

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

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 7:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Tuesday, May 3, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting

M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to approve the Tuesday, May 3, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendment:

Page 2, end of second paragraph:

He commended the First Selectman on his efforts *to create a safe disc golf course.*

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

3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Leslie Hotary, 79 Harris Road Ext., wished to ensure that Salem School is reviewing its safety policy and plan and preparing for any emergency situations in light of the recent school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Mike Bednarz will be providing a brief update regarding the overall safety of the Town.

4. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

M/S/C: Lyden/Butcher, to add the following item to the agenda:

5(c) Appoint Leslie Hotary to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority

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

5. AGENDA

a. Appoint Steven Wlodarczyk to the Salem Recreation Commission

M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to appoint Steven Wlodarczyk to the Salem Recreation Commission. Discussion: Mr. Wlodarczyk, who resides on Cockle Hill Road, is a disc golf player and an active member of the Lions Club. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

b. Tax Collector Rate Bill

M/S/C: Lyden/Butcher, to approve the warrant for the collection of taxes for the 2020/21 Grand List, per CT State Statutes Section 12-132. Discussion: The Tax Collector Rate Bill was approved by the Board of Finance to lay a tax rate of 28.8 mils for real estate and personal property and motor vehicles for the 2020/21 Grand List. Per the Town Charter, real estate and personal property taxes shall be due and payable in two installments on July 1, 2022, and January 1, 2023. All real estate and personal property taxes less than or equal to \$100 and motor vehicle taxes, regardless of amount, shall be payable in their entirety by July 1, 2022. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

c. Appoint Leslie Hotary to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority

M/S/C: Lyden/Butcher, to appoint Leslie Hotary to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority. Discussion: Selectman Lyden felt that Ms. Hotary would be a positive addition to the Authority and represent the Town well. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

6. REPORTS

a. FIRST SELECTMAN

He presented the following reports of the Town's various departments:

Finance – The Treasurer and Finance Specialist have been preparing for the Town's Auditors who will be conducting their preliminary work for the short-term interim audit. The Fiscal Year-end purchases are due by June 30 and weekly expenditure reports continue to be provided to the departments.

Human Resources – Several candidates have been interviewed to fill the open Library Assistant and First Selectman's Administrative Assistant positions. Open enrollment of the new health insurance is also in process.

Tax Collector – As of June 6, the tax collection rate is 99.21%, which is the third-highest collection rate in the Town for the last 11 (eleven) years. As a result of the hard work and efforts of the past Tax Collectors, the Suspense List, which is in the process of being finalized, is comparably low.

Tax Assessor – The Tax Assessor is currently engaged in professional development and will be providing a presentation at the Annual Assessor School at UConn. In addition, the Assistant Tax Assessor is in the process of receiving certification training.

Town Clerk – Dog License reminders have been mailed, the Historic Documentation Preservation Program Grant application is in process, and numerous marriage licenses are being issued.

Public Works – The Zemko garage has been cleaned and power has been connected. The Public Works team is continuing to maintain the Town's vehicles, properties, and fields. A volleyball court and pet waste disposal bag dispensers were installed at the Community Park Pavilion. The Department set up the new Emergency Services and Town trailer and conducted preparations for the Town's Annual Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony. A meeting with the State is scheduled to improve the sightlines at Route 85 and Music Vale Road.

Town Planner – The Planning & Zoning Commission continued their Public Hearing regarding a proposed multi-family residence and scheduled a Public Hearing for a proposed Zoning Change. The Commission continues to work on the Plan of Conservation & Development. New Public Hearing signs have been ordered.

Recreation – Selectman Butcher has volunteered to serve as the Selectman Liaison to the Recreation Commission's Disc Golf Course Committee. Two Summer Concerts, sponsored by Sid's Auto and Radcor, LLC, will be held on Wednesday, June 22 and Thursday, August 25 at the Salem Community Park Pavilion. Summer camps, virtual and in-person classes, and discount tickets are available. Information regarding recreation events and activities may be found on the Town website.

Salem Seniors – The Salem Seniors will be meeting next Tuesday, June 14, with newly-elected President Gary Closius. An AARP Smart Driver Class will be offered in August at the Salem Volunteer Fire Company.

Building – To date, a total of 341 permits have been issued, with \$71,892.92 in total fees collected and a total construction value of \$5,372,387.91.

b. EMERGENCY SERVICES – POLICE / FIRE

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Bednarz reported that, in April, 40 Calls for Service were received, 23 of which were received during the daytime hours, with 10 of the 23 being mutual aid calls. A successful Memorial Day event was held with the Career staff attending and participating in the parade. A successful CPR/First Aid/AED class was held with the Public Works team and the Town employees have been contacted regarding their interest in taking part in the same. Their goal is to begin empowering the employees and, eventually, the residents to handle

emergencies. The purchasing of AED Replacements, which is being funded through the Town's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds, is being investigated.

