

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022, 7:00 P.M.  
SALEM TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

**PRESENT**

Edward Chmielewski, Jr.  
Ron LaBonte  
Kevin Lyden  
Pam Munro

**ABSENT**

Thomas (TJ) Butcher

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Chmielewski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Tuesday, February 1, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to approve the Tuesday, February 1, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**B. Thursday, February 10, 2022 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes**

**M/S/C: Lyden/Munro, to approve the Tuesday, February 10, 2022 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 3-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Lyden, Munro, and Chmielewski. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman LaBonte.**

**C. Tuesday, February 15, 2022 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to approve the Tuesday, February 15, 2022 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**D. Wednesday, February 23, 2022 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to approve the Tuesday, February 23, 2022 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Gary Closius, 294 Hartford Road, spoke with respect to Board's recent appointments to boards and commissions, stating that the Board should be asking quality members regarding their continuing interest in serving on the respective boards/commissions. Maintaining the members would not only ensure continuity, but also provide volunteers with a sense of value and encouragement to fill future vacancies. In addition, it is a simple common courtesy to

inform the outgoing members that they would not be re-appointed before the new nominees are appointed. The recent appointments to the Emergency Management Agency and Recreation Commission have left the outgoing members feeling unappreciated and disrespected, affecting the Town's ability to acquire future volunteers.

**4. ALTERATIONS TO THE AGENDA – *none***

**5. AGENDA:**

**A. Appoint Selectwoman Pam Munro to the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA) Board of Trustees. (Action Item)**

**Background:** The federal legislation that created Community Action Agencies requires that municipalities of the communities it serves have representation on TVCCA's governing board.

TVCCA provides such services as energy assistance, housing, food security, childcare, education, and other basic needs to the members of the community.

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to appoint Selectwoman Pam Munro to the Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA) Board of Trustees.**

**Discussion:** Selectman Lyden commended the organization which offers a wide range of services to the community. He expressed his appreciation to former Selectman Hugh McKenney who previously served as a member of the Board of Trustees, representing Salem. The Town currently budgets approximately \$1,000.00 to help fund the TVCCA for the services. While it is not necessary to be a Selectperson, it is advantageous as she would be able to report back to the Board and provide regular updates. Selectwoman Munro reported that, according to their website, several members are Selectmen. The organization has a nearly \$27 million budget. Selectman Lyden thanked Selectwoman Munro for her willingness to serve on the Board. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

**B. Dispose of Town-owned personal property in accordance with Section 5.05-3 of the Salem Town Charter – Public Works equipment (Action Item)**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to approve the disposal of Town-owned personal property (Public Works equipment), per Section 5.05-3 of the Salem Town Charter.**

**Discussion:** Foreman Tony Gallicchio has recommended the disposal of the following equipment through Government Surplus Auctions. The equipment is no longer in use:

**Troy-Bilt Roto Tiller**

**Broyhill 3-Wheeler – *used to maintain and groom the ball fields***

**Jumping Jack**

**1994 Ford F600G Bucket Truck – *replacement bucket truck is on order***

**Hand Roller**  
**Giant Leaf Vac**  
**Undercarriage Pressure Washer**  
**Floater Pump** – *both Fire Companies were consulted with and not interested in the item*  
**2001 International 4900 Dump Truck**  
**Trailer**  
**Mower**  
**Land Pride York Rake**  
**Spreader**  
**Material Handler for Skid Steer**  
**Metal Tracks for Skid Steer**

**Funds garnered from the sale of the items will be deposited into the Town's General Fund. The items are for sale to the public on govdeals.com. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

- C. Set the Transfer Station Spring Amnesty Dates for Saturday, May 14; Sunday, May 15, and; Wednesday, May 18, 2022 (Action Item)**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to set the Transfer Station Spring Amnesty Dates for Saturday, May 14; Sunday, May 15, and; Wednesday, May 18, 2022.**

**Discussion: Amnesty Days are held twice annually, in May and October. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

- D. Extend the Contract for Municipal Services for Transfer Station Operations and Support Services with Contractor/Operator Gary Alligood for a period of one-year, effective July 1, 2022. (Action Item)**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to extend the Contract for Municipal Services for Transfer Station Operations and Support Services with Contractor/Operator Gary Alligood for a period of one-year, effective July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.**

**Discussion: Selectmen Chmielewski and Lyden commended Contractor/Operator Alligood for his honesty, hard work, and efforts. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

- E. ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Update (Discussion Item)**

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that a well-attended Special Town Meeting was held Monday, February 28, to vote on the allocation of the first allotment of ARPA Funds. The funding requests were approved with a vote of 50-2.

