

**TOWN OF SALEM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.  
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

**Per State of Connecticut, Governor Lamont Executive order 7B, the Town of Salem Board of Selectmen Meeting on May 5, 2020 will be following the suspension of in-person open meeting requirements. The public can access this meeting online at:**

**<https://zoom.us/j/95706964435?pwd=NTVCMVZjUVdFcUk3UUtpOVJmRll4Zz09>**

**Password: 345287**

**Or Via Telephone:**

**(312) 626 6799, (646) 558 8656, (346) 248 7799, (669) 900-9128, (253) 215 8782, (301) 715  
8592**

**Webinar ID: 957 0696 4435 | Password: 345287**

**PRESENT**

Kevin Lyden

Edward Chmielewski, Jr.

Ron LaBonte

Hugh McKenney

Terri Salas

**ABSENT**

*none*

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**a. Tuesday, April 7, 2020 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**

**M/S/C: McKenney/Salas, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, April 7, 2020, with the following amendments:**

**Page 3, Item 4(B), fourth sentence:**

...Selectwoman Salas reported that *JOANN Fabrics* is *possibly* offering free mask making kits....

**Page 4, top paragraph:**

The pandemic is now considered a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) *event* and all expenditures are being recorded for possible partial reimbursement.

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

**b. Wednesday, April 22, 2020 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/LaBonte, to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of Wednesday, April 22, 2020. Discussion: The meeting was held to adopt the Tax Deferral program, pursuant to Executive Order 7S; the Low Interest program was cancelled. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*E-mail public comment to [SelectmenPublicComment@salemct.gov](mailto:SelectmenPublicComment@salemct.gov)*

No comments were received via e-mail or the white dropbox located in front of Town Hall.

**4. AGENDA:**

**A. Update on COVID-19 Issues (*Discussion*)**

First Selectman Lyden reported that a weekly food pantry, hosted by the United Way, is now available for Salem, Oakdale, and Colchester residents in need. Those in need are requested to contact the First Selectman's office to receive the weekly bag of food items on their front doorsteps. A total of 38 families are currently receiving food items. The Tax Deferment Form is available online and may be completed and submitted via e-mail or snail mail for review by the Tax Office.

The Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony have been cancelled. Selectman and Military Liaison Chmielewski and VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Commander George Jackson are working together to organize an alternative Memorial Day program.

He has been meeting regularly with the SECCOG (Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments) and the Uncas Health District regarding COVID-19. Clarifications were received regarding child care facilities, youth camps, and recreational sports, specifically little league. Extensive screening measures have been instituted, along with recommended practices, for child care facilities and youth camps, both of which have been deemed as essential functions. Per the Health Director, little league and other recreational sports do not qualify as child care, i.e., an essential function, as deemed by the OEC (Connecticut Office of Early Childhood).

Campgrounds may be opened with strict restrictions, including the closing of common restrooms and showers and public areas, remote contact with the facility's office, the institution of ongoing sanitation and cleaning protocols, and the documentation of pertinent details regarding any individuals who stay at the campground. Recommended practices include the self-quarantining of out-of-state individuals for 14 days.

Discussions regarding Absentee Ballots for the primary elections have taken place. An additional dropbox for ballots will be installed in front of Town Hall.

**B. Extension of the State of Emergency for the Town of Salem, CT until June 5, 2020**  
*(Discussion & Action)*

**M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to extend the Declaration of the State of Emergency for the Town of Salem, Connecticut that was originally signed and issued on March 16, 2020 at 5:49 p.m. and was previously extended to April 30, 2020 and again to May 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., and to further extend the Declaration of the State of Emergency for the Town of Salem, Connecticut to June 5, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**C. Authorize the Salem Board of Finance, pursuant to Executive Order 7I, to “adopt a Budget for the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 fiscal year and to set a mil rate for the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 fiscal year.”** *(Discussion & Action)*

**M/S/C: Salas/Lyden, to, pursuant to State of Connecticut, Governor Lamont, Executive Order 7I, authorize the Salem Board of Finance to adopt a budget for the July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 fiscal year and to set a mil rate sufficient, in addition to the other estimated yearly income of the Town of Salem and in addition, to such revenue surplus, if any, as may be appropriated, not only to pay the expenses of the municipality for said fiscal year, but also to absorb the revenue deficit of the Town of Salem, if any, at the beginning of said fiscal year without holding votes required by Charter or without complying with any in-person budget adoption requirements, including but not limited to, annual town meetings requiring votes, referendums, and special town meetings. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden stated that the motion has been reviewed by the Town Attorney. Selectman McKenney stated the importance of ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to publicize the availability of the draft copy of the FY2020/21 proposed budget and provide ample opportunities for the public to submit their comments. Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to the First Selectman for having the motion reviewed by the Town Attorney. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**D. Authorization of Affordable Housing Grant Resolution** *(Discussion & Action)*

**M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to authorize the Southeastern CT Council of Government’s Planner contracted by the Town of Salem to apply for grants offered by the State of Connecticut Department of Housing with the purpose of preparing an Affordable Housing Plan, as required by the State of Connecticut.**

**FURTHER RESOLVED, that Kevin T. Lyden, as First Selectman of the Town of Salem, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents required for the grant application on behalf of the Board of**

**Selectmen and to do and perform all acts and things which he deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.**

**Discussion: Town Planner Justin LaFountain contacted him regarding the authorization of the grant to prepare Affordable Housing Plans for the Towns of Salem, Franklin, and Bozrah. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**E. Tax Collector Refunds (*Action Item*) – none**

**5. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

The First Selectman reported that a running tally of expenditures is being maintained for possible FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) reimbursements.

Plexiglas shields, similar to that of the Tax Collector's office, have been ordered for the Town Clerk, Assessor, Building, and Finance offices. A solution for the First Selectman's office is pending.

The Library is completely closed and the Head Librarian, who was coming in twice a week, is now working from home due to a boiler malfunction. The building is being checked regularly by both the custodian and himself. A civil engineer has provided an assessment and recommendations for the heating system and will be forwarded to the Selectmen.

The Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Building Departments continue to work their regular schedules. The First Selectman's Administrative Assistant and Finance Specialist are working remotely from home.

A substitute Resident State Trooper has been working in place of Trooper Luke LaRue who is now working in Chester as their daytime Trooper. Four individuals have expressed an interest in the position; the position is expected to be filled within the next six to eight weeks.

Due to COVID-19, the State has gone from an \$80 million surplus in funds to a \$1 billion deficit. The Town is currently budgeting for the current ECS (Educational Cost Sharing) Funding and hopes that the funding will not be cut due to the State's fiscal status. Luckily, the Town has a very healthy rainy day fund, from which funds will be allocated to deal with the expenses due to the pandemic.

While the FY2020/21 General Government budget request continues to be fluid, a number of reductions have been made, including a reduction in the salary increases for the staff from 3% to 2.5%, foregoing his salary increase, and a reduction in revaluation costs, totaling approximately \$27,000.00. The budget reflects an increase of approximately \$80,000.00, primarily due to the revaluation.

Amnesty Day will, most likely, be re-scheduled to June. Various options are being investigated, including a one-trip pass and Tuesday & Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Amnesty Day only days. In response to Selectwomen Salas who expressed her hesitation with the lack of offering weekend dates, First Selectman Lyden stated that those who are not able to drop off their items on the designated days may contact the office for a one-trip pass.

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

Selectman McKenney reported that several towns, including Salem, are investigating the possibility of overturning the Governor's Executive Order regarding the honoring of the bus contracts.

Approximately 1,000 meals are distributed three times a week for Salem students.

Per the Governor's recent announcement, Connecticut schools will be closed to the end of the school year. Virtual Summer services are currently being planned.

To date, a total of three (3) teachers have accepted the Teachers Retirement Incentive. The Board of Finance has funded for a total of six (6) teachers and First Selectman Lyden stated his willingness to encourage the BOE to extend the offer to a total of ten (10) teachers.

Kindergarten enrollment was significantly reduced and the BOE is now planning for two (2), rather than three (3) classes, resulting in a decrease of one teacher and one aide.

Due to the Teachers Retirement Incentive and the projected kindergarten enrollment, the BOE has reduced their proposed budget request by \$110,000.00. In addition to their previous cuts that were made at the request of the Board of Finance, the BOE has reduced their proposed budget request from a 7.2% to 6.14% increase over the current fiscal year.

Approximately \$65,000.00 in funds might be returned to the Town for this fiscal year due to savings gained from the pandemic.

The BOE has decided not to renegotiate the salary increases with the Union(s).

First Selectman Lyden added that the Board of Finance Chairman Skip Dickson has requested an estimated amount of funds that would be returned to the town and other future cuts from BOE Chairman Sean Reith. He stated the need for the BOE to further trim their budget request, especially in light of the pandemic. In response to First Selectman Lyden who questioned the status of the hiring of the two teachers, Selectman McKenney stated that the BOE continues to feel the need to add the two teachers to their overall staff, based upon the class sizes of the particular grade levels that the two proposed additional teachers would be placed. He further added that the increase would be for only one teacher due to the decreased enrollment of kindergarten students.

**C. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Board of Finance will be meeting on May 21 and 28 to discuss and finalize the FY2020/21 budget.

**D. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – *no meeting; no report***

**E. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that Senator Paul Formica and Representative Holly Cheeseman are continuing to work behind the scenes to support small businesses, who have made efforts to adapt to the situation but are continuing to struggle during this period.

**F. LIBRARY**

Selectman LaBonte reported that a virtual Zoom Library Board meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday, May 12, 2020.

**G. MILITARY LIAISON**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that, though the Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony have been cancelled for the safety of the community, the VFW, recognizing the importance of honoring the town's military service members who have fallen in combat, is planning a modest mobile parade similar to that of which was held by the Salem Volunteer Fire Company for Easter and the teachers for their students.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: Salas/Chmielewski, to adjourn the meeting at 7:52 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