

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021, 7:00 P.M.
MEETING ROOM 1, SALEM TOWN HALL**

PRESENT

Kevin Lyden
Edward Chmielewski, Jr.
Ron LaBonte
Susan Sullivan

ABSENT

Hugh McKenney

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Lyden called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Tuesday, June 1, 2021, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting

M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, June 1, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

B. Tuesday, June 15, 2021, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting

M/S/C: LaBonte/Sullivan to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, June 15, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Chmielewski, LaBonte, and Sullivan. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman Lyden.

4. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comment:

Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO) Board of Directors (BOD) President Cheryl Philophena expressed her appreciation to the Board of Selectmen for reaching out and meeting with the Fire Company and the First Selectman for his willingness to meet with them to discuss the issues, which has been their primary goal for the past two years. She is hopeful that they will now be able to move forward to, first and foremost, renegotiate the cancelled contract, settle the 2003 vote regarding the ambulance funds, and proceed with the contract that was drafted by Christine, Horace, and Jennifer Lindo and the Fire Marshals. Immediately following these accomplishments, she requested a meeting between the First Selectman, herself, and their respective attorneys to discuss the pending lawsuit. She felt it was time to stop wasting the taxpayers' dollars and expressed the Fire Company's willingness to "come to the table" to resolve the issues. On behalf of the Fire Company, she reiterated her appreciation to them for reaching out to resolve their differences.

First Selectman Lyden reported that, per the discussion with GLVFCO BOD President Philophena and Treasurer Christine Lindo last week, he has reached out to the Town Attorney.

Though she felt that an agreement could be reached regarding the contracts without the involvement of their respective attorneys, GLVFCO BOD President Philophena stated that they, too, have contacted their attorney. She also requested that minutes of any meeting(s) that are held between the two parties be written to ensure that there is no miscommunication or misunderstandings.

Selectman Chmielewski thanked the Fire Company for their service.

Correspondence:

Copy of a letter from GLVFCO BOD Secretary Jennifer Lindo requesting a meeting.

Copy of a letter has been posted on the News & Announcements section of the town website responding to and clarifying concerns expressed by the public regarding the GLVFCO's recent letter to the residents and the continuation of services.

First Selectman Lyden announced that, after 12 years of serving as the town's First Selectman, he and his wife, Kathleen, have made the difficult decision to not run for re-election this coming November. He expressed his appreciation to Acting Selectman Chmielewski for his help and support and his fellow Selectmen.

Selectwoman Sullivan thanked the First Selectman for his service to the town and for all of the time, efforts, and sacrifices he has made on behalf of the town. Thanks to his organizational and leadership skills and dedication, the town was upgraded from a negative to a positive outlook by Moody's Investment Service, significantly improving the financial condition of the town and its resources.

First Selectman Lyden, in turn, stated that the town has a great team of volunteers, emergency services (paid and volunteer), and staff who worked and continue to work hard for the town. Selectman LaBonte added the Board's support for the town's various boards, commissions, and organizations is evidenced by its smooth budget season in comparison to some of their neighboring towns. Selectman Chmielewski echoed Selectwoman Sullivan's comments, adding that it has been an honor to work by his side as the Acting First Selectman and thanked him for his appointment as the Liaison to Emergency Services. He looks forward to continuing to move ahead with the guidance of his leadership.

5. AGENDA:

A. Appoint Jim Miller to Gardner Lake Authority

M/S/C: Lyden/Chmielewski, to appoint Jim Miller to the Gardner Lake Authority.

Discussion: First Selectman Lyden stated that the position has been open since the resignation of longtime member Bob Neddo. Mr. Miller is a former Resident State Trooper and is very familiar with the property. Selectman Chmielewski supported the appointment, adding that Mr. Miller is a fine candidate who would represent the town very well. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

B. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

An informational packet regarding the ARPA Funds was provided to the Selectmen for review. The town has received approximately \$600,000.00, which must be allocated by the end of 2024. Additional funds are expected to be received next year. Several requests have been received regarding the use of the funds. The Attorney for the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments issued an opinion stating that there is “no specific guidance or mandate on an allocation methodology. As these funds are “formula grants” as opposed to “competitive grants” local governments are not required to apply or certify to justify needs in advance.” An issue arises when the funds, which have already been received, are expended on items that are not within the parameters of the Act, resulting in the need to unexpectedly return the funds following the completion of a final audit years later. Per the Town Charter, the proposed expenditure of amounts totaling over 2/10ths of 1% of the Town Budget must be voted upon by the Boards of Finance and Selectmen and amounts exceeding 1% of the Town Budget must be voted upon by the residents via a Town Meeting.

Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to the First Selectman for his cautious approach with the expenditure of Federal funds, the oversight of the Board of Finance, and his confidence that the funds would be well spent.

B. Tax Collector Refunds – none

5. REPORTS:

A. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Lyden reported that he has contacted the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Commissioner Katie Dykes and Representative Holly Cheeseman, regarding the Gardner Lake State Park Boat Launch and Beach. While the issues at the beach area have somewhat improved due to increased enforcement, an alcohol ban, and the placement of dumpsters, complaints continue to be received regarding the increased use of jet skis on the Lake. A slight adjustment was recently made to the swim area to improve the safety of the immediate area. He is proposing, and has consulted with the Town of Montville Mayor Ronald McDaniel, regarding the possibility of banning the use of jet skis on Sundays. All three towns (Bozrah, Montville, and Salem) must agree to the ban via a Town Meeting. They will continue to monitor the Lake for the remainder of the year and further discuss the proposal for 2022.

B. BOARD OF EDUCATION – *Selectman Liaison McKenney not present; no update*

First Selectman Lyden reported that he met the School District’s newly hired Superintendent at the 8th Grade Graduation Ceremony and looks forward to his expertise.

C. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Lyden reported that King, King & Associates, who the Board of Finance selected to serve as the town’s Auditor, recently conducted their preliminary audit and will be returning in September.

D. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Selectwoman Sullivan reported that the Commission has been busy with public hearings and the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The Commission is currently reviewing the POCD Survey results as well as discussing the legislators' recent passing of House Bill (HB) 6107 regarding, in part, affordable housing. Town Planner Justin LaFountain identified various areas within the town's Regulations which will need to be amended as a result of the bill's passage.

E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the EDC's Business Directory is making progress and is slated for publication during the next quarter. The Commissioners continue to visit the town's businesses and act as the ambassadors of the town. Construction on the age-restricted development continues and many calls expressing interest have been received and a waiting list comprised of 30 individuals has been formed.

F. LIBRARY

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Library discussed their current and upcoming programs, including the Summer Reading Program, which received a large donation by Friends of the Library Member Carl Narwocki, in honor of his wife, Carole Eckhart, who recently passed away and to whom the Program will be dedicated. First Selectman Lyden added that both Mr. Narwocki and his wife, Ms. Eckhart are long-time supporters of the Library.

G. MILITARY LIAISON

Selectman Chmielewski reported that he continues to reach out to various members of the town, including young teenagers who have expressed an interest in joining the military. Thanks to the town's many veterans, active members, and retirees, these youngsters have been able to receive additional guidance. Discussions and excitement continue around the recent Memorial Day Parade, which featured co-Grand Marshals Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Deputy Chief Joseph Danao II, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired), U.S. Army, and Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston, Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps, and many marchers. He reiterated his appreciation of the Fire Companies for their service.

6. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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