

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 5, 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 7:03 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Tuesday, June 7, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting

M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to approve the Tuesday, June 7, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS – *none*

4. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

M/S/C: Lyden/Munro, to move Item 5, Executive Session, to follow Item 7, Reports. The item numbers will be revised accordingly. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

5. AGENDA

a. Tax Collector's Refunds

M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, 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 \$4,330.90 (four thousand three hundred thirty dollars and ninety cents) on this fifth day of July 2022. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

6. REPORTS

a. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the new owners of Salem Town Center Plaza located at 1 New London Road have been busy renovating the building and parking lot, creating a more inviting shopping complex. The merchants are pleased with the improved cooperation and communication.

Included in the Selectmen's packet is a copy of the Summer issue of *Our Town Salem*, which will soon be delivered to the town's residents. A copy of the departmental updates will also be provided to the Selectmen and attached to the minutes.

Selectman Butcher was appointed as the Selectman Liaison of the Disc Golf Course Committee and Steven Wlodarczyk has been appointed to the Recreation Commission to complete a course that is safe and enjoyable for people of all ages. Selectman Butcher stated that he has met with Commissioner Wlodarczyk and is looking forward to working with him.

Selectman Lyden commended the progress on the 1 New London Road Plaza which has been an ongoing issue for several years. A two-year-old lien on the property has been paid off, with interest. The new owners appear to be a reputable firm who are interested in investing in and caring for the plaza.

b. EMERGENCY SERVICES – POLICE / FIRE

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Mike Bednarz reported that the career Firefighter/EMTs are continuing to do well. All COVID-19 safety protocols continue to be in place. Firefighter/EMT Ryan Teixeira held a successful CPR Class for the Public Works crew and will be doing the same for the Town Hall Employees. Their goal is to have most, if not all, of the employees CPR-certified and AED-trained.

c. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Bednarz reported that members of the Emergency Management team and First Selectman Chmielewski and Selectmen Lyden and Munro participated in a webinar hosted by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) regarding school security, safety, and the programs they offer.

He attended an online training course regarding debris management and the designation of a secure area for debris. The Salem Community Park, which offers adequate in/egress, a flat terrain, and a large area, has been designated as the Town's area to collect and store debris when necessary.

They are currently in the process of researching the possibility of purchasing 800-band radios, which are utilized by State Agencies and larger communities. The frequency is free-of-charge. The neighboring communities are also planning to move to the 800-band. The issue arose as a result of the need to purchase new radios and discovering that low-band radios are no longer available. They are also searching for a company that will move the existing antennas from the building to the tower.

The State is currently in the midst of hurricane season and the message for the summer is to prepare for hurricanes. While the area has been designated at the lowest level, we must heed the issue of drought.

Extensive discussion was held regarding school security. Selectman Lyden stated that the webinar was very informative and copies of the session will be shared with the Board of Education (BOE) and school administration. He believed that the decision to support an armed security guard/Police Officer should derive from the BOE and parents who are informed of all of the efforts that have been made to strengthen the school to date. Selectwoman Munro expressed her surprise and dismay with the current BOE members' lack of awareness of the measures that are already in place to secure the school. Though invited, the members of the school were unable to attend the webinar. Selectman Lyden stated that, following the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting, several security upgrades were made to harden the school and procedures were put into place based on recommendations received by the State Police, who were asked to review the School's security measures. The staff is regularly trained and the Town is confident that the school has secured a good foundation. First Selectman Chmielewski stated that it is the Superintendent's role to ensure that the internal drills, safety, plans, and training are in place and the Town's role to guide, secure, and assist the school, using their expertise and capabilities. The town's goal is to partner with the school and review past training events for any lessons that can be learned and seek additional training to supplement, support, and enhance their procedures. Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Bednarz stated that they have established and plan to maintain the line of communication. First Selectman Chmielewski added that the presence of an armed security guard/Police Officer would also include his/her active involvement with the children, e.g., teaching the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and the McGruff Gun Safety Programs.

D. BOARD OF FINANCE

Selectman Lyden reported that he and the First Selectman will be reviewing the budget for fiscal year-end line-item adjustments.

e. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE) – *no meeting; no update*

f. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission is continuing to work on the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The recent Public Hearing regarding 45 Forest Drive proposed zone change was continued to their next Regular Meeting.

g. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Economic Development Commission is continuing to work on the Welcome Packets for new businesses and other initiatives to support the local businesses.

h. LIBRARY

First Selectman Chmielewski commended the Library Staff, especially the Interim Library Director Shannon Henson, whose lively and hard-working attitude and ability to work well with the Town Hall staff is a positive addition to the team. Selectwoman Munro noted that the Library continues to offer widespread programs for everyone of all ages. Selectman Lyden also expressed his appreciation to and commended former Library Director Vicky Coffin, who helped with the transition and has accepted a position as the Mansfield Public Library's Adult Services Librarian.

i. MILITARY LIAISON

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Military Liaisons continue to work with the Town's VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars).

k. TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)

