

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2020, 7:00 P.M.
MEETING ROOM 1, SALEM TOWN HALL**

PRESENT

Kevin Lyden
Edward Chmielewski, Jr.
Ron LaBonte
Hugh McKenney
Terri Salas (7:02 p.m.)

ABSENT

none

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Lyden called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Tuesday, November 4, 2020 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting

M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, November 4, 2020. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA: *none*

4. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS

E-mail public comment to SelectmenPublicComment@salemct.gov prior to 7:10 p.m.

No comments were received via e-mail or the white drop box located in front of Town Hall.

On behalf of the Board and their families, First Selectman Lyden wished everyone and their families a *Mele Kalikimaka* and *Hau'oli Makahiki Hou*.

5. AGENDA:

A. Resolution with Respect to the Authorization, Issuance and sale of, not exceeding \$2,7000,000 Town of Salem, Connecticut General Obligation Bonds (*Discussion & Action*)

M/S/C: McKenney/Salas, to authorize the issuance and sale of, not exceeding \$2,700,000.00 Town of Salem, Connecticut General Obligation Refunding Bonds.

FURTHER RESOLVED that Kevin T. Lyden, as First Selectman of the Town of Salem is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents required for the grant acceptance on behalf of the Board of Selectmen 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. **Discussion:** First Selectman Lyden stated that the Resolution is an opportunity for the town to re-fund the \$4.5 million bond for the Salem School Renovation Project. The re-funding would result in a savings of approximately \$150,000.00 at the end of the term due to the reduced interest rate. Similar to refinancing, the balance of the debt would be re-funded for the same remaining term of nine (9) years. The town currently has an AA-3 Positive rating from Moody's, a strong Fund Balance, and is very well-fiscally managed. Because the allocation of the funds was already voted upon by the citizens via a referendum, the re-funding would not require further approval from the Board of Finance or the residents. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

B. School Roof/HVAC and Oil Tank Financing requirements to request funding portion from the State of Connecticut (*Discussion*)

First Selectman Lyden reported that an estimate of \$1,016,097.00 for the Salem School Roof Replacement/HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning) project (1996 addition) was received in January 2020. Because the estimate was received nearly one year ago, it is expected that the cost has increased by approximately 4%. Approximately \$346,367.00 is expected to be reimbursed by the State incrementally as the project progresses. It is hoped that the project will go out to bid in March 2021 and the work would be conducted during the Summer of 2021. To date, approximately \$281,000.00 has been allocated in the town's Capital Plan and, with the expected reimbursement by the State, approximately \$500,000.00 will be necessary to fund the project. Per the Town Charter, the funds must be approved by the townspeople via a Town Meeting and referendum, which could postpone the project for another year. As such, he is investigating the possibility of adding the remaining amount to the re-funding of the existing bond, which the Board just approved. Because the existing bond was already approved by the residents, the additional \$500,000.00 might not require an additional vote by the residents. Other options include bonding the \$500,000.00, which would not be recommended due to the amount, or obtaining a loan, which would have a higher interest rate. A decision will need to be made prior to the expiration of the re-funding agreement in January 2022.

The removal/replacement of the school's fuel oil tank will cost approximately \$140,000.00. To date, \$40,000.00 has been allocated by the Board of Finance in the town's Capital Plan. The remaining funds may be approved by the town via a virtual Town Meeting or derive from the town's Unassigned Fund Balance.

D. COVID-19 Update (*Discussion*)

First Selectman Lyden reported that, to date, there are 69 (sixty-nine) COVID-19 positive cases and 1 (one) death. Positive cases throughout the region and the State continue to rise. Initial vaccines are expected to become available by the end of the month and vaccination planning and preparation training is currently in progress for the disbursement of the vaccines. A second dose of the vaccine will need to be administered four (4) weeks following the initial dose. Testing sites for the coronavirus will be posted on the town's website.

E. Tax Collector Refunds (Action Item)

M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to direct the Town Treasurer to issue refunds, recommended and certified by the Tax Collector, as presented, to the Board of Selectmen in the amount of \$1,786.71 (one thousand seven hundred eighty-six dollars and seventy-one cents) on the 8th day of December 2020.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

5. REPORTS:

A. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Lyden reported that positive feedback has been received regarding the two (2) new speed signs that were recently installed. Two (2) additional solar-powered speed signs will be received by the Connecticut Prevention Training and Technical Assistance Center and installed to improve the safety in the vicinity Music Vale Road and Route 85, due to the poor sightline.

Due to the receipt of complaints regarding door-to-door solicitations, the Resident State Troopers are encouraging residents to research the businesses selling their goods and services prior to purchasing any items. Residents may contact the Connecticut State Police Troop K should any of the solicitors become offensive. Residents are not required to answer their door. The Town of Salem does not endorse any company's selling of goods/services door-to-door.

The Library's HVAC project continues to progress. The new boilers and heat pumps have been installed and the old fuel tank has been de-installed and the new propane tank has been installed. The company has been replacing the copper pipes and working on the controls.

Salem VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Post Commander Steve Buck, Salem School Principal Joan Phillips, and the Town Hall staff coordinated their efforts to engage the students in creating and handwriting nearly 200 "Thank You" letters to the town's veterans and/or their spouses for their service to our country. The letters were very well-received.

With the aid of Senator Paul Formica, the town successfully received a \$120,000.00 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant. The funds will be utilized to remove the underground fuel tanks that supply fuel for the town's emergency and Public Works

vehicles and school buses. The generator that operates the fuel pumps and the Town Hall and EOC (Emergency Operations Center), which has been having issues since the last major storm, will also need to be replaced.

He reminded everyone to register to receive News & Announcements from the town via the town website or by contacting the First Selectman's office.

B. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

Selectman McKenney reported that Salem School will be engaging in distance learning until Monday, December 14, and the staff was commended for the smooth transition from in-person to distance learning. The BOE continues to work closely with the town and the Uncas Health District. While the children have been engaged in distance learning, the Public Works staff has been engaged in some additional cleaning of the school. The BOE reviewed and approved its Capital Plan requests for the Board of Finance. The deadline for the BOE vacancy has been extended as they continue to seek a qualified candidate to fill the vacancy; interested parties are encouraged to contact the Superintendent's office.

C. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Lyden reported that PFK O'Connor Davies is in the process of finalizing the town's FY2019/20 Audit. The Board is in the process of preparing the RFP (Request for Proposal) for Auditing Services, which should be approved at their next meeting.

F. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Selectwoman Salas reported that the Commission held Public Hearings regarding a proposed text amendment for the addition of a new definition for a "Private Event Facility" and a new section entitled "Special Events and Limited Accommodation Zone" to the Salem Zoning Regulations and a proposed age-restricted development to be located on Route 82. Following an extensive discussion and a significant amount of input from the residents regarding the proposed text amendment, the Commission voted to deny the application. The Commissioners approved the application for the proposed age-restricted development. The Commission also continued to discuss the POCD (Plan of Conservation and Development) Survey.

G. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commission continues to discuss the challenges that small businesses are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Senator Formica joined their meeting via speakerphone to discuss available assistance and grant(s) for small businesses. The Senator encouraged business owners to sign up to receive updates at his website, senatorformica.com.

The Commissioners also discussed the positive business climate that has been created by the First Selectman and Town Hall staff, especially during this challenging year. Positive feedback continues to be received for the Salem Plaza, 1 New London Road, improvements.

Discussions also included the 2021/22 Business Directory, their support for the proposed age-restricted development, and the POCD.

First Selectman Lyden applauded all of those who worked on the revised age-restricted development regulation. Such developments were noted in the town's 2002 and 2012 POCD as a much-needed item. He is personally aware of long-time residents who have moved out of town due to the lack of such housing, only to return following their demise. Developers are often not willing to embark on such a project in a town that does not offer any public sewer or water. The proposed development will allow those who are age 55 and older to live in a one-bedroom, ADA-accessible rental unit with a garage, porch, and deck within a small community. The development will be equipped with a Community Building and the lawns will be manicured and the snow will be plowed and shoveled.

H. LIBRARY

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Library Board is holding their monthly meeting concurrently. Their discussions have continued to center around the new HVAC unit, which was previously discussed by the First Selectman. The Director is preparing for the upcoming budget season and The Friends of Salem Library is anxious to become active again and have been investigating alternative ways to reach out to the community and maintain and make new connections.

I. MILITARY LIAISON

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the town has a very active military community, comprised of active members, retirees, reservists, and the like. As reported by the First Selectman, the town's veterans and/or their family members received cards and postcards from the Salem School students. He reminded veterans with Military/TRICARE Insurance to contact TRICARE to ensure that they continue to receive their healthcare benefits.

6. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: LaBonte/McKenney, to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem