

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2023, 7:00 PM
SALEM TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

**The minutes submitted below have been filed in accordance with
Section 1-225 of the CT General Statutes. They are subject to
final approval with or without amendments by a vote of the Board of Selectmen.
Approval and any such amendments will be detailed in subsequent minutes.**

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 7:04 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a. Tuesday, January 3, 2023 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, to approve the January 3, 2023 Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendment:**

ABSENT

Kevin Lyden ~~(tll)~~

**Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Butcher,
LaBonte, Munro, and Chmielewski. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in
Abstention: Selectman Lyden.**

3. CORRESPONDENCE / PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Cunningham, 46 Salem Ridge Drive, provided a brief background of his history and experience as a Deputy Fire Marshal and Fire Chief for the Town of Salem and the City of Groton and spoke with respect to the breakdown in communication between the town and the Fire Company regarding its finances and the town's lack of open government. As the Treasurer for the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company (GLVFCO), he is responsible for ensuring that all of the bills are in order. Unfortunately, he is currently forbidden to speak with the Finance Department regarding Fire Department matters, per orders of the First

Selectman. Over the last several months, he has discovered that checks issued to some of the members were processed and not mailed and invoices were paid for a lesser amount without explanation. He is now tasked with reviewing all of the bills and contacting each of the vendors to determine the status of their accounts, which is a negative reflection on the town and affects the reputation of both the Fire Company and him. He requested that an investigation be conducted into the matter.

GLVFCO President Cheryl Philopena requested the date on which the stakeholders could expect to receive the draft copy of the Emergency Services Study. She also thanked the Board for including their item regarding the Town Meeting on the Agenda, stating that the request was made by the citizens of the town, as evidenced by the signatures on the submitted petition. She also informed the Board that she will be submitting a written request for an itemized list of all of the expenditures and their related invoices for the town-wide AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) Replacements and the Additional Ambulance Nominal Fees – both of which were allocated by the town through its ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds.

4. AGENDA

a. Pursuant to Town Charter, Chapter 4, review and act on the Petition for Town Meeting certified by the Town Clerk on February 2, 2023 that requests consideration of the following special matter:

- **To publicly discuss the results of the Emergency Services Study being done by Municipal Resources, Inc. as soon as it is completed**
- **To discuss the current status and future direction of the Emergency Services in the Town of Salem**

M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to, pursuant to the Salem Town Charter, Chapter 4, to schedule a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at Salem School to: 1) publicly discuss the results of the Emergency Services Study being done by Municipal Resources, Inc. as soon as it is completed and 2) discuss the current status and future direction of the Emergency Services in the Town of Salem. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski recited the memo, dated February 2, 2023, received by the Town Clerk acknowledging the receipt of and certifying the submitted petition, which includes signatures gathered by Cheryl A. Philopena and James B. Savalle. The Town Attorney has also reviewed the petition. He informed the Board that the Study is not completed and the completion date is unknown at this time. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the requirement to set a date for the Town Meeting, per the Town Charter, the issuance of the public notice, per state statutes, and organizing a

presentation by the author(s) regarding their findings. Based on the requirements, First Selectman Chmielewski proposed the date of Tuesday, February 21, 2023, adding that the Salem School Multi-Purpose Room has been temporarily secured. The status of the Study on the proposed date for the Town Meeting is unknown at this time. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

- b. Authorize the First Selectman to enter into a Fire Marshal Mutual Aid Services Agreement with the Towns of Lebanon, Colchester, Bozrah, and Franklin**

M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to authorize the First Selectman to enter into a Fire Marshal Mutual Aid Services Agreement with the Towns of Lebanon, Colchester, Bozrah, and Franklin. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski introduced Interim Fire Marshal Tom Main, who stated that he was approached by the Lebanon Fire Marshal regarding the possibility entering into an agreement to regionalize their services. Each of the Fire Marshals would be cross-certified to work in each of the towns, allowing them to have coverage when one of the Fire Marshals is not available. Selectman Lyden expressed his support and appreciation to Interim Fire Marshal Main, adding that the town's health district, probate, and animal control services are currently shared with other towns. In response to Selectman Butcher and Munro regarding any additional costs that are associated with the Agreement, Interim Fire Marshal Main stated that there are no required costs associated with the Agreement at this time; discretionary funding is available should the town opt to pay a Fire Marshal on an hourly basis as an independent contractor, per the contract. First Selectman Chmielewski added that the Agreement would not only further enhance their services but also increase their eligibility for any available grant funding. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