ARPA Committee Chairman Lyden thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Approximately 50% of the expenses were derived from the Capital Plan and recommended by the Board of Finance. The approved list includes funding for TVCCA, Safe Futures, Care & Share Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut,

Homeless Shelter, and Uncas Health District – all of whom provide regional services to the community. A request was recently received from UCFS (United Community & Family Services) and will be included on the list for the second allotment of ARPA Funding. Other items on the list include Recreation Trail Upgrades, School Generator Replacement, Emergency Operations Services and Upgrades, and AED Replacement. Any unexpended funds will be returned to the ARPA Fund for re-allocation. The approval of the allocation of funds will help the Board of Finance as they determine the budget for the next fiscal year for the 4,200 individuals and 1,700 families that reside in the town. Though not required, a Town Meeting was held to ensure transparency. Similar to a budget referendum, the proposed list was voted upon in its entirety. All of the expenditures will be documented for auditing purposes. The second allotment of funds is expected to follow the same process. An envelope in which the public may place suggestions for consideration for the next allotment of ARPA Funding will be available at the Town Clerk's office. He thanked everyone for their support. First Selectman Chmielewski extended his appreciation to Selectman Lyden for acting as both the Moderator and presenting the proposed list of items during the meeting and commended the Finance Department for their handling of all of the Town's expenses.

**F. Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update (Discussion Item)**

Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Vernon Smith recited a letter regarding the Commission's request for a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioners of Transportation, Energy and Environmental Protection and Economic and Community Development to request a waiver for the submission of the Town's POCD. Due to the pandemic, the Commission's progress on the document was hindered. The Commission hopes to adopt the updated Plan by the Fall. The waiver will provide the town to qualify for discretionary funding, including the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant.

Selectman Lyden commended Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Smith, the Commission, and Town Planner Justin LaFountain. First Selectman Chmielewski also commended the Commission for their hard work and efforts and will work with both the Chairman and Town Planner to draft the letter.

**G. Tax Collector's Refunds (Action Item)**

**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 \$15,448.76 (fifteen thousand four hundred forty-eight dollars and seventy-six cents) on this first day of February 2022. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**6. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

First Selectman Chmielewski reported on a very busy month. He expressed his appreciation to and commended Foreman Gallicchio and the Public Works team for their hard work and efforts in keeping the roads and the public safe during the season's blizzards and snowstorms. Selectman Lyden commended the First Selectman for his work with the team, noting that they will need to keep an eye on the budget as all of the storms occurred during the weekends.

Finance Specialist Lisa Jablonski and Finance Specialist Assistant Meliza Jimenez and the Board of Finance have been working hard preparing the budget. The Auditor's Report, drafted by King, King & Associates, for the year ending June 30, 2021, was distributed to the Selectmen. The Report is also available on the Town website.

A Virtual Public Information Meeting regarding the State's proposed Route 85 Road Improvements is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 p.m. Additional information regarding the improvements, including a map, may be found on the Town website.

**B. SALEM RESIDENT STATE TROOPER UPDATE**

The permit application for the Lions Club's Annual Road Race has been submitted to the State Police. Both of the Troopers attended the town's monthly Safety Committee meeting and hosted the Town's first Free Child Passenger Safety – Car Seat Check with the fire companies. It is his understanding that both Troopers are planning to receive training as a Child Passenger Safety Technician. They also attended the Salem School Semi-Final Basketball Games and assisted Salem Elementary School's Shelter in Place Drill. Due to the current Social Media climate, the Troopers have also been present both before- and after-school, receiving positive feedback from the parents, teachers, and administrative staff.

