

Minutes

Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting

Wednesday, October 6, 2021, at 7:30 PM
Virtual Meeting/Hangout Meets/In Person

The Town of Oxford Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting was called to order by First Selectman George Temple at 7:32 PM and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: First Selectman George Temple, Esq., Selectman Arnold Jensen, Selectman Heather Haney, Administrative Assistant to the First Selectman Kristyn Rosa.

Absent: None

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

1. 9/15/21 Regular Meeting

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the 9/15/21 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

AMENDMENT OF AGENDA

1. Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency Re-Appointments

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to amend the agenda to add Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency Re-Appointments as Item #2 under Appointments. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

2. Oxford Housing Authority Appointment

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to amend the agenda to add Oxford Housing Authority Appointment as Item #3 under Appointments. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

3. Utility Incentive Rebate Letter of Commitment with Air Temp Mechanical Services for the Great Oak Middle School – Approve and Authorize First Selectman to Sign

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to amend the agenda to add Utility Incentive Rebate Letter of Commitment with Air Temp Mechanical Services for the Great Oak Middle School – Approve and Authorize First Selectman to Sign as Item #6 and move Report of First Selectman to Item #7. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

APPOINTMENTS

1. Great Oak Middle School Evaluation and Improvement Committee Appointment

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to appoint Carl Bouchard to the Great Oak Middle School Evaluation and Improvement Committee with a term to commence immediately. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

Herman Schuler, of the Great Oak Middle School Evaluation and Improvement Committee, spoke in regards to Mr. Bouchard. Mr. Schuler stated that Mr. Bouchard is the treasurer of the Meadowbrook home Owners Association, he is a former construction manager and construction estimator, and has great computer skills; he is quite capable. Mr. Schuler also stated that this position needs to be filled. First Selectman George Temple stated that he agrees with the recommendation, Selectman Arnold Jensen agreed this is a good fit.

2. Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency Re-Appointments

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to appoint Brian Smith and Ethan Stewart both to the Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency with terms to commence immediately

and expire on 12/31/23. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

Joe Lanier, Inland/Wetlands Commissioner, stated that he can speak highly of Ethan and his skillset and also of Brian and his perspective.

3. Oxford Housing Authority Appointment

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to appoint Kathy Johnson to the Oxford Housing Authority with a term to commence immediately and expire 12/31/23. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

First Selectman George Temple stated that he knows Mrs. Johnson is very interested in this housing project and the seniors, and that she will be a good fit. Selectman Heather Haney said she believes Mrs. Johnson is going to be a wonderful fit for this position, with her passion for this community, and how she truly cares. Mrs. Johnson graciously thanked the board and stated she will represent Oxford and that board to the best of her ability.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Tax Refunds

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the tax refunds, totaling \$2,503.13, as presented and recommended by the Tax Collector in her letter dated 10/5/21 and to authorize two signatures. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

All were able to review previously. No discussion was had.

2. Dissolution of Moose Hill Estates Request – Planning & Zoning Commission’s 8-24 Referral

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to accept the following Planning & Zoning Commission’s Connecticut General Statute 8-24 Referral which was approved at their meeting held on 10/5/21:

MOTION by Commission Secretary Pat Cocchiarella to make a positive referral to the Board of Selectman pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24 regarding the expired Moose Hill Estates Subdivision and the following: a positive referral of the reconveyance of Roslyn Lane to C&M Homes, Inc. from the Town of Oxford, and the release of 5 recorded Easements granted to the Town of Oxford by C&M Homes, Inc., specifically a Detention Basin Maintenance Agreement and Access Easement to Detention Basin, a Fire Tank Easement, a Temporary Turnaround Easement, a Slope Easement over Lot 1 and 3, and a Slope Easement over Lot 7 all conjunction with the expired Moose Hill Estates Subdivision.