- c. Resolution to authorize the First Selectman to enter into and execute all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain the 2022 STEAP Grant with the State of Connecticut, on behalf of the Town of Salem for the Darling Road Bridge rehabilitation, in the amount of \$372,000.00**

M/S/C: Butcher/Munro, hereby resolved, that First Selectman be authorized to accept on behalf of the Town of Salem, CT, a 2022 Connecticut STEAP Grant in the amount of \$372,000.00 for the Darling Road Bridge Rehabilitation and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that First Selectman Ed Chmielewski is hereby authorized to enter into and execute all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain the 2022 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant with the State of Connecticut, on behalf of the

Town of Salem for the Darling Road Bridge rehabilitation in the amount of \$372,000.00. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to Selectman Lyden, former Town Planner Justin LaFountain, Executive Assistant Alesha Brothers, and Finance Specialist Lisa Jablonski for their assistance in submitting the Grant application in a timely manner. The State of Connecticut conducts a review of the town's bridges every five (5) years and questioned the health of the bridge. Once questioned, CLA Engineers, Inc., was requested to review and inspect the bridge, which crosses over the Eightmile River, and provided its recommendations. The estimated cost of the project is \$469,600.00, of which \$97,600.00 (or 20%) would be the town's responsibility, per the requirements of the STEAP (Small Towns Economic Assistance Program) Grant. Part of the town's portion of funding has been expended for the Engineering review. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

d. 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 \$11,814.75 (eleven thousand eight hundred fourteen dollars and seventy-five cents) on the 7th day of February 2023. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

5. REPORTS:

a. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Winter 2022/23 issue of *Our Town Salem* is now available and provided the highlights as reported by the town's various departments in their monthly reports (*attached*). He expressed his appreciation to and commended each of the individual staff members for all of their hard work and efforts, including a solid Finance and Human Resources Department, the recent emergency repair of the Landfill's trash compactor and Town Hall septic system by the Public Works Department, the Library's numerous activities and events, and a 96.03% Tax Collection Rate, to date, as reported by the Tax Collector.

b. EMERGENCY SERVICES – POLICE / FIRE

Interim Fire Marshal Tom Main reported that all of the Deputy Fire Marshals and paid Firefighters/EMTs received their CTDEEP (Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) Open Burn Official certifications and will provide assistance, as necessary, to Deputy Fire Marshal John Cunningham, who is the primary lead. The Fire Marshal's office is in the process of prioritizing the inspections of the local businesses to help streamline the process and provide businesses with adequate time to conduct any necessary corrective action(s) before applying for their state permits and/or

licenses. The Emergency Services team is also in the process of implementing the ESO Record Keeping System which supports the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) codes and will increase the town's eligibility for grants. The System will streamline the town's internal record-keeping system, enhance its reporting capabilities, and will, ultimately, improve the town's ISO (Insurance Services Office) Rating.

AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) Update (Selectman LaBonte) – After consulting with ZOLL Medical Corporation, it was determined that the current AEDs were serviceable. As such, each of the AEDs was upgraded, free of charge, and is now capable of delivering nine (9) shocks vs. the three (3) shocks on a single battery. Six (6) new replacement AEDs were also ordered (three (3) for each Fire Department) for the First Responders. An additional Lucas device, i.e., CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) system, which will serve as a backup for the ambulance, was purchased with the remaining funds.

First Selectman Chmielewski added that Fire Marshal Main and Deputy Fire Marshal Jeff Standish also act as the Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor to the town's Firefighters/EMTs. The Fire Chiefs, Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator, Firefighters/EMTs Supervisor, and Selectman Liaison continue to hold monthly round table meetings, which were instituted 2-1/2 years ago. Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston commented that the meetings have been productive and the communication has been positive. The group is currently working to ensure that the career staff and members of both Fire Departments are trained at the same level.

c. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Mike Bednarz reported that 307 residents have signed up for the Everbridge Notification System, to date. Numerous communications continue to be received daily from the state regarding alerts, training, and meetings. He participated in a very positive site walk of the proposed Disc Golf Course which included members of Emergency Services, representatives of both Fire Departments, Selectman Liaison Butcher, and other related individuals. The town's EOC (Emergency Operations Center) is operationally ready and prepared to handle the winter, summer, and hurricane seasons and is in constant contact with Eversource. Per the state, Region 4, and Red Cross, towns are requested to utilize regional Red Cross warming shelters. Residents are encouraged to contact 2-1-1 for assistance and guidance. He urged everyone to be prepared for any weather-, natural-, or disaster-related emergencies by visiting either the Eversource website and/or ready.gov, which includes a variety of checklists. This month's PSA (Public Service Announcement) is Winter Weather Emergencies, including black ice and freezing pipes. The Emergency Management Team has also been discussing school safety,

cybersecurity, and the general topics of sustainability and resiliency. Following the state's approval, the town's Local Emergency Operation Plan (LEOP) will be distributed to the relevant parties. The Department aims to continue to collaborate with all of the town departments and work on hazard mitigation planning for disaster- and emergency-related events.

First Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to the Emergency Management team for all of their hard work and efforts, including collaborating with Emergency Services, the Resident State Troopers office, and the school to draft the school's Emergency Management Plan. The town seeks to continue to cooperate and aid the school with any needs they might have. Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Coordinator Bednarz added that they also plan to continue to hold annual training events that will eventually lead to a larger event. The school's Facilities Director was recently appointed as the Emergency Management Liaison. As such, emergency drills or events are handled within the school proper. Once their internal resources are expended, the town becomes involved and provides support to the school and once the town's resources are expended, the state is contacted for aid.

d. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Board of Finance has completed their preliminary discussions regarding the FY2023/24 Capital Budget and will begin speaking with the town departments this week. Selectman Lyden added that the town is in good financial condition, as evidenced by the recent Audit, which found no material weaknesses. Selectman Butcher concurred, stating that in comparison to other towns' budgets, Salem's financial standing is healthy.

e. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

Selectwoman Munro reported that parents expressed their concerns and requested clarification regarding the School's discipline policies during the Public Comment portion of their Regular Meeting. The Board approved their proposed FY2023/24 Budget, with an increase of approximately 0.55%; the proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Finance. The Board will be reviewing East Lyme High School and LEARN's proposed school calendars on which the School's 2023/24 school calendar will be based. The Board also discussed the various ways in which to honor retiring staff members, noting that several notable staff members will be retiring at the end of the current school year.

The Selectmen commended the school and its staff for maintaining the level of funding and quality of education that Salem School provides to the children of the community. First Selectman Chmielewski added that the town continues to maintain a positive relationship with the School, as evidenced by their ability to accommodate the aforementioned Town Meeting on short notice.

f. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commission has completed and submitted the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Commission continues to mature and grow in a positive manner.

g. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Economic Development Commission is in the process of continuing their discussions regarding actions they could take and ways they could offer their support to help enhance and help the town's businesses grow.

h. LIBRARY – *see First Selectman's Report*

First Selectman Lyden added that the Public Works Department is in the process of renovating the old Salem Library, including the addition of an ADA-Accessible Bathroom, electrical upgrades, and upgrades to the basement, utilizing the town-approved ARPA Funds. The building is owned by the town and will be used by the Friends of the Library, who will offer books for sale year-round and, like Center School, will be available for use by the town's organizations for small meetings.

i. TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)

Selectwoman Munro reported that TVCCA is currently offering tax preparation assistance. While the organization does receive significant funding, the number of citizens-in-need has grown and, due to the demand and increasing costs, households are receiving a decreased amount of funding compared to previous years. Selectman Lyden added that those in need may also contact the town for temporary assistance through its Benevolent Fund.

First Selectman Chmielewski wished to extend his gratitude to the Selectmen and Selectwoman for their invaluable support and input, based on their professional expertise and backgrounds.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 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 Selectman
Tuesday, February 7th, 2023 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report – Department Updates

Financial Lisa Jablonski

- Request and reconcile upon return Oper Budget spreadsheets for all 30 Depts and 18 Department Heads; several second requests for Meeting packets
- Paper posting of annual OSHA Records and Report, electronic files by March
- Monitor present Budgets including Oper, Capital, ARPA
- Managed/consulted continuing issues including ARPA purchases, beaver complications, inoperable vault, Dollar Gen GC complications, vacuum cleaner malfunction, CYBER Natl Guard evaluation, bus driver parking issues, postage meter, both men's and women's bathroom issues
- Review PO's with several Depts including ARPA PO's
- Evaluate or clarify GLVFC submitted invoices and issues

