

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING  
THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2021, 7:00 P.M.  
MEETING ROOM 1, SALEM TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT**

Kevin Lyden  
Edward Chmielewski, Jr.  
Hugh McKenney  
Sue Sullivan

**ABSENT**

Ron LaBonte

**CALL TO ORDER**

First Selectman Lyden called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Tuesday, April 6, 2021 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/McKenney, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, April 6, 2021, with the following amendments:**

**Page 3, Item 4(d) Tax Collector Refunds:**

**M/S/C: McKenney/Chmielewski, to direct the Town Treasurer to issue refunds,... on the ~~2nd~~ 6th day of ~~March~~ April....**

**Page 6, Item 5(h) Military Liaison:**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Salem ~~VFW~~ *Memorial Day Parade Committee* is continuing to plan the town's annual Memorial Day parade.

**Discussion:** In response to Selectman McKenney regarding page 6, item 5(g), Library, last sentence, which reads, "Meetings will not be held in the Library, per Sector Rules.", First Selectman Lyden explained that there are the Governor's Executive Orders and Sector Rules. The latter delineates the recommended capacity, spacing of individuals, and the like. Voice vote, 3-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Chmielewski, McKenney, and Lyden. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectwoman Sullivan.

**4. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*E-mail public comment to SelectmenPublicComment@salemct.gov prior to 7:10 p.m.*

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

**5. AGENDA:**

**A. Appoint Jennifer Messervy to the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission**

**M/S/C: Lyden/Chmielewski, to appoint Jennifer Messervy to the Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden stated that Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission Chairperson Kim Bradley referred the appointment to the Board of Selectmen and provided a brief background of Ms. Messervy's extensive experience and qualifications. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**B. Re-appoint Linda Wildrick to the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission**

**M/S/C: Lyden/Sullivan, to re-appoint Linda Wildrick to the Inland Wetlands & Conservation Commission. Discussion: First Selectman Lyden commended and expressed his appreciation to Ms. Wildrick, who has served on the Commission for many years. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**C. Emergency Responder Awards Ordinance**

**Due to COVID-19, the submittals will be acted on at the June Board of Selectmen meeting if not available for the May 6 meeting**

In accordance with the Ordinance, the town annually awards up to 60 (sixty) Emergency Responders Awards to qualified volunteers serving the two fire companies. Resident volunteers receive a \$1,000.00 abatement on their real estate taxes while non-resident volunteers receive a \$550.00 stipend. One exception is being requested for Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Member Jeffrey Savalle who attended the required number of calls, but is unable to fulfill the training requirements due to his work schedule. Because non-resident retirees do not receive the stipend, per the Ordinance, one such member was deleted from the list.

**M/S/C: Lyden/Chmielewski, to approve the Emergency Responders Awards, as submitted by Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Chief Pete Silva and Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston. Discussion: Selectman McKenney proposed the possibility of increasing the number of Awards distributed to the volunteers and Selectman Chmielewski questioned the possibility of increasing the abatement amount. First Selectman Lyden stated his support for increasing the amount from \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00, for the active volunteers as part of an effort to increase volunteerism. First Selectman Lyden stated that the individual organizations also recognize their volunteers internally. Selectman and Emergency Services Liaison Chmielewski added that he, along with the Emergency Services Coordinator and Fire Chiefs, are in the process of investigating other forms of recognition. Voice vote, 4-0, all in favor.**

**D. Tax Collector Refunds – none**

**5. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Salem Youth Baseball League President David Donat organized a very safe and successful Spring Baseball Opening Day Ceremony during which the Public Works employees were presented with a plaque and provided gift cards as a token of their appreciation for their hard work taking care of the fields.

Trooper Ben Duffy, who has been working in the town for the past year, was re-introduced and Trooper Bryce Reed was introduced as the town's new night-time Resident State Trooper. He is hopeful that one of the Troopers will become D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)-certified and teach the kindergarten, 5th, and 8th grade students. The program not only educates children about drugs, but is also one of the first steps in building trust. The Troopers are also present for Salem School's annual Emergency Service Day, which includes the presence of LIFE STAR and the State Police K-9 Unit, and are sometimes requested to sit on the Juvenile Review Board. Selectman Chmielewski, a retired Police Sergeant who also taught in the D.A.R.E. program, commended the program and expressed his support of the Resident State Troopers.

The Resident State Troopers held a Drug Take Back Day during which approximately 30 lbs. of drugs were collected during the four-hour event.

The town also celebrated Earth Day with a Clean-up Day. Participants were requested to select a town road to clean up and were provided Salem trash bags. Approximately 68 bags were picked up. In addition, the Republican Town Committee picked up trash along Route 82. Participants were also entered into a raffle to win a compost bin or countertop compost pail.

Elizabeth "Buffy" Lane is hosting the annual Friends of the Salem Free Public Library Plant Sale today through Saturday, May 8. Over \$1,500.00 has been raised thus far.

A telephone meeting was held with Moody's regarding the town's bond rating. In 2018, the town was initially received an A1 rating with a negative outlook when then-Governor Dannel Malloy was proposing significantly cutting the town's Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) Funding. After speaking with them, the rating was raised to an Aa3 with a positive outlook. The adjusted rating will be helpful as the town aims to re-fund their current bond for the Salem School Renovation and add on the upcoming Salem School roof and HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning) replacement project. The term for the re-funding will remain the same (ten years) and the rate will be reduced.

First Selectman Lyden and Selectman and Moderator McKenney encouraged everyone to vote on the budget next Wednesday, May 12, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., at Town Hall.

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

Selectman McKenney reported that the Salem School 8th Grade Graduation Ceremony will be held outdoors on June 15, with a rain date of June 16; the School Principal and staff are working hard to ensure that all of the health and safety protocols will be met.

Two teachers have accepted the teachers' retirement incentive. Over the last month, the school's total COVID-19 expenses have increased from \$195,000.00 to \$208,000.00; the funds will derive from various State & Federal grants and reimbursements. Of their nearly \$11 million budget, \$42,000.00 is currently unencumbered. Some of their unencumbered funds have been utilized for some of their proposed expenditures for the next fiscal year, per a discussion with the Board of Finance.

The BOE continued their discussion regarding a memorial for the late Mike Siebert.

On a side note, Selectman McKenney announced that *Mitchell Farm* will be hosting an Open Barn educational event on Saturday, June 12, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Attendees are invited to meet and greet their horses and learn about horses, in general.

**C. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Lyden reported that, after sending out for an RFP (Request for Proposals), the Board of Finance selected King, King & Associates, P.C., as the town's Auditor for the next five years. A thank you letter has been sent to O'Connor Davies for their 11 years of service to the town. King, King & Associates is a comparable firm that proposed a lower bid.

The Board of Finance will be meeting next Thursday, following the Referendum. If the budget is approved, the mil rate will be determined. The town has had a steady mil rate over the past four years. After expending some of the funds for the de-installation of the underground oil tanks and placement of above-ground oil tanks at Salem School, the town's Unassigned Fund Balance is currently at 18% to 19%. Fifty percent of the eligible costs for the oil tanks is expected to be reimbursed by the State.

**D. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Selectwoman Sullivan reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission will be holding a Public Hearing this month. The Commission has been working on the town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which must be completed by November, and is reviewing the first draft of the Affordable Housing Plan, which they are hoping to include in the POCD. The POCD Surveys will be made available to the residents in the coming days. The Commission will also begin working on revising and updating the town's Sign Regulation.

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

Selectman Chmielewski expressed the Commission's appreciation of the support they continue to receive from State Senator Paul Formica and Representative Holly Cheeseman as well as the First Selectman. Discussions also included the construction of the Age-Restricted Development and the *Dollar General*, where 70% of their staff is comprised of Salem residents. They continue to work on the Business Directory and have engaged the services of *The Chronicle*, who will also handle all of the advertising, to publish the booklet. The Commission is also working on their contribution to the POCD as well as continuing to engage in community outreach, creating an electronic survey, and a welcome packet for businesses.

**G. LIBRARY**

First Selectmen Lyden reiterated that the Plant Sale will continue to Saturday and select books are being sold outside the Library. The Library is now open to a limited number of patrons for a limited amount of time. Those interested in entering the Library must ring the doorbell and don a mask. Chairs have been placed with proper social distancing. No direction has been received by the State regarding the opening of the meeting rooms for groups; all groups are being encouraged to meet at the Pavilion for the time being. The Library has remodeled its Teen Room, replaced the HVAC system, and have purchased new chairs while it has been closed due to the pandemic.

**H. MILITARY LIAISON**

Selectman Chmielewski announced that the Annual Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony will be held on Monday, May 31, at 10:00 a.m. All residents are invited to march. Young marchers are invited to meet on Pratt/Morgan Roads and adults, floats, tractors, and other vehicles will meet on Hagen Road. Participants are requested to arrive by 9:30 a.m. The Grand Marshals will be Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Chip Weston, Sergeant, U.S. Marine Corps, and Gardner Lake Volunteer Fire Company Deputy Chief Joseph Danao II, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.), U.S. Army. The parade will be followed by a ceremony featuring Keynote Speaker Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Thomas J. Saadi, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army Reserve. A flyer will be created for distribution. All health and safety protocols will be followed; masks will be available.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/Sullivan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 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