Selectwoman Munro encouraged those interested in the TVCCA's numerous offerings, including counseling, oil, preschool, etc., to visit their website at tvcca.org. Many of their offerings are available without any qualifications.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. To discuss legal strategies for the current lawsuit "The Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. vs. Town of Salem" pursuant to C.G.S. Section 1-200 (6)(B)

M/S/C: Butcher/LaBonte, to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal strategies for the current lawsuit "The Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Inc. vs. Town of Salem" pursuant to C.G.S. Section 1-200 (6)(B) at 7:41p.m. Discussion to include the Board of Selectmen, Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Mike Bednarz, and Town Attorney Brian Estep. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

First Selectman Chmielewski resumed the meeting at 10:19 p.m. It was noted that Selectman LaBonte departed from the meeting at 9:54 p.m. No votes were taken during Executive Session.

8. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Lyden/Butcher, to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 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

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

Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 5, 2022 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report
Department Updates

Human Resources and Finance Department

Finance Specialist & HR Lisa Jablonski

- The Finance Dept has provided 2021-22 with Budget guidance for multiple Departments in completing their year-end expenditures for last Fiscal year.
- The HR Dept has assisted the Library in finding and orientating several new Library Assistants, filled the Administrative Assistant for the First Selectman's office, and will begin the process of hiring the Fire Marshal
- The Medical Insurance transfer to the State Plan has begun as the Finance Office assists in the adjustment for employees and the new Town responsibilities included with its maintenance.
- Workers Compensation and Liability and Property Insurance policy schedules were reviewed and renewed July 1.
- The Finance Dept Processed over \$1,000,000 in Accounts Payable payments in June
- The Office continues to train and advise several new Dept. Heads and staff
- Operating Budget and Capital adherence and other Finance and HR procedures (PW, Tax, Collector, Library, First Selectman & Administrative Assistant)
- ARPA Fund expenditures by allocated Departments are being monitored and another Expenditure Report is due July 31.

Tax Collectors Office

Tax Collector Vivian Waters

- The tax collector's office is on track to seamlessly open the 2021 collection season, and look forward to great success.
- Bills went out in a timely fashion and public notice has and will be posted in the Day as well as on our information board outside the Town Hall.
- The 2020 season wrap up:
 - ✓ 11 Liens have been placed.
 - ✓ The number of suspense accounts have dropped to 11 totaling \$21,555.58.
 - ✓ The audit was successful with no questions or problems.
 - ✓ The collection rate for the 2020 grand list as of this report is the highest it has been in 11 years; 99.39% with an expectation of a higher final number at close of business 6/30/22.
 - ✓ 2021 grand list update
 - ✓ Collected \$308,000.48 since July 1

The Tax office would like to thank the entire town hall staff for all the support and encouragement we received over the 2020 tax cycle and look forward to continued teamwork in the future.

**Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 5, 2022 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report
Department Updates**

Recreation Update

Summer Concert - Sponsored by Sid's Auto, Radcor, LLC, and Salem Recreation
Thursday, August 25
Band: The 70's Project
Food Trucks: Rustic Streets, Curb Your Appetite, Walsh's Waffle Wagon

This week:

Starting Thursday, July 9, FREE Track & Field Camp, Grades 4-9, all levels

Not too late to register for next week's camps:

Outside the Lines Art Camp, Grades 1 to 6

Mini-Hawks (Baseball, Basketball, Soccer) Camp, Ages 5-7

Multi-Sport (Baseball, Basketball, Flag Football, Soccer), Ages 7-12

Other upcoming camps for kids:

L.E.G.O. Camps for ages 5-9, July 18- 22

Slime Camp, Grades 1 to 6, July 25-29

Soccer Camp, Ages 3-14, July 25-29

Beginning Golf, ages 5-8, July 25-28

Tennis, ages 6-12, August 1-4

Photography Camp for ages 7-13, August 8-12

Virtual classes:

Live Classes Online for Kids & Adults

Code Wiz Online Coding classes

Personal Euphoria Fitness classes

Also available:

Good Any Day Tickets to Lake Compounce, Adventure Park, and CT Science Center

Coming soon:

Tai Chi Classes

Find your Footprint Medallions

Vanta Leagues E-Sports

Adult Tennis

**Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 5, 2022 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report
Department Updates**

Salem Seniors Update

Annual BBQ hosted by Salem Fire Co next Tuesday, July 12, 10:30am, at Salem Firehouse.

AARP Driver Safety Class, August 16, Salem Firehouse. Those who complete the course could be eligible to receive auto insurance discount.

Working on providing/posting more information on Salem Seniors webpage on town website

Building Department Update
Building Official Vernon Vesey II

Permits for Fiscal-Year 2021/22

Total Permits: 371

Total Fees Collected: \$80,818.08

Total Construction Value: \$6,092,855.19

Assessor's Office Update

Tax Assessor Mike Kapinos

- Upcoming July tax wave prep
- Filing State reports
- Record retention / Map updates
- Working with lawyer on cell tower lawsuit

Town Planner Update

Town Planner Justin LaFountain

Planning and Zoning has been busy over the last month. Highlights:

- A three-unit multi-family development was approved at 116 Old Colchester Road.
- A public hearing for the application of the Special Agriculture Zone at 45 Forest Drive is currently open (opened June 28th, continued on July 12th).
- An application is currently being reviewed for outdoor merchandise sales at 1 New London Road (Statewide Pawn).
- The POCD is nearly finished, with a near-complete draft being reviewed by the Commission.
- All campground and quarry permits have been renewed by the PZC for another year.
- There are several more applications on the horizon, but nothing set in stone yet.

Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 5, 2022 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report
Department Updates

Town Clerk Update
Town Clerk Linda Flugrad

- Our Historic Document Preservation grant was approved & we have submitted our contract. Our vendor should be starting around mid-August.
- Dog licenses - already registered more dogs than last year probably due to sending out reminder postcards and new legislation that boarded dogs and those in "daycare" must be registered. I've contacted the State regarding obtaining more Salem dog tags
- reorganizing and updating space so got 2 new file cabinets for the vault

Zoning & Wetlands Official Update
ZWEO Matt Allen

Thus far for calendar year 2022, 29 zoning permits and have been issued and two variances have been issued.

The Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission added three new members while the Zoning Board of Appeals added one new member.

In addition, the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission participated in the Planning & Zoning Commission's update of the Salem Plan of Conservation & Development by taking on the task of redrafting chapters dealing with natural resources and conservation.

Public Works Update
Foreman Tony Gallicchio

- Put gutters on buildings and clean others
- CPR certification class for crew
- Install Exhaust fan in PW garage
- Install overflow parking at PW salt shed area
- Widened road way to Zemko building and around building for
 - school evacuation route
- Installed 18" vehicle gate @ school and reworked pad so large
 - School Access for Emergency Vehicles
- Mowed and cared for all the fields and properties several times
- New bucket truck factory training
- Mowed transfer station
- Moved tires at transfer station
- Burnt brush at transfer station

**Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 5, 2022 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report
Department Updates**

Public Works Update *(continued)*

- Repaired/Replaced cover for recycle dumpster
- Took batteries to recycle station
- Replaced Beam rails at Cockle hill hit by vehicle
- Rail mowed roads
- Top soiled and seeded Zemko property trench
- Removed large debris dumped on the side of Forsyth RD
- Filled potholes various roads
- Crack sealed and chip sealed roads
- Inspected several driveway aprons for CO
- Cleaned off catch basin tops
- Answered and responded to 12 Citizen Comment Forms
- Repaired several large pieces of equipment in house
- Prepared end of year purchases and balance sheets for finance

Salem Library Update

Interim Head Librarian Shannon Henson

- June 21 - Make Music Day 2022 is an internationally recognized event to bring people together through music. For this day we prepared and handed out harmonica kits and music books. We also hosted a program with Mystic Seaport called Sailor's Sea Chest which was a program for children ages K-5th grade, and then the program Sea Chanteys for all ages.
- June 27 - Summer Reading Program began. This program runs through the summer, and children that participate log the books they read. They are entered into a raffle at the end of the summer where Sharon Geer (Program Coordinator) has several prizes for those that participate.
- June 27 - Crawly Critters Storytime-Susan Nye (Library Staff) prepared a bug hunt, bug song, and Storytime for children ages 2-4.
- June 29 - Chalk the Walk! - Children registered and came out the library to decorate the sidewalk that runs alongside the library. Participants were provided chalk, stencils and design ideas to participate.
- Free Magazine Bin - Discarded magazines from the library's collection and donations made by patrons are put in this bin for library patrons to pick up. This has been very successful!
- Salem Public School Art Display - We have art displayed at the Circulation desk from students' grades K-8 th from Salem School. I hope to continue displaying art from the school twice a year, once in the Fall and then in the Spring. This display has received a very positive response.

**Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, July 5, 2022 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report
Department Updates**

Library Upcoming Events

- July 6 Sand - Presented by the Kellogg Environmental Center. Learn about sand and what it is made of. The program includes the use of microscopes and a hand lens to view a collection of sand from CT beaches, streams and lakes, as well as an art project using paint made from CT soils.
- July 12 Reading the Map - Presented by the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center. Learn how to read trail signs, use a paper map and compass and discuss hiking preparedness.
- July 19 Wild Animals of our Region - Join Chief Ranger, Bill Reid of the Last Green Valley to explore and learn about the wild animals of our region. Participants will have an opportunity to closely examine skull models of several mammals and to identify their individual characteristics and habits.
- August 2 Kid's Guide to Tree ID - Presented by the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center. Learn tree identification skills and meet DPNC animals that rely on trees in the wild and make a leaf rubbing craft.
- August 10 Author Event with Erica Cirino - Erica Cirino, the author of *Thicker than Water: The Quest for Solutions to the Plastic Crisis* will discuss her book and experiences with other scientists about the issue of plastic and the planet.
- August 17 - Live Birds of Prey with A Place Called Hope - Family Program - The audience will get to meet 2 daytime hunters and 2 nighttime hunters.