Acting Resident State Trooper Kevin Crosby was selected as the Town's Evening Resident State Trooper. The First Selectman commended Trooper Crosby, who actively engages with the community and provides visibility throughout the Town. He stated his hopes to invite the Troopers to a future meeting and, possibly, host a Pinning Ceremony. The Town is very fortunate to have both Troopers Ben Duffy and Crosby serving the Town.

**C. SUSTAINABLE CT MUNICIPAL PROGRAM – *none***

**D. EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Emergency Management Manager/Emergency Services Administrator Bednarz reported that the Town's career firefighters have completed the required annual physicals and fit testing for the SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus). The Training Officers are

engaging in a collaborative effort to offer both day and evening training sessions for the volunteers and career firefighters to ensure that the team receives the same training.

#### **E. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Emergency Management Manager/Emergency Services Administrator Bednarz reported that, to date, 350 individuals have registered to receive Everbridge Notifications, a town-wide notification system informing residents of emergencies, events, and activities.

Due to the recent weather conditions, the Emergency Management Agency's Safety Tip of the Month is potholes, coinciding with large potholes that were formed on Route 85 by the Dinosaur Park, damaging several cars. He called attention to being aware of any standing water and encouraged general road safety.

A map of the areas Eversource is planning to conduct tree maintenance work beginning in May 2022 was presented. The bulk of the work will be conducted north of Route 82, including Route 85, Rattlesnake Ledge, Old Colchester, and Witch Meadow Roads. Eversource also recently released a Vegetation Management Scorecard which includes a variety of data related to tree-related events. He reported that Eversource maintained constant communication with the Town during the recent storms. Due to reports of wind gusts of up to 60 mph, the town's Emergency Operations Center was partially activated during the most recent storm. Approximately 32 customers experienced a power outage. Luckily, the storm moved through the town quicker than anticipated resulting in minimal damage. First Selectman Chmielewski added that, due to the town's proactive efforts to mitigate the trees, it has experienced fewer power outages than some of its neighboring towns.

ISO New England, the overall supplier of the Town's electricity, reported that the Town may not experience any load-shedding issues this Winter. Depending upon the demand for power during the Summer, there is a possibility that the town could experience load shedding. Selectman Lyden stated the importance of energy conservation and trimming of trees. Emergency Services Administrator/Emergency Management Manager Bednarz also stated the importance of preparation and reiterated the town's vulnerability due to its reliance on power. Information regarding the source of the town's power and how much power is utilized is available on the ISO New England website.

First Selectman Chmielewski commended him for his hard work and the amount of progress he has made within a short period of time from organizing the distribution event to dealing with unexpected weather occurrences. He also acknowledged the improved communication within Emergency Services and Emergency Management.

#### **F. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Board of Finance has been busy reviewing the departments' FY2022/23 operating budgets. Selectman Lyden reported that the Grand



List has increased by 16%. As such, the mil rate is expected to drop, based upon the needs of the town. The First Selectman conveyed the Board of Finance's appreciation to the Board for their leadership in forming the ARPA Committee and developing the process.

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

Selectwoman Munro reported that the BOE Regular Meeting will be held next Monday, March 7. Several budget meetings have been held dealing, in large part, with an unexpectedly large increase for health insurance costs. Selectman Lyden stated that the Town will also be dealing with the same issue and proposed the possibility of adjusting their deductibles to reduce the cost.

**H. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commission continues to actively discuss the updates to the town's POCD. Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman concurred, adding that the Commissioners are working very well together and progressing positively.

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

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the EDC continues to provide support to the town's many businesses.

**J. LIBRARY**

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Board continues to meet virtually via Zoom. Discussions regarding the HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) continue. The new solar picnic table, which was purchased through a COVID-related Grant, has been installed on the south side of the Library. They also presented their budget to the Board of Finance. First Selectman Chmielewski added that the Library Director's explanation sheet for each of the line items was very well-received by the Board of Finance.

**K. MILITARY LIAISON**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Commander Steve Buck fulfilled the School's request to provide a replacement of the School's POW-MIA (Prisoners of War – Missing in Action) Flag.

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Air and Army National Guard who have been on COVID Orders for the last two years will be coming off active duty by the end of March due to declining funds.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0. Meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem