

**Board of Selectmen's  
Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 16, 2023,**  
**7:30 PM - Town Hall**

First Selectman George Temple opened the meeting at 7:31 PM, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance: First Selectman George Temple, Selectman David McKane, and Administrative Assistant Kristyn Rosa. Selectman Arnold Jensen attended remotely.

First Selectman George Temple asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence in remembrance of State Senator Louis Deluca and Oxford Resident, Town Volunteer, and Friend Todd Romagna.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

**1. 7/19/23 Regular Meeting**

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the 7/19/23 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen—all 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

**AMENDMENT OF AGENDA** NONE

**APPOINTMENTS** NONE

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. 115 Newgate Road Lots A&B Common Driveway Request – Approve**

#### **MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the common driveway request for 115 Newgate Road Lots A & B as approved by the Town Engineer on 6/23/23 and the Planning & Zoning Commission on 7/24/23 CONTINGENT UPON the approval of a proposed subdivision, re-subdivision, or lot line revision. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple—all 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: Mike Herde, Inland and Wetlands Enforcement Officer, briefly discussed the plans for the common driveway. Mr. Herde stated he would cut off a parcel of land and would like to retain access to the main road. Mr. Herde also mentioned that, eventually, there would be a second lot at 115 Newgate, which would be( LOT B).

First Selectman Temple asked if this has been put through and approved by Planning and Zoning. Mr Herde said yes. The Town Engineer has visited the site and agrees that with the grade, and drainage, it would be best to have a common driveway. Mr. Herde provided the Selectmen with letters of support/approval from the town engineer, the driveway inspector, and the P&Z board.

### **2. ARPA Funding Request for Oxford Center Fire Department Sign – Approve**

#### **MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to Table the ARPA funding request, in the amount of \$55,000.00, to install a sign at Oxford Center Fire House. This was approved by the Oxford Space & ARPA Funds Advisory Committee at their meeting held on 7/11/23 with the contingency of location to consider. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple.

Discussion: Selectman Arnold Jensen asked Fire Chief Scott Pelletier if the sign was just for Fire emergencies or if the sign would be used for all Town notices/information. Fire Chief Scott Pelletier stated that the sign would be available for all Town emergency notifications. Any emergency services notifications, such as natural disasters, details regarding the emergency, locations of cooling or warming centers, and water supplies. The standby generator at the Center Fire House will connect the sign to emergency backup power.

The Fire Departments will also use the sign for recruitment. Currently, enrollment has been low. Chief Pelletier explained that they spoke to other Towns struggling with low enrollment, and they mentioned that their signs have helped.

The sign will be bright during the day and dim at night to not be so blinding to drivers passing by. Control and notifications will be put on the sign by the firehouse.

First Selectman George Temple asked if this has currently gone out for bid. Fire Chief Scott Pelletier answered no, it has not. Chief Pelletier explained he received two quotes for a sign, submitted an application to the ARPA Committee, and is in front of the board tonight to consider the ARPA funds to pay for the sign.

First Selectman George Temple would like to visit a Town with a digital sign to better understand how the sign will look and its features before making a final decision.

**3. Community Support Committee Youth Conservation Corp's Wetlands High Adventure Trail – Approve**

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the Community Support Committee's application for the Youth Conservation Corp's Wetlands High Adventure Trail, in the amount of \$12,023.02, as presented and recommended by the Committee and approved at their meeting held on 6/16/23. This was seconded by Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: Glen Schumitz ( Community Support Committee Chairman) discussed the objectives of the trail program. The focus is on engaging Oxford's youth by understanding the significance of wetlands for ensuring a healthy ecosystem.

The key objectives include identifying indicator species, plants, and animals and distinguishing wetlands from surrounding woodlands. Target audiences are the children from Quaker Farms, Great Oak Elementary, and Oxford Middle Schools. The initial focus is on kids ages second through fourth grades. The lessons could be taught by Oxford High School students in field and honors biology. These courses both have units relevant and connected to the program's objectives.

The trails will also be open to the Town residence since this land is part of the Town of Oxford open space. First Selectman Temple stated that everyone can enjoy and benefit from the land. Selectman David McKane stated that the Land Trust property abuts the Towns property, and he feels the Land Trust would support this idea.

Board of Education committee member Deb Sherman stated that it is a great idea and feels the Board of Education would support a program like this.

**4. Hire Youth Conservation Corp Member**

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to hire Keira Grice as a Youth Conservation Corp Member with a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour and a start date of 8/17/23, as recommended and presented by the Youth Conservation Corp Coordinator in his letter dated 8/3/23. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: First Selectman George Temple supports this higher. Keira has put in 50 hours of volunteer time. This position is well deserved. We also have a grant.

**5. Hire Library Page**

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to hire Megan Videira as a Library Page at a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour and a start dated Thursday, August 17, 2023. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: Library Director Robbi Costigan noted that Megan is a high school student, and her primary duty as a library page is to shelve books. First Selectman George Temple supports this hire.

**6. 2024 Revaluation – Award Bid**

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to award the 2024 Revaluation Bid to eQuality Valuation Services for the proposed amount of \$80,000.00, as presented and recommended by the Tax Assessor in her letter dated 7/28/23. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: Penny Mudgett, Tax Assessor, addressed the Board, stating she recommends eQuality Valuation Services for the 2024 Town revaluation. She explained that mailers were sent out to homeowners in which they had to answer questions and return. Next year, reevaluations will include walking around homes. Mrs. Mudgett explained that the current company has not been up to standard and therefore recommends eQuality Valuation Services. They have been in business for ten years. Mrs. Mudgett said she is familiar with their computer-aided mass appraisal software system. The eQuality office is

conveniently located nearby in Waterbury, Connecticut. First Selectman George Temple supports Mrs. Mudgett's recommendation.

