

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

**PRESENT**

Edward Chmielewski, Jr.  
Thomas (TJ) Butcher  
Ron LaBonte  
Kevin Lyden  
Pam Munro

**ABSENT**

*none*

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – *led by Selectman Lyden*

**2. WELCOME NEWLY ELECTED SELECTWOMAN AND SELECTMEN**

First Selectman Chmielewski welcomed newly elected Selectpersons Butcher, Lyden, and Munro and thanked Selectman Lyden for serving the town as the First Selectman for 12 years and offering to continue to serve as a member of the Board.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

**M/S/C: Munro/LaBonte, to add the following item to the Agenda:**

**5(d) Appointments to the Economic Development Commission (Action Item)**

**Discussion: The consequent items will be numbered accordingly. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Tuesday, October 5, 2021, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting** – *tabled*

**4. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS** – *none*

**5. AGENDA:**

**A. Appointment of Acting Selectman, per Town Charter (Action Item)**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to nominate and appoint Selectman Lyden as the Acting First Selectman for the Town of Salem, per Section 5.06 of the Town Charter. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski recited the pertinent portion of Section 5.06 of the Town Charter and stated that Selectman Lyden, who agreed to accept the nomination, served as the Town's First Selectman for 12 years and has always prioritized and served in the best interest of Salem. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**B. Appointments to the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission (Action Item)**

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the following residents have voiced their willingness to serve the town as members of the Commission:

Dean Wojcik, Full Member, a retired CT DEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) officer with a long service of volunteerism  
Michael Smith, Alternate Member, who resides on Gardner Lake Heights  
Jim Miller, Alternate Member, a member of the Gardner Lake Authority

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to nominate and appoint Dean Wojcik as a Full Member and Michael Smith and Jim Miller as Alternate Members of the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission. Discussion: Selectman Lyden added that Mr. Wojcik is a well-known member of the town and has been very helpful in dealing with the issues at Gardner Lake State Park. Mr. Miller is an active member of both the Gardner Lake Authority and the town. He stressed the importance of both the Gardner Lake Authority and Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission to consistently push the State to do more. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**C. Appointments to the Emergency Preparedness Agency (Action Item)**

**Also referred to as Civil Preparedness Agency**

**Also referred to as Emergency Management Committee / Commission**

Per the Town Charter, the Committee will be referred to as the Emergency Preparedness Agency; a request will be made to the Board of Finance to amend the line item in the Town's budget to read the same. The following members of the community have voiced their interest in serving on the Agency:

Pete Lynch, a Lieutenant with the Hamden Fire Company and a Certified CT Fire Service Instructor III with a Master of Science degree in Fire Administration  
Eva Agathos, an Army Veteran who works as a Captain with the CT Department of Correction, specializing in Emergency Management  
Erik Trotter, also an Army Veteran who works as a Lieutenant with the CT State Police and a Commander with the Danielson Barracks  
Dan Marsh, a retired Senior Law Enforcement Officer with the CT Judicial Branch

**M/S/C: Lyden/Munro, to nominate and appoint Pete Lynch, Eva Agathos, Erik Trotter, and Dan Marsh to serve on the Emergency Preparedness Agency. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the Agency is a five-member committee made up of volunteers who meet at least once a month and provide guidance and act as an advisory board to the Emergency Management Manager. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**D. Appointments to the Economic Development Commission (Action Item)**

The following members of the community have volunteered to serve on the Commission:

John Houchin, Full Member, President of the Salem Lions Club

Melissa Beers, Full Member, a co-owner of a local grout & tile business

Vickie Knopf, Full Member, who has experience working with an equestrian retirement/rehabilitation farm

Alexandra Marsh, Alternate Member, who currently works with the State Judicial Branch

John F. Gilbert, Alternate Member, a longtime Salem resident and salesperson

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that he has submitted his resignation from the Commission at the conclusion of this evening's meeting, allowing an additional member of the community to serve on the Commission.

**M/S/C: Butcher/LaBonte, to nominate and appoint John Houchin, Melissa Beers, and Vickie Knopf as Full Members and Alexandra Marsh and John F. Gilbert as Alternate Members of the Economic Development Commission. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski reported that Commissioner Steven Shelley was elected as the Chairman of the Commission this evening and Commissioner Carl Fontneau was elected as the Commission's Vice-Chairman. The Commission is a five-member Commission. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**E. Appointments to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee to review and suggest spending funds for the Town of Salem (Discussion and Action Item)**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee will be tasked with reviewing and recommending the allocation of funds that have been and will be received by the town. The town has received approximately \$600,000.00 and is expected to receive an additional \$600,000.00 in July 2023. The following individuals were recommended to serve on the Committee:

