

**TOWN OF SALEM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 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 for long-time Salem resident Charlene Clancy. The Town was very fortunate to have Ms. Clancy, who served on several Boards, Commissions, and Associations, as a very active member of the community.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 4, 2019 Regular Meeting.**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 4, 2019.**

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

**3. CORRESPONDENCE/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**A. CORRESPONDENCE**

1. A copy of the e-blast sent to the Town's News & Announcements subscribers and a copy of the letter addressed to Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Commissioner Katie Dykes regarding the severe overcrowding during the summer months at Gardner Lake State Park.

First Selectman Lyden recited both the e-blast and the letter addressed to the CT DEEP, which requests that access to the park be restricted once the parking lot has reached its capacity. He has also spoken with and encouraged the Gardner Lake Authority (GLA) to send a letter to the CT DEEP Boating Division concerning their safety concerns regarding jet skiers. The GLA, which is comprised of members from the towns of Bozrah, Montville, and Salem, cooperates with the State Boating Commission in the enforcement of boating laws on the Lake. The Authority also works to control and abate the growth of algae and aquatic weeds and studies and makes recommendations concerning water

management. Two years ago, an alcohol ban was instituted, alleviating the alcohol-related issues. In addition, in an effort to control the amount of trash being left behind at the Park, the Town is funding the placement of a dumpster on the premises. He has requested the Town's Zoning Enforcement Officer to send notices of violation to those residents located near the Park who engaged in unpermitted parking activities on their properties and requested the address(es) and any photographs the public might have documenting the illegal parking activity(ies) which took place on the Fourth of July. In addition, the Town will be mailing a survey to the residents of Lakeview Avenue to gauge their willingness to institute a "No Parking/Tow-Away Zone" from June 15 to September 15.

2. A letter regarding the receipt of a Member Equity Check for approximately \$9,660.00 from the Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA).

First Selectman Lyden thanked all of the Town's Boards, Staff, School Staff, and Emergency Responders for instituting safe work practices.

## **B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

GLA Member Robert Neddo, 71 Forest Drive, stated the importance of sending a letter to their legislators regarding the ongoing issues at the Lake. He proceeded to recite the Mission Statement of the GLA. The bulk of their budget is utilized to fund boat patrols by certified personnel, lake studies of weeds and chemistry, and drawdowns to control evasive weeds and erosion – all of which are health and safety issues. The issues which arose at the Lake on the Fourth of July reflect the need for adequate policing on the Lake. The traffic began at 6:30 a.m. with the jet skis, which are pulling in and out of the water next to the swimming areas. The results of the study by an aquatic expert will reflect the adverse effects of this winter's lack of a drawdown, which will, in turn, affect the swimming, fishing, and property values. The GLA is willing to meet with any officials to discuss their mission and the importance of protecting the Lake. He invited everyone to attend their next monthly meeting which will be held tomorrow evening, Thursday, July 11 at 7:00 p.m. at the Montville Public Safety Building located at 911 Norwich-New London Turnpike (Route 32).

GLA Member Kate Johnson, 87-G Cottage Road, Oakdale, stated that additional funding might have led to increased patrolling of the Lake on the Fourth of July. She stated that jet skis are allowed to travel up to six miles per hour until 8:00 a.m., a rule which many of the jet skiers do not follow and may not be aware of. As such, she would like to work with CT DEEP to install signage at both the beach and boat launch areas stating the rules and regulations. She felt that the manner in which the swim area, which was recently extended, is currently designated has allowed for the increase in the jet ski population. In addition to the overcrowding, the potential for water pollution due to the water vessels in the swim area increase tenfold. Another issue, unrelated to the Fourth of July, is the repair of the inoperable fire hydrant at the boat launch area and the Fire Company's opposition to conducting the drawdown, which helps control the two invasive species in Lake.

First Selectman Lyden reiterated the tasks of the GLA, which includes the monitoring of the Lake's water quality and boating patrol. Any issues regarding jet skis and water quality should be directed to the GLA. With regards to the drawdown, the towns of Salem, Bozrah and Montville had agreed to drawdown the Lake two feet, but due to the unseasonably wet year, the Lake continued to overflow.

Indianfield Cooperative Campground President John Suchecki, 306 Old Colchester Road, commended the Fire Departments on their quick response and excellent job in controlling a recent fire at the Campground. With regards to the overcrowding, he reported that they hired additional help to man the gate over the weekend to keep visitors from entering the facility. He received complaints from the residents regarding verbal confrontations with some of the jet skiers and recommended that they to contact the State Police. He also added that there are a number of unregistered jet skis on the Lake.

First Selectman Lyden informed the public that the contact information for State Senator Paul Formica, State Representative Holly Cheeseman, and CT DEEP can be found on the Information Table in the hallway. He encouraged everyone to contact them regarding any violations they witness at the Lake. The Town's goal is to educate the public and determine solutions that will improve the situation.

Ron Marquis, Witter Road, congratulated everyone who responded to the issues which arose on the Fourth of July. He commented on the lack of enforcement at the Lake after hours and requested that the area be randomly and regularly patrolled. He also requested that one-way and do not enter signs be installed in the parking lot as well as signage clearly indicating those spaces that are reserved for boaters. Parking should also be limited to beach goers only.

Louis Allen, 68 Lakeview Avenue, reported on his surprise at the lack of action for what the authorities regard as a safety issue. He stated the importance of being proactive to avoid any unfortunate accidents from occurring and plans to send a registered letter to the State voicing his concerns. He also commented on the lack of a sufficient number of porta-potties to adequately accommodate the number of visitors and expressed his concerns regarding the cleanliness of the Lake. He also stated the reduction of their property values due to these issues. He encouraged everyone to place pressure on the State and suggested the GLA invite Senator Formica and Representative Cheeseman to their meeting.

First Selectman Lyden concurred and encouraged everyone to send letters of concern to the CT DEEP and their Legislators.

Cindy Church Ross, 62 Lakeview Avenue, whose family has owned their property for four generations, using it as a place for family to gather and a place of serenity, peace, and healing, thanked the Town for all of their efforts, stating that the changes are noticeable. The primary issue is that of safety. They, too, are boaters, jet skiers, and tubers. She stated that she did contact the CT DEEP, who arrived in a timely manner, regarding some jet skiers who were jet skiing near her children and responded aggressively towards her when she approached them.

She, along with several other residents, supports the institution of a “No Parking/Tow Away Zone” for weekends and holidays.

Darrell Len, 319 Witch Meadow Road, stated that he has frequented the Lake his entire life and no longer feels safe or comfortable visiting the Lake. His family has addressed the issues with the State and CT DEEP. He also reported on his experiences the weekend prior to the Fourth of July with the CT DEEP and the Resident State Trooper.

Sue Coffee, 10 Saunders Hollow Lane, Old Lyme, who owns property in Salem, and Alexis Tavares, 11 Emerald Glen Lane, announced that a Facebook page for the Friends of Gardner Lake has been created and a letter addressed to CT DEEP and State Officials, outlining their observations, the issues, and possible solutions, has been posted. The letter may be copied and either sent as is or edited to their liking and sent to CT DEEP and/or their respective Legislators. Possible solutions include having a CT DEEP or EnCon Official on weekends and holidays to direct and close the Park to pedestrians once it has reached capacity and to ensure that all watercrafts are properly registered and that the operator is properly licensed, charge an admission fee to out-of-state visitors to help offset the additional staffing costs, place at least 12 easily accessible porta-potties on the property that are cleaned on both Saturdays and Sundays, create a carry-in/carry-out educational program, place a dumpster for recyclables, have the water tested every weekend, and prohibit tents on the beach area.

First Selectman Lyden added that the Friends of Gardner Lake, was formed several years ago and is made up of a group of concerned citizens.

Ms. Coffee reported that CT DEEP’s Scott Dawley, who has been working with them, has extended the swimming area, added two additional porta-potties, and an additional dumpster. She expressed her safety concerns related to the location of the porta-potties. She is waiting to hear back from the CT DEEP Deputy Commissioner for Environmental Conservation Susan Whalen and has received the support of State Senator Paul Formica and State Representative Kathleen McCarty. She also reported that she was informed about and, subsequently, visited, videotaped, and reported on a company who had set up a tent to rent paddle boards over the weekend. The CT DEEP telephone number to express their concerns is (860) 424-3333.

Ms. Tavares was pleased with the proactive approach the Town and its residents has taken in an effort to address the issues.

Rich Spina, Indianfield Cooperative Campground, who grew up on the Lake and now enjoys the Lake with his grandchildren, inquired as to the possibility of having the boat with the blue lights, which was a big deterrent, return to the Lake. He also warned against engaging in any type of confrontation and recommended taking a photograph and reporting any violation(s) to the proper authorities.

Ross Johnson, 64 Lakeview Avenue, stated the importance of clarifying the beach area rules and the State launch area with regards to the Launch and Leave rule. To his knowledge, boats or jet skis are prohibited on the beach.

First Selectman Lyden stated that visitors are allowed to launch their boat in the boat launch area and fish from the dock, but cannot spend time in the area.

Louis Allen stated his observation that the majority of the visitors were from Massachusetts. While he supports the placement of additional porta-potties, he is afraid that it might encourage the State to allow more visitors into the Park. He also added that he felt that 95% of the visitors follow the rules and are respectful; it is the remaining 5% who are not.

Sue Coffee added that, like the Indianfield Cooperative Campground, visitors were also coming in to Sna-Z-Spot Campground, Pequot Campground, and onto the properties of those residents located on Lakeview Avenue and Gardner Lake Heights.

Steven Sabo, Indianfield Cooperative Campground, expressed his concern regarding the increasing size of the boats on the Lake, many of which are used for saltwater fishing, and the large waves that they are creating.

First Selectman Lyden directed him to express his concerns to the Gardner Lake Authority.

Katrina Zickwolf, 206 Witter Road, expressed her love for kayaking and inability to do so at the Lake.

Kate Johnson stated that, in years past, the GLA allocated \$10,000.00 and, more recently raised the amount to \$12,000.00, for Safety Patrol, but due to budget cuts, they have been unable to properly fund their account. Due to the recently growing issues, she felt that they would need to allocate, at least, twice as much for additional patrol during concentrated periods of time and would be agreeable to conducting a study, through GLA, to investigate the possible need to increase that amount.

First Selectman Lyden stated that 60% of the GLA budget derives from the Town of Salem, 30% from Montville, and 10% from Bozrah. Due to another tight budget year, he agreed to support a five to ten percent increase of their budget, adding that providing additional funding in small annual increments is easier for the Town deal with. He closed the public comment period of the meeting and encouraged everyone to pick up a copy of the letter which he sent to CT DEEP and to contact CT DEEP and their State Legislators with their concerns.

In response to Darrell Len who questioned whether the recent incident at the gas station was a retaliation in response to the issues at the Lake on the Fourth of July, First Selectman Lyden stated that it was unrelated.

#### **4. AGENDA:**

##### **A. Appointment to Recreation Commission**

**M/S/C: Lyden/McKenney, to appoint Alexis Tavares to the Recreation Commission.**

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

**B. Appointments to Economic Development Commission**

**M/S/C: Kennedy/McKenney, to appoint Ron LaBonte, Ed Natoli, and Terri Salas as Full Members of the Economic Development Commission. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 4-0-1. Voting in Favor: Selectmen Chmielewski, Kennedy, McKenney, and Lyden. Voting in Opposition: None. Voting in Abstention: Selectman LaBonte.**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/Kennedy, to appoint Ron Przech and Joshua Rehrig as Alternate Members of the Economic Development Commission. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**D. Appointments to Bicentennial Committee**

**M/S/C: Chmielewski/LaBonte, to appoint Salem Volunteer Fire Company Chief Gene Maiorano, Joshua Rehrig, and Teri Salas to the Bicentennial Committee. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**E. Tax Collector Refunds**

**M/S/C: McKenney/LaBonte, 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 \$240.07 (two hundred forty and seven cents) on the 10th day of July 2019. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor.**

**6. REPORTS:**

**A. FIRST SELECTMAN**

First Selectman Lyden reported that, as previously reported, the Town has received a \$6,950.00 Members' Equity Check from CIRMA.

He, along with Head Librarian Vicky Coffin, have met with the Town's Census Bureau Representative to discuss the importance of the Report, which determines the amount of funding they will receive. The Census is conducted every ten years and the information is not shared.

He attended a very nice Salem School graduation and is very proud of all of the children who have done a fine job.

He commended Selectman LaBonte and the Fire Marshal team, comprised of Fire Marshal Donald Bourdeau, Jr., and Deputy Fire Marshals Mike Bednarz and John Cunningham, who are continuing to work together to be compliant with the Federal Labor Laws.

The additional appropriation of \$100,000.00 to the Board of Education (BOE) was approved at a recent Town Meeting, per the Town Charter. The BOE was made aware that such requests should not be presented to the Town in such an untimely manner. Selectman Chmielewski added that the appropriation was reduced by \$10,000.00, due to the First Selectman's leadership and the Town's CPA, who verified the amount.

**B. BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that the Committee continues to work behind the scenes. He encouraged everyone to visit the Town website and click on the link to the Bicentennial website for a listing of upcoming events. He looks forward to working with their new members and hopes that all of the residents have received a copy of the booklet in the mail.

First Selectman Lyden added that the Memorial Day Bicentennial event was a lot of fun and looks forward to the upcoming Heritage Day event. Selectman Chmielewski also added that the cupola will, hopefully, be placed atop the old Library and the Time Capsule will be buried in October.

**C. BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE) – no report**

**D. BOARD OF FINANCE**

First Selectman Lyden reported that the Board of Finance will be meeting tomorrow, July 11, at 7:00 p.m. The Auditors have begun their preliminary audit for FY2018/19.

**E. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION – no report**

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

Selectman Liaison and EDC Chairman Chmielewski thanked the Board for their support and the appointing the new members this evening. The EDC's 2019/20 Business and Service Directory, showcasing the Town's businesses and services, will be mailed in the very near future.

**G. LIBRARY**

Selectman LaBonte reported that due to a lack of quorum, the meeting began at 7:40 p.m.

First Selectman Lyden stated that the carpets and furniture have been cleaned.

**H. MILITARY LIASION**

Selectman Chmielewski reported that he, as a retiree of the Army National Guard, and Selectman LaBonte, a retiree of the Air Force Reserve, are reaching out to the community's military veterans and retirees to get them involved in various activities.

The Unsung Heroes will be added under *Item 6 – Reports* to future agendas.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**M/S/C: LaBonte/Chmielewski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 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