

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2021, 7:00 P.M.  
MEETING ROOM 1, SALEM TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT**

Kevin Lyden  
Edward Chmielewski, Jr.  
Ron LaBonte  
Hugh McKenney

**ABSENT**

Terri Salas

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Lyden called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Tuesday, January 5, 2021 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/McKenney, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, January 5, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Chmielewski, McKenney, and Lyden. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman LaBonte.**

**B. Monday, January 11, 2021 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/McKenney, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of Monday, January 11, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Chmielewski, McKenney, and Lyden. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman LaBonte.**

**4. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*E-mail public comment to [SelectmenPublicComment@salemct.gov](mailto: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.

**5. AGENDA:**

**A. COVID-19 Update (*Discussion*)**

First Selectman Lyden reported that information regarding the pandemic is regularly e-blasted to those who have registered to receive the town's news & announcements. Up-to-date information is also available on the Uncas Health District website ([uncashd.org](http://uncashd.org)) and the State of Connecticut website ([ct.gov](http://ct.gov)). Healthcare Personnel, Long-Term Care Facility Residents, and Medical First Responders have received their vaccinations as part of Phase 1a of the COVID-19 vaccination rollout. Individuals who are 75 years of age and older may now register to receive their vaccinations as part of the Phase 1b of the rollout. Individuals must register and schedule an appointment via email, online, or telephone at (877) 918-

2224, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. Vaccinations will be available for individuals ages 65–74 later this month. Though the system has encountered some issues, it continues to be improved. Individuals in need of assistance navigating the system are encouraged to contact either the First Selectman's Administrative Assistant Meredith Eisenberg or Salem's Agent for the Aging/Senior Citizen Pam Henry, who are working closely with the town's seniors to ensure that they receive their vaccinations. The town's COVID-19 numbers are improving, but are not as low as it was five months ago. He urged everyone to continue following the proper, recommended safety protocols. He commended the Uncas Health District Director Patrick McCormack and his staff who have been working tirelessly during this pandemic.

**B. Salem Emergency Services Update** (*Discussion*)

Salem Emergency Services Selectman Liaison Chmielewski expressed his excitement with the positive manner in which the team is moving forward and the outstanding comradery and cooperation between the Town Hall Staff, Mike's staff, and the Fire Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of both Fire Departments, who continue to meet regularly. They are continuing to interview candidates for the available full- and part-time Firefighter/EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) positions in an effort to enhance their service to the town. One of the main challenges in filling the full-time position has been the competitiveness for the position throughout the State. In the past, the position has been filled from within, eliminating the need to train and familiarize the individuals with the town and its residents. He commended Emergency Services Director Mike Bednarz, who has improved the communication between all of the parties and recently recruited Rick Martin, former Salem Volunteer Fire Company (SVFCO) Chief, as the Assistant Emergency Services Director.

Emergency Services Director Bednarz reiterated his appreciation to the Board for the opportunity to serve as the Administrator of Emergency Services for the Town of Salem and to Selectmen Lyden and Chmielewski for their ongoing guidance. He felt that they have set up a great team of individuals to address their hurdles, including the challenges of training individuals who are new to serving the town. To help with this endeavor, he has recruited Rick Martin as an Assistant who has the necessary experience to create a positive and consistent training atmosphere. Selectman Liaison to Salem Emergency Services Chmielewski, Assistant Emergency Services Director Martin, the Gardner Lake and Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs, and Full-Time Fire Fighter/EMT Ryan Teixeira, and himself are working together to determine the town's needs and enhance their existing services and training. Emergency Services Director Bednarz introduced Assistant Emergency Services Director Martin, who is the former Chief (2-1/2 years) and Deputy Chief (7 years) of SVFCO; a Certified State Fire Instructor, Fire Officer, and Safety Officer and Fire Suppression.

Assistant Emergency Services Director Martin stated that, because the town has been fortunate in past years to be able to hire within their ranks, one of his goals is to draft and

develop a training program, in writing, to maintain consistency and continue to improve their services and professionalism and serve the town, its residents, and visitors in the best way possible.

Emergency Services Director Bednarz added that the town's full-time Career Fire Fighter Teixeira, along with Assistant Emergency Services Director Martin, are fully qualified to provide CPR training, further enhancing the town's overall safety. He is hopeful that all of the town's residents and organizations will seize the opportunity. Selectman McKenney suggested considering reaching out to Salem School Principal Joan Phillips to provide CPR training to the teaching staff.

First Selectman Lyden thanked and commended them for their hard work and efforts. While the town has been fortunate to have its emergency services grow organically over the years, they are no longer able to rely on the same practices and, as career professionals in the field, the team will be able to establish the structure and build the foundation upon which the town's emergency services can continue to grow and prosper. The town will continue to invest in its Emergency Services, the costs of which, he expects, will continue to rise.

Salem Emergency Services Selectman Liaison Chmielewski announced that, as the result of the improved communications between the town's Finance Department and Fire Companies, he will be delivering a stipend check to the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company in the amount of \$11,540.00 for the nominal fees for the emergency responders.

**C. Schedule Board of Selectmen Special Meeting for FY2021/2022 (*Discussion & Action*)**

First Selectman Lyden stated that the Special Meeting is scheduled annually. General Liability costs will remain the same while the Workers' Compensation costs will be increasing by 3%, due to recent claims. Medical Insurance will be rising approximately 15%. The cost for the Resident State Troopers is forthcoming. The Selectmen agreed to schedule the Special Meeting for Wednesday, February 24, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., at Salem Town Hall, Conference Room 1.

**D. Tax Collector Refunds (*Action Item*)**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/McKenney, 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 \$7,965.11 (seven thousand nine hundred sixty-five dollars and eleven cents) on the 5th day of January 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor.**

**5. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

Information has been posted on the town's website regarding the availability of an Equity Matching Grant from the Women's Business Development Council, which is offering matching grants of up to \$10,000.00 to women and minority entrepreneurs.

While the de-installation of the underground oil tanks will decrease the risks and save the town approximately \$2,000.00/year in Pollution Policy costs, the town will need to acquire a Cyber Risk Policy. The town's current Cyber Risk Policy, which is built into its main policy with CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency), will expire on June 30, 2021. As such, he has committed the town to a Cyber Risk Policy with \$1 million coverage and a \$10,000.00 deductible. Because the School is in the midst of their budget discussions and was unable to commit to the Policy prior to the deadline, he opted to provide the School with the coverage under the same policy.

**B. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)**

Selectman McKenney reported that two (2) very good candidates were interviewed for the vacant seat on the BOE and William Butler was selected to fill the position. The BOE's current budget proposal includes an increase of 4.7% for the FY2021/22. The BOE held a Special Meeting to discuss the search for a new Superintendent and develop their administrative structure with CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) Search Services Consultants Mary Broderick and Jack Reynolds. The Board plans to engage the community through interviews and meetings with advisory groups, officials, parents, and residents of the town. It is expected that the School's current COVID-19 costs of approximately \$189,000.00 will be funded by both the Federal and State Governments.

First Selectman Lyden encouraged everyone to engage in the BOE survey to gauge the public's opinion regarding the town's hiring needs for a new School Superintendent. A link to the survey is available on the town's website.

As a side note, Selectman McKenney commended the Public Works Department on a great job plowing the roads during the recent storms.

**C. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Board of Finance has reviewed and finalized their FY2021/22 Capital Plan. Adjustments may be made, as necessary, until the end of March. They will begin meeting with the various town departments to discuss their respective budget proposals.

**E. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the supplemental appropriation for legal costs due to an increase in public hearings was approved by the Board of Finance. Selectman Chmielewski added that the Commission is diligently working on the town's Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD) and have begun speaking with the town's boards, commissions, organizations, and residents for their input.

**F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commission has begun discussing the POCD and their role in the Plan with Commissioner Carl Fontneau who is a member of both the Economic Development and Planning & Zoning Commissions.

#### **G. LIBRARY**

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Library is very anxious to open its doors. Grant money was received and will be utilized to make visible improvements to the Library's interior.

With respect to the Library's HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) system, First Selectman Lyden reported that there is sludge in the piping in the front of the Library and by the offices. Because attempts to flush the piping have been unsuccessful, they will be shutting down the system to replace those sections of piping when the weather warms. A pipe burst in the storage room over the weekend and was subsequently cleaned. The heat pumps are currently working and a few adjustments will need to be made to the controls. In addition, a soffit will be constructed in the Children's Room to cover additional piping that was installed. He is hoping to be able to open the Library in March. He was pleased to report that a handshake agreement was negotiated with the last Contractor, who will be returning \$20,000.00 to the town. The funds will be returned to the General Fund.

#### **H. MILITARY LIAISON**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that some questions arose regarding the Veteran Flag designation on CT licenses; individuals who are encouraged to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs with any questions they might have or to visit their website to find more information and/or download the application. Qualified veterans may also contact the office regarding arrangements for their burial at the State Veterans Cemetery; spouses also qualify for burial at no cost to the individual. Selectman Military Liaison LaBonte continues to reach out and assist the town's veterans.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. Discussion: None.  
Voice vote, 3-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

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