

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 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.  
Ron LaBonte  
Kevin Lyden  
Pam Munro

**ABSENT**

Thomas (TJ) Butcher

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Chmielewski called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**a. Tuesday, July 11, 2023, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to approve the Board of Selectmen June 6, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes, with the following amendment:**

**Page 3, Item 5(b)(2):**

**M/S/A: Munro/Lyden, to re-appoint.... ~~Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.~~**

**Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Public Comments:**

Tom Craney, 152 Old Colchester Road, spoke with respect to the activities at the Gardner Lake State Park Boat Launch. As a neighboring property, they are not able to utilize their cottage on the weekends due to excessive noise, trespassers picnicking in their yard, and vandalism. As a result, the State Park and its surrounding properties are declining. It is his understanding that the uniformed individual who was supervising the area does not have the authority to issue tickets or ask people to leave. He felt that the Board had the power and responsibility to the Lake residents of the town to send a letter, with supporting documentation, to the state pushing them to address the issues, which are creating a hardship for the town and its residents.

Sue Coffee, 10 Saunders Hollow Road, Old Lyme, who started Friends of Gardner Lake in 2010, stated that she is very knowledgeable about the issues and has photographs documenting the trash and porta-potties. She agreed with Mr. Craney that something needs to be done to improve the safety of the area for the public. She also spoke concerning the continuing issues caused by the unpermitted motocross track on Old Colchester Road and its impact on Harris Brook/Eightmile River Watershed and Zemko Preserve. She provided a brief recap of the past actions that have been taken and stated the need for further actions to control the runoff that has resulted from the unpermitted activities. The recent Erosion & Sedimentation control measures that were placed, she felt, are temporary and a permanent solution should be instituted. She requested that the Board of Selectmen take the necessary steps to engage the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) and Army Corps of Engineers to assess the damage, remediate the area, and prevent further damage.

Correspondence:

First Selectman Chmielewski recited a letter received from Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Vernon Smith regarding the ongoing zoning enforcement efforts at 343 Old Colchester Road. The letter informs the Board that, during their last meeting, the Commission voted to authorize the Chairman to inform the Board of the Commission's consent to authorize the Zoning Enforcement Officer to file a court action relative to the Cease & Desist Order issued to the property.

*Selectman Lyden suggested contacting the Town Attorney to discuss the matter with the First Selectman, Zoning Enforcement Officer, and Town Planner. Selectwoman Munro concurred, adding that it would be prudent to seek the advisement of those who have expertise regarding such matters.*

**ADDITION TO THE AGENDA:**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to add the following item to the Agenda:**

- 5(d) Authorize the First Selectman to send a letter to the elected State Representatives and Senators and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Commissioner regarding the continuing dire conditions at the Gardner Lake State Park and Boat Launch.**

**Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**5. AGENDA**

- a. Authorize resolution for First Selectman to apply for Small Town Economic Assistance Program Grant**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to hereby resolve that the First Selectman be authorized to accept, on behalf of the Town of Salem, CT, a 2023 Connecticut STEAP**

**(Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant in the amount of \$198,560.00 for the Town of Salem Town Hall upgrades 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 2023 STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant with the State of Connecticut, on behalf of the Town of Salem.**

**Discussion: Selectman Lyden provided a brief background of the Grant, which the town has received in the past for such projects as the Transfer Station, Pavilion, and Bridge. The town will be requesting a grant to upgrade and renovate the old section of the Town Hall building. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**b. Appointments**

**1) Recreation Commission**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to appoint Dierdre Ahern as a member of the Recreation Commission. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski stated that Ms. Ahern's appointment was requested and recommended by the Recreation Commission Chairperson. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**2) Economic Development Commission**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Munro, to appoint Tammy Johnston as an Alternate Member of the Economic Development Commission. Discussion: First Selectman Chmielewski stated that Ms. Johnston's appointment was requested and recommended by the Economic Development Commission Chairperson. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**3) Old Lyme Area Cable Advisory Council**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to re-appoint Selectwoman Pam Munro to the Old Lyme Area Cable Advisory Council. Discussion: Selectwoman Munro, who has represented the Town of Salem on the Advisory Council since 2011/2012, provided a brief background of the Council, which is comprised of two (2) representatives, one from the Board of Selectmen and another from the Board of Education (BOE), from each of the five (5) area towns it represents. The Council champions those who have issues with their cable company. While their leverage has become limited over the years due to changes in its structure, they continue to advocate for the public and provide scholarships to graduating seniors. The cable access station, which is now located in Norwich, also provides training to individuals. The town does not provide funds to the**

**organization. She plans to approach the BOE for an additional representative. Information, including the agendas and minutes, is available through the Town of Old Lyme. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**c. Tax Collector Refunds – *none***

- d. Authorize the First Selectman to send a letter to the elected State Representatives and Senators and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Commissioner regarding the continuing dire conditions at the Gardner Lake State Park and Boat Launch.**

**M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to authorize the First Selectman to send a letter to the elected State Representatives and Senators and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Commissioner regarding the continuing dire conditions at the Gardner Lake State Park and Boat Launch. Discussion: Selectman Lyden provided a brief background of the State Park and Boat Launch. Because the State Park and Boat Launch are located in the Town of Salem, where the bulk of the activity occurs, the town has inherited the issues while having no jurisdiction over the area. As First Selectman, he pushed for and was able to successfully institute an alcohol ban at the Park and tow-away zones on Lakeview Avenue. First Selectman Chmielewski was also able to have No Parking signage posted along the state road. While additional funds to support the state parks through the Passport to Parks program have been gained by the state, the lack of enforcement at the Park continues. The Park, which is located in a residential neighborhood, is poorly managed resulting in overcrowding and unsafe situations. The First Selectman has requested that the State Police have a presence at the State Park over the next few weekends, at the Town's expense. Given the continuing issues, he recommended the Board of Selectmen authorize the First Selectman to send a letter regarding the ongoing safety issues, the resulting expense to the town, and the need to address the issues for its residents, in particular, and the town, as a whole. First Selectman Chmielewski reported that he has been working with the Resident State Troopers to provide additional patrols and issue tickets, as necessary, in collaboration with CT DEEP and EnCon (Connecticut Environmental Conservation Police Officers). Retired EnCon Officer and Resident Dean Wojcik has also been working behind the scenes to advocate for additional patrols. Additional signage will be placed and the tow-away zones will be more strictly enforced. He recited a brief writing regarding the State Park and Boat Launch, encouraging the residents to contact CT DEEP and their State Senators and Representatives to voice their concerns.**

**Selectwoman Munro stated that, in her research, she found that the Gardner Lake Authority partners with CT DEEP to enforce the laws of the lake and has the authority to hire third-party patrols with expenses to be reimbursed by the town (2011). First Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to the town's Resident State Troopers for their efforts and for collaborating with CT DEEP. He encouraged the public to voice their concerns to help resolve the issues. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

#### **4. REPORTS**

##### **a. FIRST SELECTMAN**

First Selectman Chmielewski provided a copy of the Departmental Updates. He expressed his appreciation to Selectmen LaBonte and Munro for their continued work and efforts on the Public Works Contract.

##### **b. EMERGENCY SERVICES – POLICE/FIRE**

The Fire Chief Roundtable Meeting was held with both of the Fire Companies in attendance. Members of the Economic Development Commission were also in attendance to discuss the logistics for the recently held Christmas in July event.

Selectman LaBonte provided a brief report on the negotiations for the On Call Agreement with the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company. Their next meeting is scheduled for August 31. The group is beginning to work collaboratively and he looks forward to the completion of the Public Safety Study, which will be helpful as they continue their discussions. It was clarified that the Agreement is related to the Emergency Services On Call Stipends for the non-career staff members. The group is also working on transparency issues with respect to their finances.

##### **c. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

The Emergency Management Team was also involved with the Christmas in July event. This month's Public Safety Announcement is Heat and Hot Weather. Residents are encouraged to prepare for power outages and contact 2-1-1 for any non-emergency needs.

##### **d. RECREATION COMMISSION**

The Commission collaborated with the Economic Development Commission to host a successful Christmas in July event. The Commission is also in the midst of hosting a Fun Run series and is in the final stages of completing the long-awaited revamped Disc Golf Course. The volleyball court at the Pavilion should be breaking ground this month. The Commission will also be hosting its final Summer Concert on Thursday, August 24, at 6:00 p.m., at the Salem Community Park Pavilion.

##### **e. BOARD OF FINANCE**

The Board of Finance, which has begun preparing for the next budget season, will be meeting next Thursday.

**f. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)**

The Board of Education has contracted to share its Director of Facilities with East Lyme. The School Roof Project has been completed. The receipt of the HVAC System was delayed due to supply chain issues. It is expected to arrive in approximately 16 weeks and will be installed during one of the school breaks. Meanwhile, the system will be cleaned in preparation for its installation. The School Building Committee will be meeting next Thursday and will have an opportunity to review the roof first-hand.

First Selectman Chmielewski thanked Selectwoman Munro for her service and Selectman Lyden for his leadership on the Committee.

**g. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

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

**h. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

First Selectman Chmielewski commended the Commission, which recently reconstituted, on a successful Christmas in July event, featuring approximately 25 Salem businesses, 3 food trucks, non-profit and town organizations, and both fire departments. It is estimated that approximately 600 individuals, including the participants, attended the event.

**i. LIBRARY**

Library Director Shannon Henson and staff were commended for bringing phenomenal programs to its residents.

**j. TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)**

Selectwoman Munro reported that the TVCCA Board of Directors will be meeting on August 8 at one of their facilities in Groton. She reminded everyone that the organization provides aid with food, housing, health, daycare, etc., and encouraged those in need to take advantage of their services.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Lyden, to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 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.**