Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
February 19, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes

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

Also Present: V. Belles; M. Masci; 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 Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to approve the agenda as presented. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of February 5, 2025 and Special Meeting of February 12, 2025

   Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to the minutes of their meetings on February 5, 2025 and February 12, 2025 in their meeting packets.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 5, 2025 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of February 12, 2025 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence

   The following correspondence was read at the meeting:

   - An email from Melanie Kolek expressing her "deep appreciation" to Public Works Director Velez for quickly replacing her mailbox which had been damaged by a Town snowplow during a recent ice storm.
   - Two emails from David Oakes complimenting Public Works Director Velez and the DPW crew for their road work this winter, stating he was "impressed".
   - An email from Library Director Evelyn Morgen, thanking the Grounds crew for keeping the libraries' driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks clear of ice during the recent storm.

5. First Selectmen's Report

Ms. Haines noted that the Board has been working on the FY2025-2026 budget and, consequently, she had no updated report to share at this meeting.

6. Public Comment: The following public comment was brought up at the meeting:

- Michael Masci – rebutted Public Works Director Velez's version of the occurrences surrounding the "incorrect" installation of a drainage pipe on Daniel Peck Road. Mr. Masci stated he had taken the referenced picture while he was still employed by Public Works; however, he was laid off the next morning and, therefore, did not have time to inform management of the issue. He stated he did not have malicious intent but, as a taxpayer, he is "appalled" by the poor quality of work being tolerated by the Director and this Board.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices (ATESD) Discussion: Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to reports with the results of the ATESD tests on Falls Road, East Haddam-Colchester Turnpike, and Town Street. She reviewed the number of cars that exceeded the speed limit on those roads by 10+ mph and stated she believes the Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices will pay for themselves. In response to a question from Ms. Bourgoin, Ms. Haines advised that the average citation collection rate nationally is 64%.

Ms. Haines reported that the contractor is offering to lease the equipment to municipalities for $2k/month plus a processing fee of $11 per citation. There was a general discussion regarding the pros and cons of leasing vs. outright purchase of the devices. Mr. Dill stated that he would like the Town to be able to move the devices around to several locations; however, Ms. Zemienieski advised that the CT DOT must approve the use and location of the devices which would not allow them to be mobile.

There were several open issues regarding this agenda item, including how the appeal process would work, financial reporting, and ensuring the Police Department is willing to manage the Town's administration process for the ATESDs. The Board agreed to carry this item forward on their meeting agenda.

B. Three Bridges Cemetery Discussion and Potential Resolution: There was no update on this agenda item and further discussion was postponed.

8. New Business

A. Bid Waiver Request: Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to a letter in their meeting packets from Finance Director Belles requesting a one-year bid waiver on the auditor's contract.

Ms. Belles stated that the facts that the Town has had two late audits and the FY 2023-2024 audit has not yet been issued suggest complications and trouble with the financials which could have a significant negative impact on any bids the Town receives. She advised that the current auditors, Clifton, Larsen & Allen (CLA), has provided her with a quote for a 1-year contract with a 5% increase over last year's price.

Ms. Belles requested the Selectmen approve a one-year bid waiver for the audit contract and stated that, assuming the FY2025 audit is completed on-time by the end of 2025, she will go out to bid for a 3-year contract in January or February 2026.

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to waive the bid process for audit services for one-year and authorize Finance Director Valerie Belles to negotiate with Clifton, Larsen & Allen (CLA) for a further quote for service at a 5% increase over last year's audit costs. Unanimous aye.

B. Moodus Firehouse Building Committee Charge Resolution: Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to materials in their meeting packets regarding this agenda item. She explained that, due to the change in the scope of the Renovation Committee's work of Fire Company No. 2, their charge must be changed to one more applicable to a Building Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to accept the Moodus Firehouse Building Committee charge and send said charge to Town Meeting for approval. Unanimous aye.

RESOLVED: That a Moodus Firehouse Building Committee is hereby established for the purpose of the design and construction of the Moodus Firehouse. The committee is charged with (1) the demolition of the current firehouse and planning/design and construction of a new facility, of the current Moodus Firehouse also known as Company #2 Firehouse located at 44 William F. Palmer Road, Moodus, Connecticut, which shall without limitation include, (i) the demolition of approximately 7000 square feet constituting the current building, (ii) the design and construction of a firehouse to include the expansion of existing size, including vehicle bays, sleeping quarters, kitchens, bathrooms, offices, training space, storage and other designated areas as needed or required, (iii) the installation of new building electrical service, building generator, well and septic (if required), and vehicle exhaust system, (iv) code compliance work, including handicapped accessibility code, (v) hazardous material and asbestos abatement. (2) the purchase of furniture, fixtures, equipment, IT infrastructure, and other materials for the foregoing project; (3) site improvements, including parking, lighting, regrading and improved site lines where possible; (4) the preparation and printing of bid documents, cost estimate reports, traffic and other studies, environmental reports, informational materials and other preliminary materials, studies and reports related to the project; and (5) all permit fees, engineering, construction management, architectural, insurance, testing and inspections, legal, administration, temporary and permanent financing, costs of issuance, printing, capitalized interest and any other costs and expenses related to the project.

Section 1. The Committee shall consist of 3 members and 1 alternate, to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The term of office of said members shall continue until the project is complete and accepted by the town and the committee is discharged, 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, secretary and treasurer. 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 necessary expenses of the committee shall be included in the estimated project cost and any appropriation to be requested by the Committee from the Town. All records of the Committee shall be filed with the Town Clerk and open to public inspection in accordance with applicable state statutes.

Section 3. The Town of East Haddam Land Use Administrator and Facilities and Finance Directors will serve as advisory staff to the committee.

Section 4. The Committee shall have the following powers and duties:

(a) To consult with the Fire Department, Office of the Fire Marshal, Emergency Management and its administrators concerning the plans for said project and its construction and the schedule therefore;

(b) To develop required drawings and outline specifications for the project and to review and approve all plans for said project, and to supervise and/or provide for the proper supervision of the project in the Town's best interest;

(c) To assist in the application and filing for any grants or federal loan that may be available to the Town for said project, and provide or execute any necessary documentation for such a grant or loans;

(d) Within the future approved appropriations, to contract with architects, engineers, contractors and others in the name of and on behalf of the town to design, build and complete the project, and approve all design and construction expenditures for the project.

Section 5. Upon completion of the Moodus Firehouse project, the Committee shall make a complete report and accounting to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Zemienieski advised that, if the new charge is approved at Town Meeting, the Renovation Committee should close out its work at its next meeting and reconvene as the Building Committee.

C. Purchasing Ordinance Discussion: Ms. Haines reported that the state legislature has proposed a change to the state's Purchasing statute which would raise the threshold for requiring municipalities to secure sealed bids to $35k. She noted that the Town's purchasing ordinance currently has a threshold of $15k and recommended that, due to the overall increase in prices, the Board consider raising the threshold in its ordinance to $25k or $35k.

There was a general discussion about Ms. Haines' recommendation and Ms. Zemienieski explained that the Town currently requires a minimum of two quotes on purchases between $7,500.00 and $15k. She stated that if the Board decides to change the threshold in the Town Purchasing ordinance, she recommended maintaining the requirement of obtaining a minimum of two bids for purchases between $7,500.00 and the new threshold.

The Board agreed to postpone further discussion of this agenda item until such time as the state approves a change to their Purchasing statute with a new threshold amount.

D. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (EHLS)

East Haddam Library Trustees

Ms. Haines advised that the East Haddam Library Board of Trustees has recommended Laurel White to fill a vacant position on their Board.

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to appoint Laurel White to the Board of Library Trustees to fill the balance of a vacant term to expire with the 2025 municipal election. Unanimous aye.

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

9. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison's Reports: Ms. Bourgoin reiterated that PACE had presented their findings on townwide energy usage to the Sustainability Committee. She stated she would like to have PACE come and give a similar presentation to the Board of Selectmen after budget season.

B. Other: There were no additional items discussed at the meeting.

10. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary