Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
September 4, 2024
Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Also Present: D. DiStefano; M. Hall (IT); M. Velez (PW); L. Woodward; L. Zemienieski; and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to amend the agenda as follows: add the following items under Agenda item 9B – Selectmen's Discussion – Other:

- 1. Executive Session - Transfer Station Collective Bargaining Agreement
- 2. Vote on Transfer Station Collective Bargaining Agreement

Unanimous aye.

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

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of August 21, 2024

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 21, 2024 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence

Ms. Haines advised that she had received a written request from Amalia Shaltiel at the very end of the last meeting with a request to upgrade meeting room 3 to allow for hybrid meetings. Ms. Haines stated she would submit the request to the IT Department to see what could be done.

5. First Selectmen's Report

Ms. Haines reported that she had received an updated Swingbridge construction calendar, and it did not have any closures listed on it; however, she expects that there will be at least one more extended closure before the project is completed.

A. Public Works Report – Public Works Director Michele Velez: Ms. Haines invited Public Works Director Velez to provide an update on the activities in her department.

Director Velez provided an overview of "State of the Public Works Department". She discussed the reduction in the department's workforce, which began with voluntary

resignations at the end of 2023 and ended with layoffs at the end of July. She stated that the department has continued to operate with a staff of 4 workers plus a mechanic.

She reviewed this year's road and road-sweeping projects and noted that the summer mowing had been delayed due to a part for one of the mowers being on back-order. Ms. Velez reviewed a list of assets, including 16 trucks and 22 other pieces of equipment. and stated that, over the last two years, a number of assets had been sold/auctioned off generating over $90k in revenue for the Town.

Director Velez advised that she had created an on-line work-order system that all of the Public Works employees have access to and she is in the process of creating a Google form that will allow the public to submit work requests electronically.

In response to questions from the Board, she advised that she is not currently planning on filling any of the vacant positions and has been reallocating the savings from the salaries to the paving budget. There was a general discussion regarding paving projects and budgeting.

6. Public Comment

The following public comments were brought up at the meeting:

- Denise DiStefano – commented that she has yet to see a side-by-side comparison of the Fire Department's and Ambulance Association's plans to respond to emergency medical calls. She refuted several statements Ms. Haines made regarding the subject at previous meetings. She encouraged the Board to establish a Task Force to research and recommend solutions to the current situation and/or publish the EHFD and EHAA plans for responding to emergency medical calls, including cost and revenue projections, possibly in a Town Meeting format with a Q&A session.

  Ms. DiStefano stated she would like the following questions addressed:

  - Where can she find the side-by-side comparison of the EHFD and EHAA proposals?
  - Can she get a breakdown of what is included in the $800k the Town states it is currently spending on emergency medical service response calls?
  - If a task force is not established, who will make the decision on future actions that will be taken concerning the Town's emergency medical calls response?
  - How can taxpayers prevent Ms. Haines from making a unilateral decision on the management of the Town's emergency medical calls response?

7. Unfinished Business

A. Bid Waiver – Audio Video integration Municipal Office Complex Meeting Rooms 1 & 2: Ms. Haines introduced Matt Hall, Director of the Town's and Board of Education's IT Department. Mr. Hall provided information on the Town's relationship with Opticom and responded to questions from the Board. He stated that the life-span of the new equipment

will be 8-10 years and noted that he had recently spoken with Opticom representatives, who advised that they expect the quoted price to go down a bit when the Town places its order.

Ms. Zemienieski confirmed that, due to the Town's desire to use ARPA funds for this project, there are time constraints which have driven a portion of the request for a bid waiver.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to waive the bid process for the Audio Video Integration Municipal Office Complex Meeting Rooms 1 & 2 and authorize the Technology Manager, Matt Hall, to negotiate with Opticom Inc. as a sole source provider per their quote of $90,646.00. Unanimous aye.

B. Ambulance Task Force: Ms. Bourgoin explained her rationale for establishing a task force to evaluate the options for the management of the Town's response to emergency medical calls.

Mr. Dill proposed making the East Haddam Ambulance Association a Town entity similar to the Fire Department and other similar non-profit agencies. He suggested the EHAA would be expected to share its annual budget with the Boards of Finance and Selectmen and track its revenue similar to the Recreation Department's system. He stated that he feels the Town should purchase the emergency medical response equipment as it does for the Fire Department and should have an oversight Board or Commission similar to the Board of Fire Commissioners.

There was a general discussion regarding the pros and cons of Mr. Dill's proposal vs. establishing a task force and the Board agreed to postpone further discussion of this agenda item until their next meeting.

C. Bashan Lake – Wake Surfing Potential Ordinance Discussion: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.

8. New Business

A. Grant Acceptance – Community Foundation: Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets regarding a notification of a grant to the Recreation Department.

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to accept a grant in the amount of $1,185.00 from the Connor Meaney Young Memorial Fund at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, for the purpose of supporting the 2024 summer camp ice cream truck event, and send acceptance of said grant to the Board of Finance and then to Town Meeting for approval. Unanimous aye.

B. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (SUSCT): The following Board/Commission/ Committee change was discussed at the meeting:

Sustainability Team

Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to the materials in their meeting packets recommending the an appointment to the Sustainability Team.

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to appoint Honora Myers as a member of the East Haddam Sustainability Team to serve until the desired certification level has been achieved. Unanimous aye.

C. Tax Refunds: One tax refund was considered at the meeting:

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to award a tax refund in the amount as presented.

- $ 139.98 to Michael Holbrook.

Unanimous aye.

9. Selectmen's Discussion

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A. Liaison's Reports: Ms. Bourgoin advised that the Sustainability Team's Repair Café was not heavily attended; however, she felt it went well. She reported that the Team's goal is to host two Repair Café's a year, one in the spring and one in the fall. She also reported that the Team had met its goal for Eversource's Energy Assessment Audit program.

B. Other

1. Executive Session – Transfer Station Collective Bargaining Agreement

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to enter into executive session at 9:14 a.m. to discuss the East Haddam Transfer Station (International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 30) Collective Bargaining Agreement and to invite Ms. Zemienieski and Public Works Director Velez into this session. Unanimous aye.

The Selectmen returned to regular session at 9:32 am. No motions or decisions were made.

2. Vote on Transfer Station Collective Bargaining Agreement

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to accept the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of East Haddam and Transfer Station Union (International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 30) for the period from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027. Unanimous aye.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to adjourn the meeting at 9:33 a.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary