

**TOWN OF SALEM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2019 – 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN OFFICE BUILDING**

PRESENT

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

ABSENT

David Kennedy

CALL TO ORDER

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

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 7, 2019 Regular Meeting.

M/S/C: Chmielewski/LaBonte, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2019, with the following amendments:

Page 5, 1st Paragraph:

...and the Town Attorney. ~~Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company.~~ . . .

Page 5:

H. Military Liaison ~~—no report~~

Selectman Chmielewski reported that preparation work is underway for the Memorial Day Parade with the Bicentennial Committee; they are hoping to have a flyover of a C-130 jet coordinated by CT Office of Military Affairs Executive Director Bob Ross.

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

3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Sean Reith requested that he be added to the agenda to discuss options and provide details on issues impacting the FY2018/19 BOE budget.

M/S/C: Lyden/Chmielewski, to add the following item to the agenda:

E. Discuss options and provide details on issues impacting the FY2018/19 BOE budget

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

4. AGENDA:

A. Economic Development Commission (EDC) Booklet Update

First Selectman Lyden reported that EDC Chairman Elbert Burr was unable to attend this evening's meeting and delivered a mock-up of the EDC Booklet, a directory of all of the Town businesses. The Commission, which has been working on the Booklet since EDC Chairman Frank Sroka's tenure, generated approximately \$6,000.00 in ad revenue to help offset its cost. The Booklet is scheduled to be delivered to every household in Salem this summer. The First Selectman and Selectman and EDC Commissioner Chmielewski thanked and commended all of those who worked on the Booklet, including EDC Chairman Burr and Member Paul Robillard, and the Town Hall staff.

B. Memorial Day/Bicentennial Event Review Update

First Selectman Lyden commented on a successful Memorial Day/Bicentennial Event; the timing of the flyover was perfect and those who attended appeared to be enjoying themselves. The town is fortunate to have all of the people who helped organize the event.

Selectman Chmielewski, likewise, thanked everyone who came together to help organize the event, including the Lions Club, First Selectman Lyden, Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Gene Maiorano, Bicentennial Committee Vice-Chairs Bruce & Shelley Rodgers, and the Bicentennial Committee. While some curveballs were presented, they were seamlessly handled. He felt it was the town's best-ever and most memorable Memorial Day event, including the timing of the flyover, which occurred immediately following the conclusion of the closing prayer, as if by divine intervention.

Selectman and Parade Grand Marshal Ron LaBonte stated that there were too many individuals to thank. He enjoyed being the Grand Marshal as well as attending the well-planned event. He added and noted that the flyover was conducted by a U.S. *Airforce* C-130.

Selectman McKenney stated that a great time was had by himself and all of those who attended and thanked everyone for all of their hard work.

C. Police Report/Safety Signage

The Board reviewed the monthly report of public services from Troop "K" Commanding Officer Lt. Marc Petruzzi (*see file copy*). The report indicates that the Troop K Troopers responded to 223 calls in the month of April 2019. In addition, the Resident State Troopers met with the Salem School administration to discuss school security and coordinated and provided traffic control for the Annual Salem Lions Club 5K Road Race. He commented on the positive relationship between the Town, the Resident State Troopers, and Troop K Officers and introduced the "Take, Remove, Lock" signs, which have been placed at key points in the community, reminding the public to "Take your keys, Remove your valuables, and Lock your vehicle".

Selectman Chmielewski also commented on the 131 Non-Reportable Matters, which includes those incidents in which the Officers' are helping the members of the community and do not involve any arrests.

Selectman McKenney suggested the possibility of gathering and trending the numbers.

Selectman LaBonte added that the First Responders average 50 to 60 calls per month and, combined with the 223 Troopers' calls for service, touch approximately one to two percent of the town's population — a reality in which the residents might not realize without having been a witness to the incidents, themselves. He agreed with Selectman McKenney's suggestion to trend the numbers.

D. Tax Collector Refunds – none

E. Discuss options and provide details on issues impacting the FY2018/19 BOE budget

BOE Chairman Reith thanked First Selectman Lyden for making last minute provisions to allow him to address the Board. The BOE is requesting an additional appropriation of \$110,000.00 to supplement the current year's operating budget due to the unanticipated receipt of seven (7) invoices from East Lyme High School for special education services, totaling approximately \$96,000.00. The invoices are due on June 30, 2019 and, as of this week, the BOE's unencumbered funds total \$2,200.00.

