Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
September 2, 2020
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: R. Smith; T. Govert; C. Quinn
Also Present: A. Blaschik; E. Blaschik; K. Blaschik; C. Brownell; L. D'Aquila; R. Gross, M.D.; J. Moreau; S. Wheeler; L. Woodward; L. Zemienieski, other members of the public via virtual media

1. First Selectman Smith 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 Ms. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of August 19, 2020 and Special Meeting of August 19, 2020

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of August 19, 2020 as written. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 19, 2020 as written. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: Mr. Smith reported that the following correspondence had been received:

   - An email from Alan & Karin Blaschik, dated August 19, 2020, requesting the Selectmen's meetings be opened to the public. He noted that Ms. Zemienieski responded to the email on September 2nd advising that the Municipal Office Complex opened to the public on August 31st and "*as such in-person board and commission meetings are also available*".

   - An email from Melissa Ziobron, dated September 2, 2020, in which she raised the following questions. Mr. Smith advised that he would respond to Ms. Ziobron in writing.

     "Q: I watched the recent P&Z meeting where the full BOS members were in attendance, however during the meeting when asked if the BOS should convene, the First Selectman responded that they were told they did not have to. I would like to know who provided this advice? A quorum was present in a public forum---what is the reasoning for not properly noticing this meeting of elected BOS officials? Does this follow appropriate FOI guidance?

     "Q: During the P&Z meeting after a prolonged discussion regarding the offensive statements classifying our volunteers on the board as racists by Selectman Govert, Chairman Brownell asked that a public apology or statement be provided by the BOS. When can the residents of East Haddam expect this apology?

     "Q: As a former elected official I have often spoken to the grave danger of losing dedicated volunteers due to potential harassment by others or other potential issues often faced by a public servant. Selectman Govert also mentioned this concern during her comments at the same P & Z meeting. What policies are being developed in East Haddam to recruit volunteers?"

- An email from Dr. R. Gross, dated August 11, 2020, in which he said he "*appreciates the time Mr. Smith took out of his day to meet with Laurie [D'Aquila] and me*". Dr. Gross further states, in his email, that he agrees with Ms. D'Aquila's summary of the meeting and her opinion that "*very significant disadvantages*" will result if the Board of Fire Commissioners' proposed new work schedule is put into effect. Mr. Smith advised that their concern would be addressed later in the meeting under item A of the First Selectman's Report.

5. First Selectmen's Report

Mr. Smith reported that Public Works Director Beth Lunt has resigned to take a job with the town of Columbia. He stated her last day will be September 16th.

He further reported that work on Neptune Avenue should begin soon.

A. East Haddam Ambulance Association Discussion: Mr. Smith recognized Ms. D'Aquila who reviewed her objections to the Board of Fire Commissioners' proposal to change the paid staff's work schedule which would result in eliminating coverage in the early morning and early evening hours. She stated that there would be no benefit to the community from the proposed new schedule and, in fact, the proposed schedule eliminates coverage "*at times of the community's highest need and call volume*". Ms. D'Aquila stated that 21% of the Ambulance Association's annual call volume occurs during the 2.5 hours the Fire Commissioners want to eliminate from the paid staff's schedule.

Ms. D'Aquila noted that the Ambulance Association's call volume data had been used to justify the hiring of a second full-time fire-fighter to provide coverage by three staff members from 6am to 6pm, the timeframe jointly agreed to by the Boards of Selectmen and Fire Commissioners, the Fire Chief and the Ambulance Association. She stated that the Ambulance Association currently has a mutual aid rate of 4% for the year but the proposed schedule change would result in much higher rate estimated at up to 25% with an additional cost of $35,000/yr.

Ms. D'Aquila stated that, "*The current record of the high number of paid staff call outs over the past few months has shown that there isn't proper management of the current crew of two staff*". She noted that the call outs leave the Town without appropriate fire coverage since the Ambulance Association can only cover the EMS calls, not fire emergencies.

In response to questions raised by Board Member Quinn, Mr. Smith confirmed that the fire fighters' collective bargaining agreement stipulates a work schedule of 6am to 6pm and Ms. D'Aquila provided the historical record of the move to 12-hour shifts over time. Ms. D'Aquila also confirmed that she has not had an opportunity to meet face-to-face with the Fire Commissioners to discuss her concerns.

In response to a request from Board Member Govert, Mr. Smith agreed to provide more detailed mutual aid data.

Ms. D'Aquila inquired about next steps and Mr. Smith stated that he has not made any decision regarding the Board of Fire Commissioners proposal and he doesn't expect to make any changes to the firefighters' work schedule for the foreseeable future. He advised that he would schedule a meeting with representatives from the Boards of Fire Commissioners and Selectmen, and the Ambulance Association to further discuss the Fire Commissioners' proposal.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Woodward discussed a recent invoice that the Ambulance Association had submitted to the Town and Mr. Smith stated that the Board of Finance will discuss the bill at their September 19th meeting.