Human Resources Lisa Jablonski

- Numerous employee tax withholding changes, W-2 and 1099 changes or updates and issuance
- Continuing Accrual issues with Primepay
- Worked on past complaints and new reports re: Harassment to Full time Salem Fire Fighter /EMT's
- Continued reference regarding both GLVFC Lawsuit and filed Complaints

Public Works – Tony Gallicchio

- Repaired the Landfill Trash compactor. Gary reported it broken on Sunday - fabricated hydraulic piston system / pins saved approx. \$8-10,000. Spent about \$400 on material.
- Cleared and cleaned bathrooms at Town Hall
- Dug up and reworked septic at Town hall
- Continued hazardous tree mitigation - Cut downed trees
- Responded to 34 Maintenance Requests
- Worked with Stula on generator Pad
- Repaired drawer unit
- Checked out tree complaint on Harris Ext.
- Picked up #6 Dump truck
- Reinstalled fence at Old Library for tree work
- Had 4 morning safety/tailgate meetings with crew
- 4 garbage runs
- Fabricated brackets for mowers
- Fabricated exhaust system for PW-11 not able to purchase
- Moved wood from roads that were from last three storms
- Finished bathroom at old library - waiting for heat system
- Came in for 2 storms
- Pretreated for 4 icing conditions
- Dug up and reworked septic at Town hall
- Cleared and cleaned bathrooms at Town Hall
- Reseated toilets at Town Hall
- Set new Generator on Pad with Electrician
- Prepared Parking lots for snow/ice at school 4 times
- Held Safety meeting

**Board of Selectman
Tuesday, February 7th, 2023 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report – Department Updates**

Public Works – Tony Gallicchio cont.)

- Rewelded bed of PW-6 from the salt
- Washed trucks after salting conditions
- Repaired tire leak on PW-10
- Repaired Utility cabinet at PW
- Fabricated lift for tires on big trucks
- Set up flagger class
- Brought scrap to DW
- Repaired fence at transfer station
- Replaced lights in New Library Biography area
- Went out twice to clear catch basins
- Replaced two street signs
- Put out 6 linear road markers

Salem Library Director - Shannon Henson

Past Events:

- January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Seniors meet every Tuesday from 1:00-4:00 PM. They use our Nintendo Wii, play games, and serve refreshments.
- January 7, 2023 Author Story Time with Chad Chenail from America's Test Kitchen. 10 participants.
- January 9, 2023-Monday Matinee-Where the Crawdads Sing 5 attendees.
- January 10, 2023 Winter Reading Program: 40 registered
- January 18, 2023 Mushroom Storytime with Hannah. 16 attendees.
- January 21, 2023 Sewing for Beginners. 8 participants.
- January 26, 2023 Books in the Afternoon Book Group. 12 attendees.
- January 28, 2023 Garden Party-40 participants.

Upcoming Events: Winter Reading Program kicked off on January 10, 2023. We have 40 patrons registered for the program so far. I will continue to update everyone on if we have more patrons register. As patrons complete reading lists, they receive tickets to be entered into prizes that will be raffled at the end of the program. We also have a cart of Free Books, as prizes for completion of reading lists.

Tax Collector - Vivian Waters

- The tax office had a busy January with many payments being submitted through both the town web site and in person. All payments were processed in a timely fashion with both myself and Athena assisting our towns folk.
- Our collection rate has risen significantly since my last report. As of this date we are currently at **96.03%** with four more months to increase that number.

**Board of Selectman
Tuesday, February 7th, 2023 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report – Department Updates**

Recreation – Agnes Miyuki

- Tai Chi Classes, Session II, in progress. 8-week Sessions, Tuesdays, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., Salem School Multi-Purpose Room. Next session scheduled to begin Tuesday, February 14, 2023.
- Adult Co-ed Basketball Pick-up Games at Salem School Gym, Open to Salem & East Lyme residents, Age 18 and over, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., through March 30, 2023
- Adult Co-ed Volleyball Pick-up Games at Salem School Gym, Open to Salem & East Lyme residents, Age 18 and over, Fridays, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., through March 29, 2023
- Adult Co-ed Pickleball Pick-up Games at Salem School Multi-Purpose Room, Open to Salem & East Lyme residents, Age 18 and over, Saturdays, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., through April 1, 2023
- Seniors & Strollers Walking at Salem School, Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, through May 31, 2023
- Disc Golf Course – working with CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency)
- Spring/Summer Camps Planned:
 - TinyTykes Soccer, Tuesdays, May 2 / May 9, / May 16/ May 23 / May 30, Ages 2-3, 9:00-9:45 a.m. / Ages 4-5, 10:00-10:45 a.m., Volunteer Park, \$90
 - Hands on Science, Grades 1 to 6, June 26-30, \$240 Residents
 - Slime Week, Grades 1-6, July 10-14, \$240 Residents
 - Jewelry & Games, Grades 1-6, July 17-21, \$240 Residents
 - Outside the Lines Art, Grades 1-6, July 24-28, \$240 Residents
 - Building up S.T.E.A.M. LEGO Camp, Ages 5-6, July 17-21, \$130 Residents
 - S.T.E.A.M. Works LEGO Camp, Ages 7-9, July 17-21, \$130 Residents
 - Skyhawks Sports Camps
- Planning for three Summer Concerts in June, July, and August. July Concert will be in partnership with the Economic Development Commission
- Bob Appleby Fields at Volunteer Park Dedication Ceremony planned for Spring 2023
- Other Collaborative Events/Activities with Salem Free Public Library in the works

Seniors – Agnes Miyuki

- Salem Seniors Group
 - Next meeting: Tuesday, February 14, 10:30 am, Salem School Library
 - Blood Pressure Screenings offered at Seniors' Monthly Meetings
 - View their new monthly newsletter online at salemct.gov — Departments — Salem Seniors
 - Many activities in the works: BINGO, Potluck Dinner/Talent Show, Self Defense Course, 2023 Memorial Day Parade Float, Senior Yoga & Sittercise, Senior Night/Day at the Movies, Salem School Valentine's Day Wish List, Garden Team, Bus Trips
- Salem Seniors \$5 (+ tip) Lunches @ Two Brothers Restaurant, first & third Tuesdays
- Senior Activities @ the Salem Free Public Library:
 - Fun and Games, Tuesdays, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
 - Busy Bee Quilters, second Wednesdays of the month, 12:00-4:00 p.m.
 - Clam Shell Quilters, first and third Fridays, 10:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
 - Knitting and Crocheting Circle, Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.-noon

**Board of Selectman
Tuesday, February 7th, 2023 Regular Meeting
First Selectman's Report – Department Updates**

Seniors – Agnes Miyuki (cont.)

- Transportation Services
Municipal Medical Transportation for adults 60+ and/or with disabilities can reserve rides to/from their medical appointments within the County. Note: Due to increased usage and dwindling grant funds, the number of one-way trips has been reduced from 36 to 24.
Eastern CT Travel Voucher Program – affordable subsidized tax, livery, wheelchair accessible rides

Building Department – Agnes Miyuki

- FY2022/23, to date:
 - Total Permits Issued: 228
 - Total Fees Collected: \$61,111.05
 - Total Construction Value: \$4,883,050.54
 - Total Certificate of Occupancies Issued: 75

Assessor's Office – Mike Kapinos

- Finalize / Sign Grand list 2022
- Impact notice mailings
- Homeowner Tax Credit Program Mailings
- Sales entry
- Building Permit review
- Budget Preparation and Board of Assessment Appeals Preparation

Town Planner – Nicole Haggerty

- The Planning and Zoning Commission a public hearing for the Plan of Conservation and Development at their January 10th meeting. The plan was adopted unanimously and will be sent to the state shortly.
- A public hearing was held on January 24, 2023 for a regulation amendment related to commercial firewood processing. The amendment was adopted by the Commission after several meetings of discussion and numerous comments from the public.
- The Commission approved an application from Getty Granite to expand their outdoor processing operations and outdoor showroom on East Haddam Road.
- Two applications are pending for 496 New London Road – one for subdivision of the land and one for a special exception. A public hearing has been scheduled for March 14.

Town Clerk – Linda Flugrad

- Backfilled documents onto the land records (working in the mid-1800s)
- Processed land recordings
- Processed trade name certificates and dispersed them to various departments
- Issued dog licenses
- Assisted residents and the public with searching, etc.
- Encouraged residents and searchers to use our online public search application
- Registered and issued vital records
- Directed many people to the correct departments they should be contacting
- Accepted petition; spoke with Town Attorney regarding protocol.
- Updated the website as needed, administrative tasks