

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 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
Pam Munro

ABSENT

Kevin Lyden

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Tuesday, May 2, 2023, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**
M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher , to approve the Board of Selectmen May 2, 2023
Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ada Vaill, Forsyth Road, informed the Selectmen that paragliders have been launching from Salem Community Park Pavilion and flying over the area, including her property. She has conducted extensive research and contacted the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) regarding the laws and was informed that it is illegal to fly and/or hover over private property. She felt that they are trespassing and invading her and her family's privacy and expressed her concerns regarding the legal ramifications and potential liabilities of paragliders flying above and/or landing on her or the town's properties. She suggested the town post signage at the Pavilion prohibiting paragliders from launching from town properties.

First Selectman Chmielewski thanked her for informing them about the paragliders and confirmed the receipt of her written complaint which has been forwarded to the Resident State Troopers. He encouraged her to contact the Troopers, and inform her neighbors to do the same, when she sees them paragliding over her property. He also informed her that the

town is planning to post signage related to the Disc Golf Course and will consider placing signage prohibiting paragliders from launching from the site.

Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Member Tom Dillon, Witch Meadow Road, informed the Board that the Fire Company is hosting a Food Drive to benefit Care & Share of East Lyme. A collection box has been placed outside the Firehouse and will be collecting items directed towards children, including peanut butter, jelly, tuna, cereals, and healthy snacks, until June 15.

First Selectman Chmielewski thanked him for his service and for informing them of the Food Drive.

First Selectman congratulated Gary Closius on his recent marriage.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. To provide an update and 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: LaBonte/Munro, to enter into Executive Session to provide an update and 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). Discussion to include the members of the Board of Selectmen. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. Invited parties exited the conference room for Executive Session at 7:18 p.m. First Selectman Chmielewski resumed the meeting at 8:32 p.m. No motions were made or votes were taken during Executive Session.

5. AGENDA

- a. **Emergency Responder Awards Ordinance**

While the Board traditionally approves the submitted lists during the May Regular Meeting, the town is not able to vet the members in time due to the due date stated in the Ordinance. First Selectman Chmielewski recited the lists, which are dated April 23, 2023, by Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston and May 1, 2023, by Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Chief Pete Silva. Resident volunteers receive an abatement on their real estate taxes while non-resident volunteers receive a stipend.

M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, to approve the Emergency Responder Tax Abatement of \$1,000 and \$550 Cash Stipends to be paid to the qualifying individuals, as presented by Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Chief Pete Silva and Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston, pending confirmation that all of the individuals meet the criteria. Discussion: First

Selectman Chmielewski reported that they are working on amending the Ordinance to provide the maximum allowable abatement/stipend, per state law, and revise the deadline date to allow the town sufficient time to fully vet the submitted lists. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

b. Tax Collector Rate Bill

M/S/C: LaBonte/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 Board of Finance approved the Tax Collector Rate Bill to lay a tax rate of 28.8 mils for real estate and personal property and motor vehicles for the 2021/22 Grand List. Per the Town Charter, real estate and personal property taxes shall be due and payable in two installments on July 1, 2023, and January 1, 2024. 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, 2023. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

c. Tax Collector 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 \$479.86 (four hundred seventy-nine dollars and eighty-six cents) on the 6th day of June 2023. **Discussion:** None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

3. REPORTS

a. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Chmielewski provided a detailed report of the departmental updates. Of note is the current Tax Collector Rate of 98.55%. A well-attended Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony was held with Selectwoman Munro, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, as the keynote speaker. The Salem Seniors Group created and donated the patriotic planters that were placed at each of the memorial monuments. The VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and Historical Society are planning to address past criticisms regarding the exclusion of monument(s) honoring the individuals who sacrificed their lives in other historic war events. The Public Safety Study is slated for completion next month and will be presented to the Board.

b. EMERGENCY SERVICES – POLICE/FIRE

The Salem Resident State Troopers and Troop K responded to 221 Calls for Service in the month of March 2023. In addition, the Troopers visited the Salem School pre-K classroom, conducted a School Lockdown Drill, and attended the Town Safety Meeting.

c. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Emergency Management team is working on the Everbridge program, including resolving some issues that were brought to their attention and promoting the program to encourage more of the town's residents to sign up to receive emergency notifications.

d. RECREATION COMMISSION

Approvals for the construction of a volleyball court at the Salem Community Park Pavilion are in process. Selectman Butcher reported that the infrastructure of the revised Disc Golf Course is nearly complete. Also in progress are the signage and the selection of a new name and logo.

e. BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance, who recently approved a flat budget, will be meeting this Thursday, June 8. Additional promotion was conducted for the Budget Referendum resulting in a 25% improvement in voter turnout, in comparison to the previous year. He felt that part of the reason for a low turnout could be a reflection of the townspeople's satisfaction and confidence with the work of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance in maintaining the town's fiscal health. Selectwoman Munro added that the low turnout could also be a result of its lack of controversy and/or lack of awareness that the residents can vote to approve or oppose the town's budget.

f. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

The BOE is meeting this evening. Everyone was encouraged to view the meeting video(s) which can be found online at: salemschools.org/Page/1197. First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the town is continuing to meet and work with the School.

g. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

The Commission has been busy with several applications and Public Hearings.

h. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Commission is in the process of reaching out to the town's businesses who might be interested in hosting a booth at their upcoming Christmas in July event on Saturday, July 29. The event is being held in partnership with the Recreation Commission.

i. LIBRARY

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the old Library's restored cupola, which was restored by his son as an Eagle Scout project, was recently raised. Lighting may be added to highlight the cupola. The building will be utilized as an additional meeting space for community organizations. The old Library has also been remodeled with a new ADA-accessible bathroom and ramp.

j. TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action) – no report

Selectwoman Munro reported that their most recent meeting was held at their Taftville

Childcare and Preschool Center. A new facility is currently in the process of being constructed in Groton, a much-needed addition to address the daycare and preschool needs. She will be attending a virtual Strategic Planning Committee meeting this Friday, June 9.

7. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 4-0, 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.**