## **7. Tax Refunds**

### **MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the tax refunds, totaling \$2,708.61, as presented and recommended by the Tax Collector in her letter dated 8/8/23, and to authorize two signatures. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

## **8 Police Department Copier Lease – Approve Monthly Extension**

### **MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to table the change of the Police Department's Copier Lease from 36 months to 60 months for a monthly fee of \$102.00. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: Jim Hliva ( Finance Director) discussed that we are still under contract for the current copier. Purchasing one instead of leasing would cost about \$ 5,000.

## **9. Hire Part-Time Custodian**

### **MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to hire Tammy Guillette as a Part-Time Custodian at a pay rate of \$16.00 per hour and a start dated Monday, July 31, 2023. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: First Selectman George Temple stated that our previous custodian resigned. Since the Selectman's meetings are on the summer schedule and held only once a month, Tammy was temporarily hired and doing a great job. She has earned a permanent part-time position.

**10. ARPA Funding Request for Oxford Babe Ruth to Install Lighting at Posypanko Park – Discuss with Possible Action**

**MOTION:**

First Selectman George Temple moved to table the request to install lighting at Posypanko Park.

This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

**11. FY 2022 – 2023 Transfer Requests**

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to remove this matter from the table. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

**MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the FY 2022 – 2023 transfer requests (Attachment A) as presented by the Finance Director in his letter dated 8/10/23. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion: Finance Director Jim Hliva noted that all transfers are minor. There is currently a quarter of \$1 million left in the contingency fund. First Selectman George Temple stated the town is starting out in a positive direction.

**12. Report of First Selectman**

The First Selectman attended two Grand Openings in the Town. Priva Med Spa in Quarry Walk and Dunkin, which is now located across the street in the Old Webster Bank. Both events were well attended.

The Quaker Farms Carnival was a success. The weather was pretty good. The fireworks went off well. Great family event.

Oxford Center had its Annual Car Show on Saturday, July 22. which also had great weather and was a great success. Over 400 cars were in attendance.

On Tuesday, August 8th Senator Blumenthal came to Oxford to announce the award of \$3.4 million to the Town of Oxford for the Oxford Main Street project's future phases.

Last Wednesday night, the Lion's Club held a Raffle at Oxford House Tavern. Congratulations to Kenny Moura, who won.

## **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**

Tim Czaplinski, 30 Freeman Road, stated that he attended the Planning and Zoning Meeting last night regarding the noise issue from target shooting. Mr. Czaplinski stated that he believed the town tried to pass an ordinance once before, but he said he believes that an ordinance was tried to be passed previously and wasn't and would like to know why this is trying to be pushed through again.

First Selectman George Temple stated that no one is trying to push anything through. Everyone has the right to bear arms, and no one wants to take away your second amendment. This is not a gun issue; this is a noise issue.

Tim Czaplinski stated he has a right to enjoy his property and enjoys target shooting and should be able to do so without interference. We have many out-of-state people who have moved to Oxford. Years ago, it used to be all agricultural. We should not have to cater to city folks who come and move to the country and don't want to hear gunshots. He went on to say, I have 30 acres of land. This sounds like you're trying to push an ordinance through.

First Selectman George Temple stated what we would like to see is everyone respect their neighbors. He explained that target shooting all day long, every weekend, is a little much. A couple of hours of target shooting is reasonable.

Everyone should be able to enjoy their property whether you do target shooting or not. This is about respecting your neighbor. If you were going to shoot your firearm for six hours a day, that would be disrespectful to your neighbors. That's being obnoxious. If you're doing that, you can lose your right. First Selectman Temple stated that that is not something he wants to do. We will get together in a couple of weeks and see if we can all work together to find a solution.

Tim Czaplinski stated he has every right to shoot his firearm on his property. First Selectman George Temple stated there is a noise ordinance. But he believes we can find a solution when we meet in a couple of weeks.

David Stocker, 144 Punkup Rd, stated he has lived in Oxford for 20 years. He knows many people who love to go target shooting. He believes in the Second Amendment right. He discussed the noise ordinance and motorcycles dirt bikes riding on the roads. People should be tolerant of parties. But not every night. But when does it become a nuisance? Everyone pays their taxes and their mortgage and has the right to enjoy their property.

First Selectman George Temple reiterated that no one is pushing for an ordinance. He said he would like to have many people involved in the discussion. Chris Dubois, 57 Newgate Rd, coaches sports year-round here in Oxford. He said he understands this is a contentious topic but feels that this is more of a neighbor dispute. Mr. Dubois stated he does shoot; he is a firefighter but supports this Town and people who shoot safely. He went on to say that he would like to continue target shooting safely and respectfully.

Linda Czaplinski, 30 Freeman Rd, stated that there's been a little bit of a contradiction. At last night's Planning and Zoning Meeting, there was a request to restrict or limit shooting on private property. What is going on here is a dispute between neighbors. We shoot regularly, and she does not want an Ordinance. The neighbors should sort it out, and we should be able to continue to enjoy the sport that we like and enjoy. First Selectman George Temple reiterated his previous statement that he is not looking to make an Ordinance.

Pat Cocchiarella, Planning, and Zoning Chairman, read the item from the Planning and Zoning meeting the night before. This was just a discussion. We were responding to a request. He assigned the Board of Commissioners to look into this and will report back at the next Planning and Zoning Meeting. First Selectman George Temple stated this is how we work together; we make a request. We will meet in two weeks to discuss this further.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

## **MOTION:**

Selectman David McKane moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 PM. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted By  
***Kathleen Sundstrom***  
Kathleen Sundstrom

TOWN OF ORFORD, CT  
*Kathleen Sundstrom*  
TOWN CLERK

2023 SEP - 6 PM 4:47