A planned burning of brush is scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, June 7 at the Transfer Station, pending fire danger notification. The Transfer Station will not be receiving any brush during this period. Both of the Firefighters/EMTs are continuing to conduct public service campaigns at Salem School, including an event last week with the Resident State Troopers that featured a hovercraft.

c. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Bednarz reported that he recently participated in a Statewide Governor's EPPI (Emergency Planning & Preparedness Initiative) with Deputy Director Rick Martin and First Selectman Chmielewski to prepare for the hurricane season. Discussion ensued regarding the need to inform the public regarding the importance of preparing for hurricanes.

Numerous virtual Zoom and in-person meetings with Salem School have been held to plan an emergency evacuation drill. Unfortunately, due to the heat index, the drill was not held and a walk-through scenario and tabletop drills were held with the School Administration in its stead. They are maintaining ongoing communications with the School regarding its safety and security.

They will be meeting with the town's new Eversource Community Relations Representative this week.

The new LED Trailer Sign has been delivered and was used to promote the Memorial Day event and inform the public of the scheduled road closures. The Trailer is currently located in front of the gazebo near the School. The sign is also equipped with radar that is capable of obtaining and recording traffic data. The Town's career Firefighters/EMTs, Public Works, and Resident State Troopers have been trained to operate the sign.

To date, 310 residents have signed up for the town's Everbridge Notification System. Selectwoman Munro has promoted the system and the Town's News & Announcements on social media platform(s) to gain additional subscribers. The Everbridge System is utilized for emergencies (or very important information) only.

d. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Board of Finance will be meeting this Thursday. As noted earlier, the townspeople approved the proposed budget with a mill rate of 28.8. He hopes to utilize the new LED sign to increase the voter turnout for local elections and referendums. First Selectman Lyden stated that the low turnout rate is comparable to that of neighboring towns and, from his experience, is usually related to

the public's satisfaction with the proposed budget. He commended the Board of Finance for their hard work and efforts and for maintaining a healthy Unassigned Fund Balance.

e. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

With respect to school safety, First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the Town, Emergency Services, and Emergency Management are engaged in constant communication with the Salem School Administration and training is being conducted for the School staff. Funds were allocated from the Town and Grants were received to invest in the hardening of the School after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. The Town is committed to supporting and enhancing the overall safety and security of its students and residents and preparing for any incidents.

Selectwoman Munro reported that the BOE held an Executive Session to discuss confidential security updates and continues to plan and prepare for any unforeseen events. The newer members will be updated on the safety and security improvements that have been made since the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. She reiterated that the Town is committed to ensuring the safety and security of the School.

The health insurance plan for the Salem School staff will change to the State Plan on July 1. Outgoing Principal Joan Phillips was honored with awards from the BOE of Education and State Representative Holly Cheeseman for her dedication to the School over the past 25 years. The Salem School Graduation will be held on Tuesday, June 14.

f. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

See Item 7(a) First Selectman's Report.

g. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the 1 New London Road Plaza was recently sold and work is being conducted to enhance and improve the property and efforts to attract and recruit new tenants have begun. Maple Shade Services, LLC, will continue to maintain the property.

h. LIBRARY

First Selectman Chmielewski and Selectmen Butcher and Lyden commended the Interim Library Director Shannon Henson. Selectman Lyden reported that the Library is excited to fully reopen the Library and increase its programs. He also commended former Library Director Vicky Coffin for her efforts in making good use of the closure during the pandemic to successfully receive grants and make improvements both inside and outside the Library. First Selectman Chmielewski concurred, adding that former Library Director Coffin also mentored and trained the Interim Library Director, ensuring a smooth transition.

i. MILITARY LIAISON

First Selectman Chmielewski commented on a successful Memorial Day Parade with Co-Grand Marshals Katrina Zickwolf and Richard Leuck. He thanked everyone who worked hard to organize the event.

k. TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)

Selectwoman Munro reported that resources are available to those who might be facing foreclosures. They also provide home heating oil assistance for credits towards future oil use. Those in need of baby formula, regardless of income, are urged to contact them to obtain the available resources. The organization is in the process of devising a long-range plan and search to replace Executive Director Deborah Monahan, who will be retiring.

l. UNSUNG HEROES

Selectman LaBonte reported that the applications for Unsung Heroes nominations are available and due July 31. The Unsung Heroes Celebration event will be held on November 13 at the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company.

8. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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

A VIDEO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER BOARDS & COMMISSIONS – BOARD OF SELECTMEN – MEETING VIDEOS