance (the "Board") of the Town of East Haddam (the "Town") hereby accepts the recommendation of the Board of Selectman, adopted at its meeting held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, and recommends to the electors and citizens eligible to vote at town meetings of the Town, with respect to the following:

(1) That the Town (i) appropriate the sum of $5,000,000 for costs related to the acquisition of land and any easements, interests or rights therein, including development rights, located in the Town to be maintained, protected, conserved or otherwise held as open space (the "Project"), including, without limitation, the costs of land acquisition, site work, demolition and removal, easement acquisition, signage, engineering, surveying, legal, administration, temporary and permanent financing and any other costs and expenses related thereto, including the costs of printing explanatory text and any other materials in accordance with Section 9-369b of the Connecticut General Statutes. Specific land or property interests to be acquired by the Town shall be selected and approved in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 35, Article III: Open Space Trust Fund of the Town Code of Ordinances.

(2) That to finance said appropriation for the Project, the Town issue general obligation bonds and notes pursuant to Chapter 109 of the Connecticut General Statutes, Revision of 1958, as amended (the "Connecticut General Statutes"), or any other applicable provision of law thereto enabling, in an amount not to exceed $5,000,000 (or so much thereof as may be necessary after the deduction of grants or other sources of funds available therefor).

(3) That the Town issue and renew notes from time to time in anticipation of the receipt of the proceeds from the sale of the bonds or notes for the Project or the receipt of grants for the Project. The amount of the notes outstanding at any time shall not exceed $5,000,000. The notes shall be issued pursuant to Section 7-378 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Town shall comply with the provisions of Section 7-378a of the Connecticut General Statutes with respect to any notes that do not mature within the time permitted by said Section 7-378.

(4) That the First Selectman, or a majority of the Board of Selectmen, and the Treasurer (the "Officials") be authorized to issue and sell bonds and notes secured by the full faith and credit of the Town in an amount not to exceed $5,000,000 (or so much thereof as may be necessary after the deduction of grants or other sources of funds available therefor), pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes or any other applicable provision of law thereto enabling, to finance the appropriation for such project having been made by this resolution; that the Officials are hereby

authorized to appoint a bank or trust company to be the certifying agent, registrar, transfer agent and paying agent for such bonds and notes; that Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., Hartford, Connecticut is designated as the attorneys at law to render an opinion approving the legality of such issue or issues; that the Officials be authorized to sign any bonds or notes by their manual or facsimile signatures; and that the Officials be authorized to determine the rate or rates of interest for such bonds and notes, their date or dates, the dates of principal and interest payments on such bonds and notes, the form of such bonds and notes, the provisions for protecting and enforcing the rights and remedies of the holders of such bonds and notes and all other terms, conditions and particular matters regarding the issuance and securing of such bonds and notes and to sell and deliver the same, in accordance with the provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes and any other act of the General Assembly thereto enabling.

(5) That the Officials are authorized to sell the bonds or notes at public or private sale; to deliver the bonds or notes; and to perform all other acts which are necessary or appropriate to issue the bonds or notes. If the bonds or notes authorized by this resolution are issued on a tax-exempt basis, the Officials are authorized to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the bonds or notes, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

(6) That the Town reasonably expects to incur expenditures (the "Expenditures") in connection with the Project described above. The Town reasonably expects to reimburse itself for the cost of the Expenditures with the proceeds of general obligation bonds and notes of the Town described above. The maximum principal amount of such debt (both bonds and notes) is not expected to exceed $5,000,000. This declaration of official intent is a declaration of official intent made pursuant to Federal Income Tax Regulations Section 1.150-2. The Officials are authorized to amend such declaration or official intent as they deem necessary or advisable and to bind the Town pursuant to such representations and covenants as they deem necessary or advisable in order to maintain the continued exemption from federal income taxation of interest on the notes authorized by this resolution, if issued on a tax-exempt basis, including covenants to pay rebates of investment earnings to the United States in future years.

(7) That the Officials are authorized to make representations and enter into written agreements for the benefit of holders of the bonds or notes to provide secondary market disclosure information, which agreements may include such terms as they deem advisable or appropriate in order to comply with applicable laws of rules pertaining to the sale or purchase of such bonds or notes.

(8) That the Officials are authorized to take all other actions which are necessary or desirable to complete the Project consistent with the foregoing and to issue bonds or notes to finance the aforesaid appropriation.

(9) That this resolution shall become effective after approval at referendum vote.

In response to a question from Mr. Gelson, Mr. Ventres advised that the Bond Authorization would become effective immediately following a favorable vote at referendum.

**Mr. Corbett called for a vote on the motion and all Board members voted aye with the exception of Mr. Kolasinski who voted no. The motion passed by a majority of ayes. Motion carried.**

## CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence discussed at the meeting.

Mr. Corbett stated he would like to further amend the agenda to discuss the following item next:

- Old Business: (c) Discussion regarding School HVAC grant and HVAC Bonding Resolution

**Motion made by Mr. Gelston to amend the agenda as stated by Mr. Corbett. Ms. Gionta seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

## OLD BUSINESS

c. Discussion regarding School HVAC grant and HVAC Bonding Resolution - Ms. Hughson distributed a handout regarding the Schools HVAC Project, provided background and reviewed relevant information. She stated that the grant application for the Elementary and High School HVAC upgrades is due on December 31st and she must include a resolution from the Boards of Selectmen and Finance that the Town is committed to allocating 100% of the cost of the project to its capital budget.

Facilities Director Angersola provided technical information about the proposed upgrades in all three schools. He provided information regarding the condition of the existing equipment. He recommended that the Elementary School should be the first priority and the chiller for the High School should be the second priority.

Ms. Hughston provided information on the state's requirements for indoor air quality assessments and Acting Superintendent Haslam emphasized the poor air quality in the schools. Ms. Hughson also reviewed the framework of four options for a potential referendum question to be included in the resolution. She and Mr. Angersola responded to questions from the Board.

There was a general discussion regarding potential strategies for undertaking the projects and the consensus was to follow Mr. Angersola's recommendation and prioritize the Elementary School and High School chiller projects first and confirmed that they would conform to the decision of the Board of Selectmen on the wording of the referendum question. Ms. Hughson advised that she will provide the Board of Finance with the appropriate resolution language as soon as possible so that they could act on it before the end of December.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Board of Finance Rules – Finance Director Belles confirmed that she had emailed the Board of Finance Rules to all of the Board members. Mr. Corbett solicited the Board for any questions or comments on the BOF Rules and there was none.

b. Board of Finance Policies – Finance Director Belles confirmed that she had emailed the Board of Finance Policies to all of the Board members. Mr. Corbett solicited the Board for any questions or comments on the BOF Policies and there was none.

c. Handbook for Boards of Finance for Board Members – Finance Director Belles advised that she only sent the Handbook to Mr. Kolasinski as he is a new Board member.

d. Board of Finance Member List and Contact Information – Finance Director Belles confirmed that she had emailed the Board of Finance member List and Contact Information to all of the Board members.

e. Board of Finance Liaison Assignments– Finance Director Belles confirmed that she had emailed the Board of Finance Liaison Assignments to all of the Board members; however, she had not changed any of the 2022-2023 assignments. Mr. Corbett stated that he will be reaching out to the individual Board members to get their thoughts on their liaison assignments. He suggested the liaison assignments could be finalized at the BOF's January meeting.

f. Board Subcommittee Appointments & Reports - Mr. Corbett stated that he will be reaching out to the individual Board members to get their thoughts on their Subcommittee appointments. He suggested the appointments could be finalized at the BOF's January meeting.

   i. Communications – There was no new update on this agenda item.

   ii. Long-Range Capital Improvements Committee – There was no new update on this agenda item.

   iii. Financial Policies – There was no new update on this agenda item.

g. Liaison Reports

   i. Redevelopment Agency – There was no update on this agenda item.

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## FIRST SELECTMEN'S REPORT

First Selectwoman Haines stated that due to the late hour she would forego her report to the Board at this time but welcomed new Finance Director Belles and thanked Ms. Gionta for her volunteer work on the Board and stated she would be missed.

## FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. October 2023 Year to Date Budget Report – Ms. Belles called the Board's attention to the October 2023 YTD Budget Report in their meeting packets. There were no questions or comments but, in response to a question from Mr. Gelston, Ms. Belles confirmed that the Board members could email her with any questions they have about the report.

b. FY23 Audit Update – Ms. Belles advised that she has reached out to the auditors to introduce herself. She stated that she has also filed with the state for an extension to January 31st for the FY23 audit. She noted that additional extensions, if needed, could be filed up to the day before the deadline

c. FY25 Budget Development Calendar – Ms. Belles called the Board's attention to the proposed calendar for the development of the fiscal year 2025 budget. She recapped the Board's previous discussion regarding moving the calendar up and there was a brief discussion regarding same. In response to a question raised by Ms. Belles, Ms. Gionta confirmed that the Chairman of the BOF generally drafts the Citizens' Guide to the Budget with input from the Board.

Ms. Haines solicited suggestions from the BOF on best practices for issuing a call-to-action to the public during the budget workshops. There was a general discussion regarding how to engage the public during the development of the budget and it was suggested to extend an open invitation to citizens to attend the Tri-Board meeting which occurs before the BOS, BOF, and BOE workshops begin.

## OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion Regarding Open Space Reissuance of Bond Authorization Relating to Purchase of the Kronberg Property – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the above minutes.

b. Discussion Regarding Open Space Future Bonding Authorization – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the above minutes.

c. Discussion regarding School HVAC grant and HVAC Bonding Resolution – This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting and is reported on in the above minutes.

## NEW BUSINESS

a. Budget Transfer Request – $9,200.00 from Capital Project C0237 Bashan Falls Culvert Design to fund East Shore Rd. Engineering work from Capital Project C0294 – Ms. Haines provided information regarding the Public Works' request for this budget transfer.

**Motion made by Ms. Whatley to approve a transfer in the amount of $9,200.00 from the Capital Project C0237 Bashan Culvert Design to fund East Shore Road Engineering work from Capital Project C0294. Motion was seconded by Mr. Gelston and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

b. Budget Transfer Request – $20,000.00 from Capital Project C0199 Transfer Station Bulky Waste Canopy to a new Capital Project C0295 Rebuild Transfer Station Scale – Don Angersola provided background information regarding the Public Works' request for this budget transfer.

**Motion made by Ms. Gionta to approve a transfer in the amount of $20,000.00 from the Capital Project C0199 Transfer Station Bulky Waste Canopy to anew Capital Project**

**C0295 Rebuild Transfer Station Scale. Motion was seconded by Ms. Whatley and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

c. Request for additional appropriation – $2,500.00 from BOF Contingency 10541020-58339 to Capital Project C0249 Broadband Implementation Committee – Ms. Haines provided information regarding the Broadband Committee's request for an appropriate of $2,500.00 for additional outreach efforts.

**Motion made by Mr. Gelston to approve a transfer in the amount of $2,500.00 from the BOF Contingency Fune (10541020-58339) to Capital Project C0249 - Broad Band Feasibility Study. Motion was seconded by Mr. Thomas and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

d. Grant Acceptance – To accept a Energize CT Grant in the amount of $20,000.00 – Ms. Haines provided information about the Energize CT Grant the Sustainability Committee has been awarded.

**Motion was made by Ms. Gionta to accept a grant from Eversource Energy Service Company ("Eversource") through the Energize Connecticut Community Partnership Initiative (revenue account 33050-43000 and expense account 33055011-58820) for the purpose of actions leading to an increase in homes participating in Home Energy Solutions-Income Eligible and increase in the adoption of heat pumps among income-eligible customers upon the terms and conditions set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding for Energize Connecticut Community Partnership Initiative By and Between Eversource Energy Service Company and the Town of East Haddam and to recommend that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

e. Grant Acceptance – DECD Municipal Brownfield Grant Program – Ms. Haines provided information about the state of CT grant the Village Redevelopment Agency was awarded for a brownfield study in the Village district. She responded to questions from the Board

**Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to accept a grant from the State of Connecticut acting by the Department of Economic and Community Development (revenue account 33050-43000 and expense account 33055011-58820) for the purpose of conducting a brownfield environmental assessment as part of the Village District Assessment Project upon the terms and conditions set forth in an Assistance Agreement by and between The State of Connecticut Acting by the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Town of East Haddam and to recommend that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Kolasinski seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

f. 2024 Meeting Schedule – Mr. Funk distributed the proposed 2023-24 Board of Finance regular meeting schedule. Ms. Whatley recommended the Town's website be amended to reflect correct information about the BOF's regular meeting schedule.

**Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the following 2023-2024 Board of Finance regular meeting schedule: (January 8, February 12m March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10,**

**July 8, August 12, September 9, October 21, November 18, December 9, 2024 and January 14, 2025) Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Motion carried.**

## AUDIENCE AND GUEST COMMENTS

There were no guest or audience comments raised at the meeting.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Motion made by Ms. Gionta to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Ms. Whatley seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
/s/
Todd Gelston
Secretary