

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 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 7:09 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Tuesday, June 6, 2023, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting

M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, to approve the Board of Selectmen June 6, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. 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

Selectman Lyden recited a letter submitted by Sue Coffee, Old Lyme, regarding issues that have arisen from the properties located at 343 and 343-R Old Colchester Road and the town's actions and reactions. While the town appears to be addressing the issue(s), she felt that the issues that arose from the properties could have been better dealt with and controlled should the Zoning/Wetlands Enforcement Officer have had the time to address the issues, adding that the limited office hours are insufficient to accommodate the growing town.

First Selectman Chmielewski recited an anonymous letter, received June 14, 2023, from a member of the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company regarding equipment that was damaged by the Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief.

5. AGENDA

a. Resolution to authorize the First Selectman to enter into an agreement with Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (“C-PACE”)

M/S/C: Butcher/Lyden, to move to and schedule a Special Town Meeting for a Resolution to authorize the First Selectman to enter into an agreement with the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (“C-PACE”), pursuant to Connecticut State General Statutes, Section 16(a)-40(g) on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at Salem Town Hall. Discussion: Burnett’s Country Gardens Owner Todd Burnett, 380 New London Road, recited a letter from Catherine Duncan, Connecticut Green Bank, regarding the program, which provides long-term financing for green energy upgrades, is based on Public Act 15-21, An Act Concerning the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program. The Public Act allows municipalities to place a benefit assessment on a property when the Property Owner funds an energy improvement through the Green Bank. The First Selectman reported that he consulted with the Tax Collector who recommended the item be sent to a Town Meeting for discussion and approval. Mr. Burnett stated that, if approved, an 80kW solar array would be installed on the southwest (front) portion of the roof. If approved, a lien would be placed on the property by the town and would take priority over all other liens, including the mortgage. As such, the mortgage lender(s), in most cases, agree to the contract as the solar array would increase its value should the loan be defaulted upon. The solar array is estimated to have a life span of 30 to 50 years. Once the proposed program is approved by the residents at the Town Meeting, all businesses in the Town of Salem would be eligible to do the same without additional Town Meetings. A representative(s) from the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (“C-PACE”) Program will be present at the Town Meeting to introduce, explain, and answer any questions regarding the proposal to the residents. The Selectmen agreed that the proposal would be positive for the town. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

b. Appointments

1) Economic Development Commission

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the Commission has been having difficulty obtaining a quorum due, in part, to the passing of Carl Fontneau and other resignation(s). The following candidates have expressed an interest in serving on the Commission: Michael Smith (R), who currently serves on the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission and is the owner of *Clean Grout*; Kathleen Roderick (U),

owner of *Brimstone Candles*, and; Amanda Lawrence (U), owner of *Mandie Lee Photography* and unofficial photographer for *Our Town Salem*.

M/S/C: Lyden/Butcher, to appoint Amanda Lawrence, Kathleen Roderick, and Michael Smith as full members of the Economic Development Commission. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

2) Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission

First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the terms for Commissioners Diba Khan-Bureau (D) and Roger Phillips (R) have expired and were not re-appointed due to issues related to the Commission's relationship with the staff. Improvements were made and, based on positive feedback from the staff and Town Attorney, he recommended both members be re-appointed to the Commission.

M/S/A: Munro/Lyden, to re-appoint Diba Khan-Bureau and Roger Phillips as members of the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission. Discussion: Selectman Lyden commended Commissioner Khan-Bureau while cautioning the Board on electing the same members to multiple Boards. First Selectman Chmielewski concurred, adding that both the Inland Wetlands & Conservation and Planning & Zoning Commissions are interconnected in many cases and the importance of maintaining the boundaries when necessary. Commissioner LaBonte expressed his reluctance in re-appointing her to the Commission based on her past public statements that, he felt, were "unkind", adding that one must take responsibility and have accountability for their words and actions. Selectman Lyden concurred. First Selectman Chmielewski also agreed, stating his belief in mentoring and guiding individuals, which he has done with her, among others, and cited that improvements have been made. Selectman Butcher commended Commissioner Khan-Bureau, who has the expertise and has served on the Commission for many years, for her work as the Chairperson of the Commission. He also felt that Commissioner Phillips was also a strong candidate who has served on the Commission for several years and is very knowledgeable about the town. Selectman Lyden reiterated the importance of not setting a precedence by appointing the same members to the town's boards and commissions and proposed amending the motion, separating the re-appointments. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Munro/Lyden, to re-appoint Roger Phillips as a member of the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: Munro/Lyden, to re-appoint Diba Khan-Bureau as a member of the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission. Discussion: Selectman Lyden stated that he was abstaining from the motion due to his concerns that the practice does not become a pattern. Selectman Butcher concurred. Voice vote, 4-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Butcher, LaBonte, Munro, and Chmielewski. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman Lyden.

c. Tax Collector Refunds – *none*

3. REPORTS

a. FIRST SELECTMAN

The Public Works contract is currently being negotiated. The Public Works Department is working with Eversource to mitigate those trees that appear dangerous. The Tax Collector reported a collection rate of 98.61% at the end of FY2022/23 and the Salem Seniors Group met today at the Bingham Camp for their monthly meeting. A detailed report of the departmental updates will be provided to the Board.

b. EMERGENCY SERVICES – POLICE/FIRE

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that Full-time Firefighter/EMT Travis Roberts was recently certified as a Fire Marshal and will be joining the Fire Marshal team, which includes part-time Supervisors Tom Main and Jeff Standish, members of the Regional Fire Marshal Agreement and the State's Fire Marshal's office. In addition, Resident State Trooper Kevin Crosby was approved to receive Fire Marshal training and will be available to assist the team when necessary. The Resident State Trooper contract is in the process of being reviewed and signed. Selectman Lyden noted that the Fire Marshal budget was significantly reduced and must be reviewed to ensure that they remain within budget. First Selectman Chmielewski concurred, stating that the Career FF/EMTs are multi-tasking during the week, contacting and conducting local businesses to conduct inspections. Selectman LaBonte added that Selectwoman Munro and the Town Attorney negotiated the recent contract with the incentives in mind. First Selectman Chmielewski stated that the four-year contract is favorable for both the town and the individuals and will help recruit and maintain their FF/EMTs. Selectman LaBonte also noted that the part-time and per diem firefighter's rate was increased. Selectman Butcher who serves as a Liaison with Selectman LaBonte to the On-Call Stipends Negotiating Committee stated that progress has been made during their meetings with the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company.

c. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – *see above*

d. RECREATION COMMISSION

The Recreation Commission is working with the Economic Development Commission on the upcoming Christmas in July event. Their events and activities may be viewed on the town website.

e. BOARD OF FINANCE

The Board of Finance will be meeting this Thursday, July 13.

f. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

The Board of Education will be meeting next Monday, July 17.

g. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

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

h. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

As noted earlier, the Commission has been busy planning their upcoming Christmas in July event on Saturday, July 29.

i. LIBRARY

The Library Board's Bylaws were sent to the Town Attorney for review and comment(s). The old Library renovations are nearly complete. The interior renovations include a new ADA bathroom, reinstallation of the refurbished cupola, and painting. The Friends of the Library will have books and games available and the building will be utilized as an additional small meeting room for town and community organizations. Lighting and security enhancements might be added.

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

Selectwoman Munro reported that the July Board meeting was held at the TVCCA Commissary in Bozrah where they make lunches for their preschools and meals for the *Meals on Wheels* program. She reported that six (6) Salem individuals receive daily meals from *Meals on Wheels*. It was noted that the town provides the organization with only \$1,000.00 annually for the insurmountable service received by the town's residents through its *Meals on Wheels*, oil and energy assistance, and other programs. The town also provided \$3,000.00 in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds.

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/Butcher, 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) at 8:02 p.m. Discussion to include the members of the Board of Selectmen and Town Attorney Brian Estep. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. First Selectman Chmielewski resumed the meeting at 9:36 p.m. No motions were made or votes were taken during Executive Session.

7. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 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.