

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2021, 7:00 P.M.  
MEETING ROOM 1, SALEM TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT**

Kevin Lyden  
Edward Chmielewski, Jr.  
Ron LaBonte  
Hugh McKenney  
Susan Sullivan

**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, August 3, 2021, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, August 3, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Chmielewski, LaBonte, Sullivan, and Lyden. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman McKenney.**

**B. Tuesday, August 12, 2021, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, August 12, 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**4. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

A formal request from the Board of Finance to organize an Informational Town Meeting for the purpose of placing the following question on the November ballot was received:

*Should the Town of Salem consider implementing unified fire protection services?*

First Selectman Lyden reported that he discussed and explained his disagreement with their request with the Board of Finance at their last Regular Meeting. He encouraged the Board to review the videos of their meetings and view the discussions and provided a brief synopsis of his discussion. He felt that the term “unified fire protection services” required further clarification and informed the Board of Finance that Emergency Services Liaison Selectman Ed Chmielewski and Emergency Services Administrator Mike Bednarz and the Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of both fire companies continue to meet monthly. He added that a question was also raised with respect to an action being taken on an item that was not originally included on or formally added to their meeting agenda. He also added that the residents may call a town meeting by submitting a petition with at least 50 signatures.

Selectman LaBonte added that there would not be sufficient time to hold an Information Town Meeting and include the item on the November ballot. Emergency Services Liaison Selectman Ed Chmielewski confirmed that they have been meeting with both the Gardner Lake and Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs and continue to work on unifying their efforts and standardizing their policies, training practices, incidents, and equipment. He felt that they are moving forward in a positive manner in many aspects and cautioned against taking any action that would hinder the process.

**5. AGENDA:**

**A. Appoint Steven Shelley to the Eastern Region Tourism District**

**M/S/C: Lyden/McKenney, to appoint Steven Shelley to the Eastern Region Tourism District. Discussion: Selectman Chmielewski stated that Mr. Shelley is the newest member of the Economic Development Commission and works as a Commercial Realtor. He commended Mr. Shelley for his hard work and efforts in organizing the Commission's 2021/22 Business Directory and felt that he would be a positive addition to the Eastern Region Tourism District. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**B. Set Amnesty/Bulky Waste Dates: October 23, 24, and 27, 2021.**

**M/S/C: McKenney/Sullivan, to set the Transfer Station Spring Amnesty Dates for Saturday, October 23; Sunday, October 24, and; Wednesday, October 27, 2021. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden reminded everyone not to bring mattresses, metal, or electronics, which are accepted throughout the year, free of charge. Amnesty Days are scheduled twice a year during the months of May, between Mother's Day and Memorial Day, and October. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**C. Agreement between the Town of Salem & GLVFC On-Call System Nominal Fee Stipend Structure for Volunteers**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/Sullivan, to approve the agreement between the Town of Salem and Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company On-Call System Nominal Fee Stipend Structure for Volunteers. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden stated that the following addition was made to the agreement following their Special Meeting and was vetted by the Town Attorney:**

**Each party agrees to meet within 30 days after giving notice to discuss the reasons for the notice to terminate the agreement.**

**Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO) Board of Directors President Cheryl Philophena stated that the request was made to ensure**

**that the public service contract is not cancelled without discussion. The relevant parties signed the document. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**D. Tax Collector Refunds**

**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 \$6,007.19 (six thousand seven dollars and nineteen cents) on this 14th day of September 2021. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**5. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Town Hall above-ground fuel tank, which provides fuel for emergency services, public works, and school buses, is in the process of being installed. Part of the project is funded through a STEAP (Small Towns Economic Assistance Program) Grant. The underground fuel tank, which is approximately 25 years of age, will be removed. The tank will no longer require insurance. A chain-link fence with a locked gate will also be installed around the tank to keep individuals from climbing on the ladder. Plantings will also be placed to help hide and beautify the area. The underground tank at the Library has already been de-installed and the tank at the School will be de-installed in the very near future. One underground tank, which was installed in 2010/2011, will remain at the School.

The town is currently preparing for its Fiscal Year 2020/21 Audit. The preliminary work has been conducted and the final audit will take place in October for both the town and the school.

Two State of Emergencies were called for Tropical Storm Henri which was not as strong as expected, and Tropical Storm Ida. Tropical Storm Henri caused power outages for approximately 500 residences. Emergency Services, Emergency Operations Center, and Public Works Departments were available to handle any emergencies. Luckily, no roads were completely blocked. Tropical Storm Ida, which is, at the very least, a 100-year storm, caused extensive flooding on Darling and White Birch Roads as well as on Route 82 near the Round-a-bout. Woodchuck Road was also washed out. The expenses are being tracked for reimbursement by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Emergency Services were also called upon to pump out flooded basements.

A Virtual Public Hearing regarding the Route 85 Corridor Improvements at Sullivan Road and sightline improvements at Music Vale Road was held. The Federal and State-funded project is slated to begin in Spring 2023. He expressed his appreciation to the Connecticut Department of Transportation Deputy Commissioner for his assistance in adding the Music Vale Road sightline improvement project to the project.

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

Selectman McKenney reported that the new Salem School District Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and BOE Chairman Sean Reith worked together to streamline the process, resulting in a one-hour meeting. All of the information was readily available and detailed written communication from both the Superintendent and Salem School Principal to support their brief overviews, was provided to the members. Salem School had a successful reopening with glitches related to the Statewide bus driver shortage. A very informative presentation was provided by the Director of Food Services and the contract for the school year was approved. The Superintendent has consulted with the Board of Finance regarding the teachers' contract negotiations which are scheduled this year. Photographs were presented of the old playground equipment which is in need of repair. Director of Facilities Donald Bourdeau, Jr., is investigating the cost to repair and/or replace the equipment. The BOE will be returning approximately \$24,000.00 in unexpended funds from FY2020/21 to the town's General Fund.

**C. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Auditor, King, King & Associates, P.C., has conducted their preliminary audit of the town and the school and will be preparing their final audit in October.

**D. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Selectwoman Sullivan reported that the Commission continues to work on the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and a Public Hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 28, 2021 to discuss the town's proposed Affordable Housing Plan.

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

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commission is also continuing to work on the POCD as well as the publication of the upcoming Business Directory, which, due to scheduling conflicts, is running behind schedule.

**F. LIBRARY**

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Library Board has met the many challenges that they have been and continue to encounter due to the ongoing pandemic. He encouraged everyone to check the Library's webpage and Facebook pages to view the Library's hours, which continue to be dynamic. A positive staffing report was provided by Library Director Vicky Coffin. Friends of Salem Library President Carl Nawrocki reported on the recent Book Sale, which was held in conjunction with the Lions Club's Tag Sale. Additional fundraising events are being planned.

In response to Selectman McKenney regarding whether the seniors are able to utilize the conference rooms for their activities, First Selectman Lyden reported that the Quilting Group, whose members have been vaccinated and are donning masks,

has begun meeting regularly. The Library Director is speaking with the other senior groups regarding their interest in revitalizing their activities. Selectman Chmielewski stated the continuing reluctance of many seniors to venture publicly.

**G. MILITARY LIAISON**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that they continue to support the town's veterans and individuals who are interested in joining the service or are in need of assistance. He is currently working with the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) to compile a list of the veterans' graves and their locations in town and engage the help of a volunteer organization that helps clean and maintain local gravesites and/or cemeteries to ensure that their gravesites continue to be respectfully maintained.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 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