He provided a brief background of the BOE's finances, stating that, at the onset of the school year, the Board's encumbered unanticipated costs included \$27,000.00 for mold remediation and \$138,000.00 for new students requiring special education services. With the addition of these most recent invoices, the BOE has encumbered a total of \$261,000.00 in unanticipated expenses or just over 2.5% of their overall budget. Other unanticipated expenses include utilities, building maintenance, and inspections. The most current unanticipated expense is comprised of seven (7) invoices, four (4) of which total approximately \$77,000.00 and are associated with the one-to-one aides who service the students throughout the year. The three (3) remaining invoices, totaling approximately \$19,000.00, are direct billings for outplacement services for these students. The latter bills are traditionally direct billed to Salem, but, for reasons unknown, were billed to East Lyme and the error was recently realized during a review of their year-end accounting. It is believed that the error, in part, may be due to the fact that, at least, some of the students moved from East Lyme to Salem. While East Lyme has agreed to absorb the \$77,000.00, which has already been expended, and include that amount in their reconciliation process, the Board voted and agreed to request the Town to fund the total amount. In addition to the seven (7) invoices for \$96,000.00, they are also adding additional funds to cover the costs of any repairs and inspections that may be needed. Any unexpended funds would be returned to the Town.

BOE Chairman Reith noted that the BOE has returned approximately \$490,000.00 to the Town over the past five years. They recently negotiate a more palatable transportation contract with the bus company, resulting in a savings of \$35,000.00/year or \$250,000.00 over the five-year contract. Unfortunately, they are expecting an additional expense of \$30,000.00 to \$35,000.00 for the one-to-one aides in East Lyme – an expense that is not included in their FY2019/20 budget.

BOE Liaison Selectman McKenney commended the BOE for carefully analyzing their issues and ensuring that they move forward with as much transparency as possible. Selectman LaBonte questioned whether the BOE was aware, to some extent, of those students in need of one-on-one aides through the IEP (Individualized Education Program) process during which a representative from Salem would be involved in their discussions. BOE Chairman Reith confirmed the IEP process and stated that he, himself, is not clear as to the reasonings behind the lack of visibility. He reported that a new Business Manager has been hired in East Lyme, which could, in part, account for the change in process. In addition, East Lyme might have wished to zero out their accounts with Salem due to the pending expiration of their Co-Op Agreement. He also stated that, upon further review of both the expiring and new Co-Op Agreement, ambiguities do exist regarding the process. As such, the Co-Op Agreement will be reviewed and discussed in the very near future by the BOE and a dialogue will begin regarding the coordination of finances between the two offices. Based upon his understanding of their discussions, BOE Liaison Selectman McKenney stated that the BOE will be investigating the root cause of the issue and take any necessary actions to ensure that it does not occur in the future. Selectman Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to BOE Chairman Reith for presenting a somewhat complex issue in a, relatively, simple manner. The Selectmen agreed that the invoices should be paid this year and the root cause of the issue determined so as to avoid any such oversights in the future.

M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$110,000.00 to the Board of Education due to unplanned expenses and forward the item to the Board of Finance for action. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden wished to change the amount to state *up to* \$110,000.00 and add the following verbiage: “after verification by the Town’s Certified Public Accountant” to ensure that the Town has done their due diligence. In such case, the BOE Business Manager and the Town’s CPA would work together to verify the requested amount. The motion was amended as follows:

M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to support a supplemental appropriation of up to \$110,000.00 to the Board of Education for FY2018/19, after verification by the Town’s Certified Public Accountant (CPA). Discussion: Selectman McKenney wished to ensure and the First

Selectman confirmed that there would be no requests or discussions regarding the cutting of costs from their budget. The verification will be provided in writing by the CPA to the First Selectman and cc'd to the Board of Finance Chairman. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to set a Special Town Meeting for Thursday, June 20, 2019, 7:00 p.m., at Salem Town Hall, 270 Hartford Road, Conference Room 1, Salem, CT, for the purpose of reviewing and acting upon a supplemental appropriation of up to \$110,000.00 to the Board of Education for FY2018/19. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden reiterated the importance of verifying the expense(s) and doing their due diligence. BOE Chairman Reith agreed. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.

The Selectmen thanked BOE Chairman Reith for his presentation.

6. REPORTS:

A. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Lyden reported that Friends of Salem Library President Carl Nawrocki was recently honored by the CT Library Association Edith B. Nettleton Award, which is presented annually to an individual with an outstanding record of volunteer service to his or her library. He extended his congratulations and thanked and commended him for all of his hard work for both the Library and the Friends of the Library.

He announced the recent retirement of Public Works employee Bob Avery, who has been working for the Town since 1996, following his retirement from working on his family farm. Though retired, he will continue mowing the town's fields during this summer.

Recently retired Assessor Barbara Perry was recently presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Vision National User Group. He commended Assessor Perry who has worked for the town since 2011 and has left the office in good hands with Assessor Mike Kapinos, Jr., who has earned his CCMA I and II.

He commended Elizabeth Lane and her team for their hard work organizing the recent Used Books and Plant Sale at the Library, which generated a record \$1,900.00 in sales.

He congratulated all of the Town's graduates from Salem School, High School, and College.

B. BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

Selectman Chmielewski reported that all of the residents should have received their Bicentennial Booklet; he asked that those who have not, contact the Colchester Post Office. He commended all of the individuals involved with putting the Booklet together, including Production Director Elby Burr, Ex-Officio First Selectman Lyden, and the Bicentennial Committee. Ongoing/Upcoming events include:

Ongoing

Salem Recreation's "Find Your Footprint" project

June 8, 9 a.m.	Salem Land Trust's Bicentennial 5K Trail Run
July & August	Salem Historical Society will be open on Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. during the months of July and August
September 14, 11 a.m.	Heritage Day event, which will include a training demonstration(s) by the Fire Companies
October 19, 10 a.m.	Time Capsule and Cupola Display & Ceremony
October 26, 9 a.m.	Applefest
December 14, 4 p.m.	Annual Tree Lighting & Bicentennial Closing Ceremony

He commented on a great parade and thanked and commended the Rodgers' for their hard work in planning and organizing the event.

First Selectman Lyden commented on a nice Bicentennial Booklet for which positive feedback has been received and commended the Bicentennial Committee for their efforts.

UNSUNG HEROES – Selectman and Unsung Heroes Committee President McKenney reported that the Unsung Heroes Committee agreed that the theme for this year's Unsung Heroes Celebration will be Salem200 and will be held on November 10. He confirmed, with Selectman Chmielewski, that the Birthday Cake would be available for the event, which will be added to the Bicentennial Committee's listing of events. The Committee has been busy meeting with the Town's non-profit associations and distributing the nomination forms.

C. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

Selectman McKenney applauded the BOE for working through their recent receipt of the unexpected invoices.

With regards to the HVAC system and the presence of mold at the beginning of the school year, BOE Chairman Reith reported that the school is planning to, not only regularly monitor those areas of impact, but also open and/or close certain doors in an attempt to help circulate the air within the building differently. In addition, he added that the BOE has agreed to form a Standing Budget Sub-Committee.

D. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Board of Finance reviewed the referendum results and comments and voted to maintain the mil rate at 32.2 for the second year in a row. The Town, its departments, and the School continue to seek efficiencies within their respective budgets.

Selectman McKenney proposed the possibility of issuing a press release as he felt that the Town's ability to maintain its mil rate is an accomplishment during these difficult fiscal times and is reflective of the good job the town and its Board of Finance has done.

E. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – no report

F. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Commissioners continue to meet with the local businesses to offer ways to better support them. They have also been discussing and working with the First Selectman and various contractors regarding the senior housing project.

G. LIBRARY

Selectman LaBonte reported on a lively discussion regarding the budget and how they would be able to adapt and continue their services, which have been increased for the summer months. First Selectman Lyden added that the Library recently adjusted their hours to better accommodate the public. Selectman Chmielewski requested he express their appreciation for all of the services and programs the Library provides within their budgetary constraints.

H. MILITARY LIASION

Selectman Chmielewski reported that they are continuing to meet with the veterans in town to provide services. Retired Navy Captain George Jackson has recently taken over as the Commander of the Salem VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars), who also joined them at the podium of the Memorial Day Parade. Planning for next year's parade has begun.

7. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: McKenney/LaBonte, to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 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