First Selectman Ed Chmielewski

Selectman Kevin Lyden, former First Selectman and Board of Finance Member

Skip Dickson, Chair, Board of Finance

Vernon Smith, Chair, Planning & Zoning Commission

Alan Maziarz, Chair, Recreation Commission

Steven Shelley, Chair, Economic Development Commission

Mike Bednarz, Emergency Management/Emergency Services Director & Administrator

Carl Nawrocki (U), Community-at-Large; President, Friends of the Library

**M/S/C: Butcher/LaBonte, to nominate and appoint Ed Chmielewski, Kevin Lyden, Skip Dickson, Vernon Smith, Alan Maziarz, Steven Shelley, Mike Bednarz, and Carl Nawrocki as members of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Committee. Discussion: Selectwoman Munro reminded the Board that, as a town committee, the Committee is required to post their meeting agendas**

**and minutes, per FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requirements. Selectman Lyden added that, per the Town Charter, the Board of Selectman may form such committees for a period of up to one year. As previously stated, the town has received its first allotment of funds which can be used for specific items. Both the school and the library have also received funding. The allocation of funds must be reported by April 30, 2021. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**F. Approve Board of Selectmen Meeting Dates for 2022 (Action Item)**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to approve the Board of Selectmen 2022 Regular Meeting Dates. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**G. Registrar of Voters – Redistricting Update (Discussion)**

Democratic Registrar of Voters Betsy Butts and Republican Registrar of Voters Doris Burr reported that, based on the data gathered from the 2020 Census, new congressional and state legislative district boundaries have been enacted. While the town was previously part of the 37th District, it will now be part of the 34th and 37th Districts. The town is responsible for implementing how it will be divided and each resident will be notified regarding their district. Rather than establishing two separate polling locations, one in each district, they are hoping to maintain a single polling location at the Salem Town Hall and divide the room into two for each respective district. The change would require two separate ballots and additional staffing. They also requested a salary increase above the usual annual cost of living increase to help compensate for the additional time, efforts, training, and certifications. Selectman Lyden requested that they investigate the need for any supplemental appropriation over the coming days that the Board will need to approve for this fiscal year. A Capital request will need to be submitted to the Board of Finance for any additional voting stations. The redistricting will not affect the referendum.

Selectman Butcher expressed his appreciation and confidence in the Registrars. First Selectman Chmielewski thanked them for attending this evening's meeting and informing them of the redistricting.

**H. Authorization of the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Resolution (Discussion)**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to 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 Ed Chmielewski, as First Selectman of the Town of Salem, 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 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: Selectman Lyden stated that the resolution is part of a grant, which must be approved annually by each municipality to receive the funding. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**I. Tax Collector Refunds**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, 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 \$2,681.07 (two thousand six hundred eighty-one dollars and seven cents) on the 7th day of December 2021.**

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

**5. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

First Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to former First Selectman Lyden for his help in making the transition as smooth as possible. He looks forward to working with all of the Selectmen with whom he is confident will accomplish great things for the Town of Salem. Over the past month, he has had the opportunity to speak with the town's staff, with whom he has become familiar over the years as the Acting First Selectman.

Emergency Services Administrator Mike Bednarz is replacing long-time Emergency Services Manager Donald Bourdeau, Jr., who recently retired from the position. He thanked former Manager Bourdeau for all of his hard work and efforts, ensuring the town's safety. Emergency Services Administrator and Manager Bednarz, whose responsibilities for the town continue to grow, is an hourly employee.

Selectman Lyden commended newly-elected First Selectman Chmielewski for his early accomplishments. One of his goals was to be available and ensure a smooth transition of power. He expressed his love for his hometown and continued willingness to help in any way he can.

**B. EMERGENCY SERVICES / PUBLIC SAFETY**

Emergency Services Administrator and Manager Bednarz congratulated the newly-elected First Selectman and Selectmen. He provided a brief explanation of his position to act as a designee on behalf of the First Selectman to administratively supervise the town's career and part-time Firefighter/EMTs. The position was initiated, in part, to address a labor law that was brought to the town's attention. The labor law led to the difficult decision of whether the town should continue to utilize volunteers or hire paid Firefighter/EMTs. In past years, the town has been very fortunate to hire exceptional

personnel who were trained within the town's volunteer fire company system and had an intimate knowledge of the town.

Upon his appointment, they have sought to improve and enhance the communication between the town's two fire companies and between the town and the fire companies by holding monthly Emergency Services meetings between the Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of the Salem and Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Companies, then-Selectman Liaison Chmielewski, and himself. Initial discussions included the need to hire additional staffing as the nation grapples with a shortage of First Responders. Based on their collective input regarding the requirements and town's needs, a hiring procedure was established and a training program was developed for hirees who resided out of town. The task of developing and implementing the training program was delegated to current full-time career Firefighter/EMT Ryan Teixeira and former part-time Firefighter/EMT Rick Martin, who had a positive working relationship and intimate knowledge of the fire companies. Firefighter/EMT Martin's talents and abilities have since been called upon to assist him with additional duties. As a result of these conversations and developments, the town was able to hire full-time career Firefighter/EMT Travis Roberts and the town held its first Badge Pinning Ceremony for its two career Firefighter/EMTs in October 2021.

