

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

PRESENT

Kevin's Lyden
Edward Chmielewski, Jr.
David Kennedy
Ron LaBonte
Hugh McKenney

ABSENT

none

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Lyden called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silence in honor of Judy Rabe, who served on the Library Board and was an active member of the Friends of the Library, and Lifelong Salem resident Raymond Snarski, a unique and well-loved member of the town. The calling hours for Ms. Rabe will be held this Friday, January 11.

- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** December 4, 2018, ~~Special~~ *Regular* Meeting
M/S/C: Kennedy/McKenney, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2018. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

- 3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS** – *none*

4. AGENDA

A. Town Hall Staff Updates

First Selectman Lyden updated the Board on the following Town Hall Staffing changes: Matt Allen has been hired as the town's new Zoning and Wetlands Enforcement Officer (ZWEO). ZWEO Allen has replaced Liz Burdick, who is currently working as the Town Planner in Ledyard and is available for any questions to further ensure a smooth transition. He has been introduced to both Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Joseph Duncan and Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission Chairman Ed Natoli and will be holding office hours on Mondays and Thursdays from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Necia Stevens, who has been working in the Assessor's Office, retired at the end of December 2018. The town is fortunate to have had Ms. Stevens, who has served the town in several capacities, as a part of their staff.

Assessor Barbara Perry has reduced her hours to one day a week as she prepares herself and the town for her scheduled retirement at the end of April 2019. In addition to working in the Finance Office, Meliza Jimenez is now working in the Assessor's office with recently-certified Assessor Michael Kapinos, who is now working full-time.

Additional staffing changes will be occurring, including the hiring of one employee in the Public Works Department. He commended the staff and stated that, after owning a business for 27 years and being in his tenth year as the First Selectman, he has realized the importance of taking the time to hire the right person.

In response to Selectman McKenney who questioned whether there would be any significant negative financial impact due to the staff changes, First Selectman Lyden stated that he does not foresee any negative impact and/or foresee any issues.

B. Shared Service Study

First Selectman Lyden reviewed the bi-partisan *Lamont-Bysiewicz Transition Shared Services Policy Committee Recommendations*, which encourages the regionalization of services in an effort to reduce CT's over-reliance on property tax. Two recommendations of note include the bifurcation of the Municipal and Board property tax levy, which would increase the pressure on the Board of Education to become more efficient and transparent and shifting the burden of proof for Special Education.

Selectman McKenney requested that any information regarding the "Readiness Reports" received by the COG (Council of Governments) and RESC (Regional Education Service Center) as related to the regionalization of services be relayed to the Board and noted on the report's recommendation to diversify local revenue sources, i.e., increasing the sales tax of certain cities that would be allocated to that particular municipality.

C. Review Safety Forum

Approximately 40 individuals attended the two well received and informative Safety Forums which were held prior to the holiday season and following a recent incident. The Forums were well-received and included handouts and a PowerPoint presentation by the town's two Resident State Troopers and Integrated Security Solutions, who spoke with regards to some of the available security options. Residents are encouraged to lock their homes and vehicles, not leaving their keys inside their vehicles, and not leaving any valuables in sight. It is believed that, by doing so, such crimes could be reduced by as much as 50%. Future Safety Forums will be planned for the Spring. Selectman LaBonte noted that the Forums were also informative in that residents were able to realize the number of calls the Troopers and First Responders respond to. Selectman Chmielewski added that the Troopers also engage in community policing and are heavily involved with the School and other programs.

First Selectman Lyden stated that, following a recent happening experienced by Selectman Kennedy involving an unmarked vehicle parked in his driveway, he began investigating the possibility of adopting a Peddler's Ordinance in which peddlers would be required to register with the town prior to visiting residents' home; some exemptions would apply. Selectmen Kennedy and LaBonte volunteered to draft an ordinance to be reviewed and approved by the Board and the Town Attorney prior to being introduced and voted upon at a Town Meeting.

D. Library Staffing Discussion

Salem Free Public Library Director Vicky Coffin and Library Board Chairperson Susan Butler provided a brief history of the Library's budget and their request for an additional appropriation of \$11,000.00 for additional staffing. The additional funding would increase the employees' safety, be more cost effective, and allow the Director and the staff to attend professional development courses. The Library Board recommends that the Library be staffed with two members at all times during its hours of operation and for nearly 40% of those hours, the Library Director is the second staff member, leaving the Library with the potential of being understaffed in the event of illness or personal emergencies. The number of hours and staffing cost, efficiency, and economic feasibility of having the Director act as the second staff member was reviewed and discussed. The lack of appropriate staffing has also caused the Library Director to miss scheduled professional development training sessions and meetings and, similarly, the staff is not able to attend work-related training sessions. In relation to other comparable neighboring municipalities, Salem, which also serves the town of Bozrah, ranks in the top three in terms of the population served, library square footage, hours of service, Director's hours per week, and number of part-time staff members. In contrast, the town ranks below average in terms of the Director and staff's salaries and wages as well as in municipal appropriation. As such, while the Library is serving the public well, they are not serving their staff members in the same manner. Library Director Coffin added that many ideas have not been implemented due to the lack of adequate staffing. Approximately 30,000 people visit the Library to, not only browse through and check out books and other media, but also attend their programs. In addition, the Library is open for various groups and organizations who wish to meet beyond the Library's working hours.

Selectman and Library Liaison LaBonte thanked them for their presentation and informed the Board that he encouraged the library to present and share their thoughts and request with the Board for discussion.

M/F: McKenney, to increase the line item for Library staffing by \$11,000.00. The motion was not seconded.

Selectman McKenney felt that they presented a very compelling argument and agreed that it was inefficient for the Director to play the role of a second staff member.

Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation for the services they provide to the town and its residents. In light of the current fiscal climate, he questioned whether they have considered utilizing/soliciting their volunteers to help fill in as a second staff member during times of need. While Library Director Coffin applauded and commended their volunteers for their enthusiasm and help throughout the year, their primary responsibility is to shelve books. Due to the training involved in the processing of books, knowledge regarding the consortium, and the like, she felt that it was not feasible to task the volunteers with such duties. He also introduced the idea of installing video cameras. Panic buttons, which would

directly contact 9-1-1, are located in the offices and Library. Pricing for the purchase and installation of a tracker that would record the number of visitors by day and time to be used as a gauge to determine the library's staffing needs and hours in an effort to better serve the community will be provided to the First Selectman for possible funding.

First Selectman Lyden thanked them for an enlightening presentation and stated that the line item for the Library staffing salaries falls under the Town Government budget and will be reviewed in March. At that time, the Board will review, discuss, and send their recommendations to the Board of Finance, who will review and scrutinize their recommendations and make their final decisions prior to the annual Town Meeting. He recommended that the Library Board further justify their request and create a stronger argument by including more detailed information in their presentation. He also recommended they include the library's in-kind revenue and revenue received through fees, fines, grants, and the State; the funding received by the Friends of Salem Library for various programs, and; the number of programs they host in their final presentation. He commended Library Director Coffin and her staff on a great job serving the town as not only the town's library, but also as the town's Community Center.

E. Tax Collector Refunds

M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, 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 \$324.34 (three hundred twenty-four dollars and thirty-four cents) on the 8th day of January 2019. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

5. REPORTS

A. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Lyden shared an informative handout and supporting material (*see file copy*) stating some of the town's past agreements and practices between the town and its various entities, including the Historical Society Building, the Cemetery Association; Municipal Probate Court; Animal Control Officer; Town Planner, Salem & Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Companies; Municipal Parking Lot, and Bingham Field. The document will also be shared with the Board of Finance. He hopes to continue sharing such information and is open to any suggestions the Board might have.

B. BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Happy Birthday, Salem! Selectman Chmielewski reported on the Committee's progress, stating that Committee Members Bruce and Shelley Rodgers are continuing to fine tune the programming and have created an outline of incorporating the Bicentennial celebrations into the VFW's (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Annual Memorial Day Parade. Co-Chairman Elby Burr, with the help of Paul Robillard, is continuing to work on the Bicentennial Booklet, which include a calendar of events and will be distributed in March/April. Residents may complete and submit the form and small fee should they wish to have their name included in

the Booklet. The revenue generated from the ads and booster listings will be used to offset the costs of the production of the booklet. Selectman Kennedy updated the Board on the time capsule for which a short ceremony of its burial may be held in Spring 2020. Everyone is encouraged to contact him with any ideas of items they feel should be included in the time capsule. The design and manufacturing of the stainless steel custom-made time capsule will be donated by Kennedy Sheetmetal and should stand the test of time. Agnes Miyuki has volunteered to aid in the creation and management of the calendar of events and help with the website and social media while Committee Member Marilyn Vaché is working out of town. The commemorative Bicentennial coin is currently for sale by the Salem Historical Society for \$10.00.

C. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

Selectman McKenney reported that the BOE's current unencumbered funds balance is approaching \$80,000.00 and is considering the possibility of freezing their budget as much of those funds are encumbered by future items. He also reported that Superintendent Joseph Onofrio reported that the Superintendent of East Lyme stated in a recent conversation that it would not be possible to share a superintendent between the two towns. The Salem PTO is hosting guest speaker Scarlett Lewis from *Jesse Lewis' Choose Love* program this evening. Ms. Lewis, who lost her son in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, is speaking about improving our not only our school, but overall, environment. The school's 1975 air handling unit has failed and is in the process of being repaired. One of the school's maintenance workers has retired. \$10,000.00 in line item adjustments due to health insurance overages, building repairs, and legal fees were made to the BOE budget. The Board reviewed their 10-year Capital Plan request based on the feedback received from the Board of Finance. He provided and briefly discussed a copy of the Superintendent's proposed budget which includes a 3.24% increase in funding.

First Selectman Lyden encouraged either Business Manager Kim Gadaree and/or Public Works Director Donald Bourdeau, Jr., to speak with him should the repairs for the air handling unit be significant.

D. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Lyden invited and encouraged everyone to attend the Board of Finance's Regular Meeting this Thursday, January 10, at 7:00 p.m. when the Auditors will be providing their annual presentation and providing a draft of the audit.

E. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Selectman Kennedy reported that the Commission was presented with a site plan proposal for a 9,100 SF building to be located at Centre Street and Route 82; the application is currently under review and, should all progress as planned, construction is slated to begin in the Spring. In addition, the Commission reviewed and discussed a draft outline and Atty. Steve Byrne's comments regarding the RCOZ (Riparian Corridor Overlay Zone) Regulation.

The outline and comments will be sent to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission for review.

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Selectman Chmielewski reported, with regrets, that longtime Commissioner Andy Lightner, a valuable and active member, has resigned from the Commission due to scheduling conflicts. Commissioner Elby Burr was elected as the Chairman and himself as the Vice Chairman. Chairman Burr and Commissioner Paul Robillard have been busy selling advertisements for the upcoming Business Directory, which will be distributed to the residents early this year.

With regards to filling the vacancy on the Commission, First Selectman Lyden recommended that anyone interested in serving on the Commission attend a few of their meetings to ensure that they are willing and able to commit to the five-year term.

G. LIBRARY

Selectman LaBonte reported that the Library Board welcomed their newest member Nanette Trusler to the Board. Over 100 people joined the Library's 14th Anniversary celebration on December 8, 2018, which included a performance by the Eightmile River Band and a number of activities, including workshops, sales of items, were held throughout the month. The Board is working on increasing their social media exposure.

H. MILITARY LIAISON

Governor-elect Ned Lamont is expected to nominate Commissioner Thomas Saadi as the Commissioner of the CT Department of Veterans Affairs. The Bicentennial Events Subcommittee is working with the VFW to plan and help host this year's Memorial Day Parade in an effort to host an event inclusive of the town's Bicentennial, but also respectful to the event and the veterans who have served the country.

6. ADJOURNMENT

**M/S/C: Kennedy/Chmielewski, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Discussion: None.
Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem