Board of Selectmen
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
May 6, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes

Present: T. Gelston; E. Dill; T. Sevigny
Also Present: J. Leatherbee; E. Morgen; J. Pittendreigh; R. Skinner; K. Staehly; J. Thomas; L. Zemienieski and other members of the public

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Gelston called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of April 15, 2026, Special Meeting of April 22, 2026, Special Meeting of April 29, 2026 (5pm), and Special Meeting of April 29, 2026 (7pm)

   Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to minutes in their meeting packets.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 15, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of April 22, 2026. Unanimous aye.

   Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of April 29, 2026 (5:00 p.m.). Unanimous aye.

   The minutes of the Special Meeting of April 29, 2026 (7:00 p.m.) were not yet completed and approval was postponed.

4. Correspondence: No correspondence was presented at the meeting.

5. First Selectman's Report

   First Selectman Gelston reported that the FY 2026-2027 budget was approved by voters.

   He provided updates on the following:
   - Road paving funded by the $10 million road bond, noting that several roads requiring drainage improvements will be deferred and other roads will be paved this summer.
   - Traffic enforcement and speeding concerns, including the use of electronic speed signs and police enforcement.
   - Ongoing regional ambulance service workshops.
   - Potential siting of a cell tower at 7 Hood Lane.

- Economic development initiatives, including the East Haddam Village Redevelopment Agency and the Black Birch Golf Course feasibility study.
- Openings on the Economic Development Commission.
- Successful Earth Day and Arbor Day events.
- Planning for the July 11, 2026 Declaration of Independence reenactment and community celebration.

A. Board of Assessment Appeals – Spring 2026 Report: The Spring 2026 Board of Assessment Appeals report and assessment adjustments were received and reviewed. No action was required.

B. Ethics Commission Presentation and Discussion on Potential Changes to the Code of Ethics Ordinance: Members of the Ethics Commission presented proposed amendments to the Code of Ethics Ordinance.

Key changes included:
- Reorganization and clarification of complaint procedures and timelines.
- Addition of two alternate commission members to ensure quorum when recusals occur.
- Creation of a conflict-of-interest disclosure form to be used when a conflict becomes apparent.

The Board thanked the Commission for its work. Mr. Gelston stated they will send the draft to the Town Attorney for review if the Board elects to move the proposal forward to Town Meeting.

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

Janie Pittendreigh – in response to a question raised by Ms. Pittendreigh, regarding whether additional state aid recently allocated to municipalities would affect the newly adopted budget, First Selectman Gelston explained that the Town is awaiting guidance from the State before the Board of Finance sets the FY26-27 mill rate.

7. Unfinished Business

A. Cell Tower Discussion – 440 Town Street or 7 Hood Lane: No substantive updates were reported. Mr. Gelston reiterated that two companies remain interested in a tower at 7 Hood Lane, and the site continues to be evaluated.

B. Open Space Discussion – Sprecher Property Exchange Proposal – Shanaghan Road: Draft deeds were previously sent to the property owners for review. Mr. Gelston advised that the Board is awaiting further information before taking action.

C. Open Space Discussion – Dale King Property – South Sheepskin Hollow Road: Mr. Gelston reported that resolutions are being prepared and will be considered along with the Sprecher property matter.

D. Discussion of Potential Private Road Ordinance Public Hearing: Mr. Gelston stated that the next step would be to send the draft Private Road Ordinance to a public hearing for discussion.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to hold a public hearing on June 4, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the potential addition of Article III (Private Roads) to Chapter 285, Streets and Sidewalks Ordinance. Unanimous aye.

The Board reviewed and approved the draft public hearing notice language.

E. Conservation Commission Ordinance Discussion – Membership Amendment: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed while the Conservation Commission continues its review.

F. New Library Exploratory Committee – Appointment of Committee Members: Mr. Gelston stated that candidates for the New Library Exploratory Committee had been interviewed and said that the Board should make the agreed upon appointments.

Motion made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to appoint Dawn Barlow, John Bielot, Elizabeth Dillon, Shea Jezek, Maureen Sullivan, Laurel White, and Deborah Willard as regular members, and Jennifer Esty and James Leatherbee as alternate members, to the New Library Exploratory Committee, with terms to expire upon completion of the committee's report. Unanimous aye.

8. New Business

A. 2025-2026 Emergency Management Performance Grant Resolution: Mr. Gelston advised that the Town submits for this grant each year and the application requires an authorizing resolution from the Board of Selectmen for the chief executive officer to sign the application.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to adopt 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 Todd H. Gelston, 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 and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents.
Unanimous aye.

B. Board, Commission and Committee Changes: No appointments were made under this agenda item.

C. Tax Refunds: Mr. Gelston called the Board's attention to one tax refund in their meeting packets.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Sevigny, to approve a tax refund in the amount of $349.06 to Ari Fleet LT. Unanimous aye.

9. Selectmen's Discussion: Mr. Sevigny reported that the Connecticut Municipal Development Authority (CMDA) may be invited to a future meeting to make a presentation regarding financing and technical assistance opportunities for the downtown redevelopment projects.

He also advised the Board of a national antitrust lawsuit involving fire truck manufacturers and stated that information will be forwarded to the Town Attorney for review.

A. Liaison Reports: There were no liaison reports provided at the meeting.

B. Other

1. Memorial Day Parade: Mr. Gelston advised that the Memorial Day Parade is scheduled for Monday, May 25, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

10. Public Comment

Jim Leatherbee provided comments regarding:

- Delays and rising costs associated with new fire truck purchases.
- Potential use of Nathan Hale Park and the schoolhouse for historical and educational events.
- Ongoing efforts by the Riverview Cemetery group to lease and improve adjacent property.
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11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Sevigny, seconded by Mr. Dill, to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. Unanimous aye.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
Erik Dill, Secretary