Following discussions regarding the operational considerations for the types of vehicles that would be required for certain events, an Operational Response Guide was developed. The Guide now included as part of their training program and is a working document that may be updated and revised, as necessary.

Last month, a State-certified Aerial Apparatus Operators Class taught by the CT Fire Academy and offered to the members of both Fire Companies was held. Both of the town's career Firefighter/EMTs and one part-time Firefighter/EMT attended the class and gained advanced knowledge and hands-on training of the tactical operation of Salem's 121 Ladder Truck. The training completes Firefighter/EMT Roberts' training in all 14 of the emergency service vehicles. In-service continual training for all of the Firefighter/EMTs on all of the vehicles will be conducted to maintain proficiency.

In conclusion, Emergency Services Administrator and Manager Bednarz stated that he is looking forward to working with the Board as he strives to do the best he can for the town and its residents.

Selectman Lyden commended and expressed his appreciation to Emergency Services Administrator and Manager Bednarz, who has extensive experience in the field. First Selectman Chmielewski concurred, adding that both Emergency Services Administrator and Manager Bednarz and himself made themselves available to both fire companies 24/7 for any issues and possible solutions and no calls have been received of late, which is a testament to his efforts. He has also had positive conversations with the Chiefs and



Deputy Chiefs of both fire companies and Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company President Cheryl Philopena and Treasurer Christine Lindo. Selectman Butcher also agreed, adding that he looks forward to receiving future reports.

Resident State Troopers Report

Emergency Services Administrator and Manager Bednarz also presented the Resident State Trooper report. The Town of Salem has two Resident State Troopers, Trooper First Class Ben Duffy and Trooper Kevin Crosby. In addition to their regular duties, the Troopers engage in old-fashioned community policing, visiting Salem School, attending Salem Seniors meetings, providing traffic safety for town events, and/or visiting local businesses. These activities help them maintain a high level of visibility which, thereby, enhances the town's public safety. Both troopers are very active at the School, maintaining open communication, and assisting the school administration and staff by participating in safety meetings, and facilitating safety training during lockdown safety drills. They often provide added security in response to school issues and provide added traffic safety. They also assist the town's staff by taking part in their safety meetings, providing added election day security, and hosting the Drug Take-Back Program, sponsored by the United States Drug Enforcement Agency. They continue to plan, organize and staff an annual Holiday Toy Drive, which is being held this year at the Salem Marketplace on December 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. After receiving numerous complaints regarding speeding vehicles, they took the initiative to research, recommend, and install speed safety signs throughout the town. The town is very fortunate to have two outstanding Resident State Troopers; he asked the Board to join him in expressing gratitude for their service and maintaining the safety of the town and its residents.

The Selectmen concurred. Selectwoman Munro also acknowledged a recently publicized story of Trooper Crosby, who recently played an active role in reuniting a dog with his/her family. Selectman Butcher commended the Troopers on their ongoing efforts to control the speeding throughout the town.

**C. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Board of Finance appointed new members to their Board to fill their vacancies and are beginning to focus on the Capital requests they have received from the various departments. A draft of the FY2020/21 Audit was received by King, King, and Associates. An extension will be requested to allow the relevant individuals to review the document.

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

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that he attended the BOE's most recent meeting and has met with BOE Chairman Sean Reith and Board of Finance Chairman Skip

Dickson. He looks forward to working with them to ensure a smooth budget process. Selectwoman Munro was appointed as the Selectwoman Liaison to the BOE.

Selectman LaBonte expressed his appreciation to Selectwoman Munro for her willingness to serve as the Selectwoman Liaison to the BOE.

Selectwoman Munro reported that the cost of the emergency generator, which has been on the town's Capital Plan, has significantly increased. She also reported that Sean Reith was re-elected as the Chairman; Sue Spang, Vice-Chairperson; Jennifer Rucci, Secretary, and; Ryan Little, Treasurer. The final negotiations for the teachers' contract are being held this evening, before heading into mediation.

#### **E. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commission appointed new members to fill their vacancies and are continuing to work on the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). He attended their most recent meeting and was pleased to welcome its newly elected members, with whom he looks forward to serving.

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

Selectman Chmielewski reported that Steven Shelley was elected as the Chairman, Carl Fontneau as the Vice-Chairman. He has resigned from the Commission to make room for new members. They are also finalizing their contribution to the POCD and are continuing to reach out to and support the community.

#### **G. LIBRARY**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Library is continuing to prepare for the installation of their new generator, which was delayed.

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

Selectman Chmielewski reported that a successful Veteran's Day celebration was held at Salem School. A video, created by the students and including stories, singing, and presentations, was presented to the attendees. He was very pleased that several volunteers expressed their willingness to serve on one of the town's boards and commissions as he voiced the need following his Veteran's Day address.

Selectman Lyden thanked all of the members of the Board; he looks forward to a very productive term. He was very pleased to see the resurgence of individuals who have come out and expressed their willingness to serve their community, especially as they come out of the pandemic. First Selectman Chmielewski thanked everyone and expressed his availability.

### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 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