Mr. Smith opened the floor to questions and/or comments on this issue by the public. Dr. Gross and Mr. J. Moreau agreed with Ms. D'Aquila's concerns. Mr. Moreau reviewed the pros and cons of staffing the Fire Department with part-time fire fighters vs. full-time fire-fighters. He stated that there are benefits and disadvantages to both approaches; however, he feels the benefits of a part-time staff for East Haddam out-number the disadvantages.

There was a brief discussion regarding incomplete patient charts that have been outstanding since 2019.

B. COVID 19 Reopening Report: Mr. Smith advised that the Municipal Office Building opened to the public on August 31st and that a limited number of the public will be allowed to attend the Town's Board and Commission meetings. He also stated that, due to COVID's social distancing requirements, the public will not be able to attend some meetings such as those where the Board and Commission participants max out the number of attendees allowed in the meeting room. He noted, however, that the meetings will continue to be broadcast on YouTube.

Mr. Smith reported that the re-opening of the libraries was delayed a week due to not receiving the sneeze-guards from the supplier on time; however, the Grange is now open for public use. He advised that the Senior Center is gradually getting back to normal and has scheduled Tai Chi sessions outdoors, weather permitting. Meal distributions and the medical car are on-going but the building probably will not reopen before September 21st at the earliest.

C. Responses to Previous Meeting Questions: This agenda item was addressed earlier in the meeting under Correspondence and is recorded in the minutes above.

6. Unfinished Business

A. East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee Update: Mr. Smith stated that there was no new update on this agenda item. He advised that the Committee continues to move forward with their evaluation of the preferred developer's proposal and has reached out to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Commission for input.

B. Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee Update: Mr. Smith reported that the Economic Development Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee have scheduled a joint meeting for the following evening so that EDC and P&Z can provide input to the Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee.

C. Ordinance Amendment Request - Lake Hayward Speed Limit: Mr. Smith reported that the proposed revisions to the Town's current ordinance have been submitted to the CT DEEP. He stated that he expected a response from them in the near future and the next step is to bring the draft ordinance before a Public Hearing and then a Town Meeting.

D. Tax and Business Incentive Program Applications (Staehly Farms, Clark Gates LLC): Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to documents in their meeting packets that provide additional information concerning the impact of approving the two Tax and Business Incentive Program applications. He noted that the documents provide information regarding the impact of the

applicant's rebate on individual taxpayers. Mr. Smith reviewed the process for approving applications and awarding the tax rebates.

7. New Business

A. Homeland Security Memorandum of Agreement Resolution: Mr. Smith recognized Ms. Zemienieski who explained that this is a regional collaboration grant and funding will go to Region 3 REPT to benefit all of the towns in that Region. She advised that this is annual grant and the Board of Selectmen of each town must adopt a resolution agreeing to provide all appropriate documentation for the grant.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Town of East Haddam may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Robert R. Smith, as the First Selectman of the Town of East Haddam, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of East Haddam and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.
Unanimous aye.

B. 2020 Emergency Management Performance Grant Resolution: Mr. Smith advised that the Town submits for this grant each year and it requires an authorizing resolution from the Board of Selectmen for the chief executive officer to sign the application.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of East Haddam may enter into with and deliver to the State of Connecticut, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, any and all documents which it deems to be necessary or appropriate; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Robert R. Smith, as First Selectman of the Town of East Haddam, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of East Haddam and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents
Unanimous aye.

C. Grant Acceptance – FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program – Vehicle Award: Mr. Smith reported that the Town has received notification of a grant award from FEMA's Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program in the amount of $904,761.90. He noted that this is the second largest grant that the Program has awarded and complimented Steve Dorfman and Eric Kolasinski on their successful efforts in putting together the grant application.

Mr. Smith reported that, as a condition of the grant, the Town is required to contribute non-Federal funds equal to or greater than 5% of the grant (i.e. $45,238.10), for a total approved budget of $950,000.00 to purchase a Quint firetruck.

Mr. Smith advised that the Board will need to accept the grant and send it to the Board of Finance for acceptance. He stated that the Governor's Executive Order 7CC, issued April 21, 2020 as a consequence of the COVID pandemic, permits the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to authorize certain actions, including the acceptance of grants, by a majority vote of each body.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to accept a grant in the amount of $904,761.90 for the Fiscal Year 2019 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) funding from the US Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and send acceptance of said grant to the Board of Finance for approval. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response, the Governor's Executive Order 7CC, issued April 21, 2020, permits the municipality's legislative body (Board of Selectmen) and budget-making authority (Board of Finance) to authorize certain actions by a majority vote of each such body to include (i) the application for or acceptance of any grants, funding or gifts. Unanimous aye.

D. Board/Commission/Committee Changes (IWWC, REC): Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to correspondence in their meeting packets from the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Chairman Randy Dill and Parks & Recreation Director Conroy regarding several membership changes to the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission and the Recreation Commission respectively.

Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission

Motion made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to reappoint Randolph Dill and Jennifer Burton-Reeve as regular members for two-year terms to expire July 1, 2022 on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. Unanimous aye.

Recreation Commission

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to accept, with regret, the resignations of Steven Blanchard and Christopher Miner from the Recreation Commission. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to reappoint Patrick Laffan, Michael Davis and Daniel Carbo as regular members on the Recreation Commission for three-year terms to expire July 1, 2022. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to reappoint Tina Pisciotti and Charles Grillo as regular members on the Recreation Commission for three-year terms to expire July 1, 2023. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to appoint Fern Tremblay to fill a vacancy as a regular member on the Recreation Commission with a term to expire July 1, 2021. Unanimous aye.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Govert, to appoint Travis Goodie to fill a vacancy as a regular member on the Recreation Commission with a term to expire July 1, 2023. Unanimous aye.

E. Tax Refunds: Mr. Smith called the Board's attention to five tax refunds.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to award tax refunds in the amounts as presented.

- $ 70.98 to Kerry McRae,
- $109.43 to Michael Callahan,
- $107.91 to Vault Trust (Ally Financial),
- $108.82 to Toyota Lease Trust, and
- $525.00 to Enterprise FM Trust.

Unanimous aye.

8. Selectmen's Discussion

Board Member Quinn recommended awarding a commendation to Officer Smith and Captain Sarnik for their actions during the recent assault of Office Smith. Mr. Smith stated he supported Ms. Quinn's recommendation and will follow-though with the commendations as soon as he receives documentation of the incident. Ms. Quinn agreed to follow-up on providing him with the police report.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Quinn, Mr. Smith confirmed that the Fire Department's new fire boat and pump cannot be used as planned. He stated that, to prevent a similar failure in the future, he has modified how such bids go out going forward. He stated that he is in the process of evaluating the usefulness of the equipment.

A. Liaison Reports: Mr. Smith reported that the Goodspeed Airport Evaluation Committee and East Haddam Village Revitalization Committee have been very busy. He noted that the EHVRC has been in place for 10 years and recognized the commitment of its members.

9. Citizens' Concerns/Public Comment: The following Citizens' Concerns/Public Comment was discussed at the meeting:

- In response to questions raised by Ms. K. Blaschik, Mr. Smith confirmed that two fire-trucks will be retired making space in the firehouses for the Quint that will be purchased with the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters grant. He also confirmed that a committee will be established to create the specifications for the Quint and to oversee its purchase.

- In response to a request by Mr. C. Brownell, Mr. Smith stated that future Board of Selectmen Meeting Agendas will revert to the pre-COVID format which provides citizens an opportunity to speak at two points in the meetings.

- In response to an inquiry from Mr. C. Brownell, Mr. Smith stated that he will revisit the Cemetery Committee's charge and move it forward. There was a brief discussion regarding maintenance of the Town's cemeteries and Mr. Smith confirmed that the new Director of Operations will oversee their maintenance.

- In response to a question raised by Dr. R. Gross, Mr. Smith stated that there is currently no COVID testing center in Town. Mr. Smith advised that the closest testing center is in East Hampton.

- Mr. J. Moreau reviewed several conditions that the Board imposed on their approval of the submission of a grant to purchase a Quint fire truck. He noted several recent occasions, such as the renovations to the fire houses and the purchase of a "fireboat", where the Fire Department staff failed to perform appropriate due diligence supervising the projects resulting in poor financial results and stated he was pleased that an independent committee will oversee creating the specs for the Quint and its purchase. He stated that he had supervised a Quint fire truck crew when he was on the West Hartford Fire Department and offered his expertise during the Town's specification drafting and purchase of the vehicle. Mr. Moreau recognized all the work Steve Dorfman and Eric Kolasinski did to put together the grant application; however, expressed concern that the Fire Captain receives a $3,000.00 stipend to do that work.

  In response to a conflict of interest concern raised by Mr. J. Moreau, Mr. Smith confirmed that Fire Marshal Angersola has been hired as the Town's new Director of Operations and will perform both roles until the Town can find a replacement for him. He advised that, in the meantime, he has instructed Mr. Angersola to recuse himself from any and all Fire Marshal duties related to Town facilities.

- Steve Dorfman, a virtual meeting participant, submitted an email advising that the minimum turnaround time is 360 days from contract award for the Quint.

10. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Ms. Govert, seconded by Ms. Quinn, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Govert, Secretary