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

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

Also Present: D. Dill; D. DiStefano; R. Gaudio; T. Gelston; L. D'Aquila; Rev. D. Rogers; A. Shaltiel; 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 written. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of March 5, 2025

   Ms. Haines called the Board's attention to the minutes of their March 5th meeting. Ms. Bourgoin stated she would like to amend the minutes as follows:

   - Agenda Item 7A. Unfinished Business - Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices (ATESD) Discussion to include the following:
     - Trooper Rhodes stated that he felt the tool could be beneficial temporarily.
     - Capt. Leidemer expressed his concern that drivers will slow down at the camera locations and then speed up after they've gotten through the monitored area, causing problems in areas where there are no cameras.
   - Agenda Item 8A. New Business – Bid Waiver Request – Used Ambulance revise as follows:
     - First Paragraph/First Sentence: "Capt. Leidemer advised that, as a cooperative effort between the East Haddam Ambulance Association and the Fire Department, the town of Ellington was identified as ~~has~~ having a used ambulance for sale…"

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

4. Correspondence

Ms. Haines read correspondence regarding the Town's composting program from the following citizens:

- Email from Laura Ryan, dated March 9, 2025.
- Email from Robert Simmons, dated March 10, 2025.
- Email from Rev. Diana Rogers, dated March 17, 2025.
- Email from Rev. Diana Rogers, dated March 19, 2025.

Ms. Haines stated that the correspondence received above referenced these citizens' concerns regarding the discontinuation of the Blue Earth composting program at the Transfer Station. She also noted that an article about the Town's composting program and proposed hazardous waste drop-off program will be published in the March 27th edition of the East Haddam News.

5. First Selectmen's Report

Ms. Haines reported that the Swing Bridge will be open to water traffic, starting May 1st, on an hourly as needed basis.

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

- Amalia Shaltiel – stated that she had spoken with several citizens who expressed their support for maintaining the Town's composting program. She said that it is her understanding that the Town pays for the composting program from revenues received from the state's NIPS program. Ms. Shaltiel stated that it appears that the Town takes in approximately $10k/yr. from the NIPS program and that the cost of the composting program is less than that amount. She asked why the Town couldn't continue the current program until a suitable replacement plan is in place?

- Todd Gelston – stated that tonight was the first he had heard that the Town is considering eliminating its composting program. He encouraged the Board to establish a committee to evaluate the program and determine the root cause of why it has not lived up to the Town's expectations to reduce weight in the hopper. He advised that the town of Glastonbury has a very successful composting program and suggested the Town, or potential Composting Committee, look into how that program is run.

  Mr. Gelston also inquired about the Town's policy for posting advance notice for Town meetings. Ms. Zemienieski advised that the state requires 5-7 days advance notice and that the Town posts their legal notices in the East Haddam News within that timeframe. She noted; however, that notice is posted on the Town's website as soon as the Board of Selectmen approve the date, time, and place of Town meetings. Mr. Gelston expressed his opinion that the current policy does not give citizens sufficient notice of important meetings. He suggested the Town also utilize road signs to provide additional notification.

- Rev. Diana Rogers – thanked the Board members for their responses to her email about the Town's composting program. She stated that many people bring their food scraps to the Transfer Station for composting and noted that, if it is discontinued, it will be easy for

them to fall out of that habit. She stated that she would like to see a solution that keeps a composting program at the Transfer Station. Rev. Rogers questioned why the Sustainability Team had not been informed of the decision to eliminate the program.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Devices (ATESD) Discussion: Ms. Haines reported that the Town's attorney had reviewed the ATESD draft ordinance and had not made any changes. She stated that the attorney had also informed her that the Town would have to appoint a hearing officer to resolve ticketing disputes and that the hearing officer cannot be an employee of the Town.

Ms. Haines polled the Selectmen about their thoughts about moving forward with the ATESD program. Ms. Bourgoin stated she has a number of concerns about the program and would rather use the money to hire more police officers in Town. Mr. Dill stated that, at first, he thought the program would be a good solution to the Town's speeding problem; however, after learning more about it, he does not feel it will be cost effective and is disappointed about its lack of portability. In response to a question from Ms. Haines, both Ms. Bourgoin and Mr. Dill did not feel it was worth pursuing a Public Hearing on the program.

B. Three Bridges Cemetery Discussion and Potential Resolution: Ms. Haines reported that the Town had received a letter from the owners of Three Bridges Cemetery expressing their interest in donating the property to the Town. She advised that she sent the documents to the Town's Attorney for review and asked him to create a quitclaim deed and to comment on potential resolutions to send this donation of property to a Town Meeting for acceptance.

8. New Business

A. HB 7067, Municipal Option Motor Vehicle Depreciation Schedule Discussion: Ms. Haines provided background on HB7067. She advised that the state has changed the way towns assess motor vehicles for tax purposes. She stated that, going forward, vehicles will be assessed at a percentage of the MSRP rather than at the NADA level.

Ms. Haines advised that the state has given municipalities the flexibility of selecting whether the top assessment starts at 85% or 90%. She noted that, if the Town chooses to use the 90% figure, it would not have a significant impact on property taxes and it would cost the Town $700.00 to modify its tax accounting software. She stated that, either way, the Town would be missing tax dollars and have to make that up some way.

Ms. Haines solicited input from meeting attendees. Board of Finance Chairman Gelston and Tax Collector Dill responded to questions. Ms. Dill provided additional details about the Bill and stated that she is not in favor of starting the depreciation schedule at 90%.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to take no action to adopt the modifications to the depreciation schedule for October 1, 2024 for motor vehicles. Unanimous aye.

B. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (SUSCT):

Sustainability Team

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

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

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

9. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison's Reports: Ms. Bourgoin reported that the Sustainability Team had last met on March 18th. She noted that they are hosting monthly Community Conversations with a goal of connecting East Haddam citizens with various non-profits. She stated that the next event is scheduled for March 29th, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Grange Hall.

Mr. Bourgoin also reported the following regarding the Sustainability Team's work:

- They received a tag for their Silver plaque.
- An Earth Day event is scheduled for April 27th.
- A Repair Café is scheduled for May 10th.

B. Other: Ms. Haines advised the following Board of Finance Budget Workshops are scheduled and invited the public to attend:

- March 20th at 4:30 p.m. with the Public Works & Board of Education.
- March 22th at 9:00 a.m.
- March 24th at 4:30 p.m.

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 7:45 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary