

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022, 7:00 P.M.
SALEM TOWN HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM 1**

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 7:00 p.m.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Tuesday, March 1, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes

M/S/C: Lyden/Butcher, to approve the Tuesday, March 1, 2022 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

3. RECOGNITION

a. Welcome Newly Appointed Salem CT State Police Resident Trooper Kevin Crosby

First Selectman Chmielewski pinned Resident State Trooper Kevin Crosby, who was officially named as the Town's Resident State Trooper. Trooper Crosby, a very proactive and community-oriented Officer, has been serving as the Town's Interim Resident State Trooper for the past several months with Trooper Benjamin Duffy. Trooper Crosby was also recently accepted into the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program and will soon be receiving the necessary training to begin teaching the Salem School students.

Trooper Crosby stated that he has been working with the State Police for approximately two (2) years in the Willimantic/Windham area and the Town of Salem since October 2021. He also served in the U.S. Army and as a Firefighter, with the goal of becoming a Police Officer. He enjoys the small community aspect of the Town and looks forward to working with everyone and helping to keep the Town safe.

a. Recognition of Salem CT State Police Resident Trooper First Class Benjamin Duffy – *unable to attend this evening's meeting*

CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sue Spang, Hartford Road, a 35-year resident who has volunteered for the Town for over 20 years, expressed her concerns with the direction of the Town. She expressed her belief in the

existence of a culture of bullying in some of the Town's Boards and Commissions, creating a hostile environment for the members and public that is very damaging and detrimental. She cited the March 17 Board of Finance Regular Meeting and the treatment received by the Recreation Commission Chairman by one of the Board Members. The meeting was followed by the resignation of the Chairman and two of the Recreation Commissioners. She also cited the resignation of one of the librarians due, in part, to the "tensions surfacing among the Library Board environment" and the bullying of a Commissioner by two male Commission Members. In addition, a family that has served the Town in numerous capacities is selling their home, in part, as a result of the treatment she has received as a volunteer. Furthermore, a pillar of the community is also moving out of town, stating that he is reminded of the Teel-Ploszaj Wars when the town was the laughingstock of the region. She considered the sentiment widespread and expressed her hopes that the Board does not dismiss her comments and will address and discuss the issue. She requested that they lead the Town and not accept the ongoing bullying behavior that they have personally witnessed. She recited the Town's Ethics Policy, which is signed by all employees, elected and appointed officials, and volunteers, which states that:

The Town of Salem is committed to maintaining an atmosphere free from personal animosity that impairs impartial judgment. Intimidation, retaliation, or discrimination in all its public and private dealings involving employees, officials (elected or appointed), contractors, consultants, residents and members of the public is strictly prohibited.

Correspondence:

- a. Letter of Resignation/Retirement from longtime Public Works Director and Fire Marshal Donald Bourdeau, Jr.
- b. Letter of Resignation from Library Director Vicky Coffin

4. ALTERATIONS TO THE AGENDA – *none*

5. AGENDA:

A. Appointments to Salem Recreation Commission (Action Item)

There are currently four (4) vacancies on the Recreation Commission (2 Republicans, 1 Independent, 1 Unaffiliated). There are currently 3 Democrats and 2 Republicans serving on the Commission.

M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to appoint Casey Crafton (U) to the Recreation Commission. Discussion: Selectman Lyden stated that Mr. Crafton is the father of three children, a pickleball player, and a very active member of the Town's Little League. Discussion ensued regarding whether to complete the motion or present the entire slate of candidates to fill the vacancies. Roll Call vote, 3-2. Voting in Favor: Selectmen LaBonte, Lyden, and Chmielewski. Voting in Opposition: Selectmen Butcher and Munro.

M/S/C: Munro/LaBonte, to appoint three (3) of the following candidates to the Recreation Commission:

Selectman Butcher nominated Leslie Hotary (D) and Gary Closius (D). Ms. Hotary, a 20-year member of the community, was unanimously endorsed by the Democratic Town Committee. She has over 20 years of supervisory experience with Pfizer and has led numerous teams. Mr. Closius also has leadership abilities.

Selectman LaBonte nominated Eric McGlone (R), a physical education teacher who grew up in the Town of Salem.

Selectwoman Munro nominated Debra Delorimiere (U), who was selected by the Recreation Commission to lead the Dog Park Committee, and Steve Buck (R), who has experience working on a Board.

Voting in Favor of Leslie Hotary: Selectman Butcher.

Voting in Favor of Gary Closius: Selectmen Butcher, LaBonte, and Lyden

Voting in Favor of Eric McGlone: Selectmen LaBonte, Lyden, Munro, and Chmielewski

Voting in Favor of Debra Delorimiere: Selectmen Butcher, LaBonte, Munro, and Chmielewski

Voting in Favor of Steve Buck: Selectmen Lyden, Munro, and Chmielewski

Due to a tie between Gary Closius and Steve Buck, another vote was conducted.

Voting in Favor of Steve Buck: Selectmen Lyden, Munro, and Chmielewski.

Voting in Favor of Gary Closius: Selectmen Butcher and LaBonte.

Steve Buck, Eric McGlone, and Debra Delorimiere were appointed to serve on the Recreation Commission.

For those candidates who were not appointed, Selectman Lyden stated that there is currently a vacancy on the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority, should they be interested.

B. Dispose of Town-owned personal property in accordance with Section 5.05-3 of the Salem Town Charter – Public Works equipment (Action Item)

Additional items were expected, but not submitted, for disposal. Bids have been received for the items that were voted upon for disposal during the March meeting.

C. Tax Collector's Refunds (Action Item)

M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, 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 \$422.77 (four hundred twenty-two dollars and seventy-seven cents) on this fifth day of April 2022.

Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

6. REPORTS:

A. FIRST SELECTMAN

First Selectman Chmielewski wished everyone peace, happiness, and prosperity. He thanked the town's past and congratulated the town's new Board and Commission members. They continue to search for Emergency Responders and those willing to serve on the Town's numerous groups and organizations, including the Lions Club, Friends of the Library, Salem Historical Society, youth sports teams, and other non-profit and civic groups. Information regarding the Town is available on the Town website at salemct.gov and the Salem School District at salemschools.org. The Salem Community Park Disc Golf Course will remain closed to the public while safety-related enhancements are being made. The Town's Annual Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony will be held on Monday, May 30, at 10:00 a.m. Parade participants will muster at 9:15 a.m. Any members or groups/organizations of the community interested in participating in the Parade are requested to contact the Town Hall. After over 30 years of service, Public Works Director and Fire Marshal Bourdeau, who also served as the Town's First Selectman, was congratulated on his retirement. He will be missed by the community.

Selectman Lyden commended Public Works Director and Fire Marshal Bourdeau for all of his hard work and efforts during his long tenure. Public Works Director/Fire Marshal Bourdeau informed him of his pending retirement approximately 1-1/2 years ago, leading to the hiring of Tony Gallicchio as the Public Work's Foreman. He expressed his disappointment with a recent article that was published regarding the Town "pushing" him out. He stated the need for the public to gather all, rather than snippets, of the information. Not doing so results in misinformation and misunderstandings. He also informed the public that numerous conversations have been held with CIRMA (Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency), the Town's insurance company, regarding the safety risks of the Disc Golf Course. He commended the First Selectman's handling of the Town's business and felt that the townspeople should be working together with him.

Selectman Butcher proposed the Board of Selectman honors Public Works Director/Fire Marshal Bourdeau, who also served as the Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Chief, for his long service to the town.

B. SALEM RESIDENT STATE TROOPER UPDATE

First Selectman Chmielewski commended the Troopers, who help keep the community and the School safe, and introduced Emergency Management Manager/Emergency Services Administrator Mike Bednarz.

C. EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Administrator Bednarz reported that 75 total Calls for Service were received in the month of January and 41 Calls for Service in February; 16 of the calls occurred during the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A very successful Vehicle Extrication Joint Training Event was held on March 27 at the Zemko property. Twenty-two (22) members of the Salem and Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Companies participated in the training. He expressed his appreciation to *Sid's Auto Parts* who delivered and removed the vehicles, free of charge. The two paid Firefighter/EMTs will be present this Saturday, April 9, for the Lions Club Road Race.

E. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Administrator Bednarz reported that, to date, 351 registrants have signed up to receive Everbridge notifications. The Committee has been discussing Eversource Loadshedding and is continuing to review their local Emergency Operation Plan which is due in October. They have updated their communications with the Red Cross and are planning to hold meetings to discuss their partnership and develop a plan for emergency events. Eversource has been contacted for any training publications regarding generator safety they might have in preparation for a future outreach program. Last month's weather safety tip was flooding, "turn around, don't drown". The potential for fuel hoarding due to rising fuel prices was also discussed and an announcement was sent out requesting that everyone mind and observe those who are filling unapproved containers with gas. An announcement regarding cybersecurity awareness was also made.

Selectman Lyden requested that he locate the Red Cross announcement for volunteers that can be posted on the Town's website for any interested residents who would like to serve as a volunteer for the Red Cross during an emergency.

First Selectman Chmielewski commended Emergency Management Director/Emergency Services Administrator Bednarz for his leadership and the Emergency Management team.

F. BOARD OF FINANCE

First Selectman Chmielewski announced that the Board of Finance will be holding the Budget Public Hearing on Wednesday, April 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the Salem School Multi-Purpose Room.

G. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)

Selectwoman Munro reported that the BOE appointed Vice-Principal Daniel Driscoll as Principal, beginning July 1. They wished outgoing Principal Joan Phillips well wishes in her retirement. The BOE will be meeting next Monday, April 11, to discuss the proposed FY2022/23 budget.

H. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the letter requesting a waiver for the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) was sent to the State. The Commission is continuing to work on the document.

I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

First Selectman Chmielewski reported that the EDC continues to discuss the various ways in which they can provide support to the town's many businesses and the community, as a whole.

J. LIBRARY

Selectman LaBonte expressed his appreciation to outgoing Library Director Coffin, whose leadership he has enjoyed, and wished her well. First Selectman Chmielewski concurred and expressed his appreciation of her support. Former First Selectman Lyden also concurred.

TVCCA (Thames Valley Council for Community Action)

Selectwoman Munro reported that she will be meeting with TVCCA for an interview.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. 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 I-200(6)(B)**

M/S/C: Lyden/LaBonte, to enter into Executive Session at 7:56 p.m. 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 I-200(6)(B). Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

M/S/C: LaBonte/Butcher, to exit from Executive Session at 8:52 p.m. No votes were taken during Executive Session. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.

8. ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C: Munro/LaBonte, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Salem