This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Kevin McSherry, Town Attorney, explained that this is in regards to a subdivision that expired in 2017. The trust, made by Attorney Gail McTaggart, is for the action to be taken so that the deeds already conveyed to the town, whether an easement or quit claim deed, could be reversed. He went on to state that part of that reversal, for the town is to abandon their interest in something. Under Connecticut General Statute 8-24, there is a process where the Board of Selectman refers to the Planning and Zoning Commission and then Planning and Zoning Commission accept the positive referral. Then it goes from the Board of Selectmen to a town meeting to approve the transfers. It will then go back to Planning and Zoning Commission for a vote to release the bond. Finally, the owners of the property will file a perimeter map depicting one piece of property without the subdivided lots which will become the map going forward. Selectman Heather Haney asked the number of acres for this property. Attorney Gail McTaggart states it consists of 17.287 acres. First Selectman Temple inquired the future intentions for this lot. Attorney McTaggart replied to keep it as a single lot, at most split it, if anything, but at this time there are no plans. Attorney McTaggart further explained that this was approved as a 7-lot subdivision and that it is a good piece of property. Selectman Arnold Jensen asked if there was any approved open space on this property. Attorney McSherry said that there is no open space shown on the map. This subdivision was approved in 2007 when the open space requirement was fairly new. First Selectman Temple stated that he was part of that change requiring open space for subdivisions and wondered if the open space requirement for this subdivision may have fallen through the cracks. Attorney McSherry confirmed that this one had nothing showing or related to open space.

3. Community Support Committee's Application for Oxford High School's Make A Difference Club's Year of Community Engagement & Service – Approve

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the Community Support Committee's application for Oxford High School's Make A Difference Club's Year of Community Engagement & Service, in the amount of \$1,500.00 (\$500.00 towards the Senior Center Birthday Cards Initiative and \$1,000.00 towards the Veterans Memorial Community

Service Project), as approved by the Community Support Committee at their meeting held on 9/20/21. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Glen Schumitz, of the Community Support Committee, stated that the committee felt some of the items on the original application for \$4,085.00 were a little too high, and that some were school related items, so they supported items outside the scope of the school. Mr. Schumitz commented that there has already been a lot of positive feedback on what the kids have done at the senior center. He also went on to state that the committee felt some of the requests were a little extreme, so they did some research on the costs themselves, which is why they did not approve the full requests. First Selectman George Temple thanked Mr. Schumitz for looking into that, and then asked if he felt that this project was worthwhile. Mr. Schumitz confirmed that it is worthwhile and positive which is always a good thing to have the kids being involved and taking initiative. Selectman Heather Haney stated that they really are a wonderful group of kids, and spoke of what a difference they have made in the lives of the seniors, and how hard they worked, and that the birthday cards were so beautiful. Selectman Haney also pointed out that they even offered some training as well, with things like iPads and the sort. Mr. Schumitz confirmed they have received a lot of good feedback in regards to the kids. First Selectman George Temple agreed the kids in this town are amazing. Selectman Arnold Jensen asked Mr. Schumitz to explain what the Veterans Memorial Community Project is about. Mr. Schumitz stated that the idea of the project is to clean up and maintain, they want to improve flower beds, bring in natural local plant life, and basically clean up. Part of the approval was for the kids to maintain on an annual basis, this will be an ongoing process. All Selectmen stated that they support this.

4. Community Support Committee's Application for Youth Conservation Corp's Moose Hill Family Recreation Area – Approve

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the Community Support Committee's application for the Youth Conservation Corp's Moose Hill Family Recreation Area project, in the amount of \$9,500.00, as approved by the Community Support Committee at their meeting held on 9/20/21. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Glen Schumitz, of the Community Support Committee, explained that this is a reapplication from February 2019 when the Youth Conservation Corp applied for an ATV Quad for the trails. It was later realized that the ATV would be too large for the trails so it was never purchased. The Youth Conservation Corp reapplied in April of 2020 but it was the middle of the Covid-19 Pandemic, so it sat. Selectman Heather Haney inquired if this is for the younger kids too and families. Mr. Schumitz explained that it was and that this is going to be for the enhancements for families, to allow more of an

age group to enjoy the trails. There will be minor bike trails and enhancements for more access. First Selectman George Temple noted that his only issue with any of this is hikers and walkers and bikers all on the trails at the same time; tempting incidents. He suggested that there should be hour limitations or some sort of regulation. First Selectman Temple went on to say that kids often push limits, and accidents can happen. He is not against it in anyway but safety is his priority. Mr. Schumitz commented that the committee has shared the same concerns over bikes on the trails on more than one occasion. He went on to say that one of the concerns the committee voiced is that there are a lot of out-of-state and out-of-town people that seem to frequent the trails; parking up and down the road. That being said, the committee felt this project was different since it is geared more to families. Mr. Joe Lanier, Conservation Commission member, stressed that the side they are planning to enhance is on the Moose Hill side and, based on data, most hikers are out by Rockhouse West which is on the high school side and the track. Moose Hill and Peach Farm are predominantly biking, besides local neighbors who may hike. Mr. Lanier went on to state that the trails are designed for the younger riders, as it is predominantly flat ground, so they can be introduced to riding in the forest. Mr. Lanier clarified that hiking can be done on these trails, they are not excluding any particular activity, which is why they are introducing this into the Moose Hill section because it is away from the high school and where most hikers walk. Mr. Lanier went on to express concern of dogs being off leash as a potential hazard and how hard that is to control, despite the large signs being up at every one of the 14 entrances. First Selectman George Temple stressed he is concerned about that as well and feels that a conversation needs to be had. Mr. Lanier also brought up poaching as another consideration and explained that there has been poaching found on the property. First Selectman Temple reiterated that dialogue needs to be had and things need to be regulated. Whether we like it or not, in the terms of town liability and safety, it is necessary. He then added that he does support this but feels that dialogue must be had.

5. Hire Youth Conservation Corp

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to hire Abigail Zhodi and Cassidy Chromczak to the Youth Conservation Corp at a pay rate of \$12.00 per hour and a start date of Wednesday, October 6, 2021; as presented and requested by Conservation Commission Member Joe Lanier in his letter dated 9/22/21. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

DISCUSSION:

First Selectman George Temple asked if both girls completed all the requirements of service hours. Mr. Joe Lanier, Conservation Commission member, explained that they had and Ms. Zhodi, who was present at the meeting, was actually the star in our CPTV Resourceful episode while volunteering for the first time and now is part of the crew. First Selectman Temple asked Ms. Zhodi to stand to be recognized and thanked her for the work that she does. He stated that this type of work does not build character, it brings

it out. He feels that these kids are very dedicated to the good of this town, and thanked them; they have his vote.

6. Utility Incentive Rebate Letter of Commitment with Air Temp Mechanical Services for the Great Oak Middle School – Approve and Authorize First Selectman to Sign

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the Utility Incentive Rebate Letter of Commitment with Air Temp Mechanical Services for the Great Oak Middle School and to authorize the First Selectman to sign. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion Carries

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Herman Schuler, Great Oak Middle School Evaluation and Improvement Committee Chairman, explained that this is to allow Air Temp to negotiate rebates from Eversource to put in new heating, air conditioning, ventilation, fire sprinkler system, new ceiling, spray foam installation. They have a design from Air Temp. The intent is for them to take this schedule, which is a five-million-dollar project, and get a commitment from Eversource to give rebates against all this energy efficient equipment we want to put in. Therefore, they believe this \$5M will turn into approximately \$3.6M for the entire project. First Selectman George Temple inquired if by signing this, does it in any way bind the town to anything. Mr. Schuler stated that it would not; we are not bound to anything except we are giving them the ability to negotiate for us for the rebates. If they do the process the rebates still go through the town. Selectman Heather Haney asked how old is the system there. Mr. Rick Krueger, of 31 Wedgehill Drive, stated that the system is a straight electric heat system and there is no ventilation. The parts that need to be replace and maintain are obsolete, so this is the chance to get the best project return. It was agreed that getting this proper ventilation, heat and air conditioning is what the kids need. Mr. Krueger pointed out another benefit is the 50% reduction in energy cost. Selectman Arnold Jensen stated his concern is with the last line of the first paragraph in the letter of the agreement: Once an Eversource Incentive letter is presented by the Utilities, we intend to proceed with the installation of the project in accordance of the submitted proposal. It was agreed to amend the motion.

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to amend the motion to strikeout the line at the end of the first paragraph of the Utility Incentive Rebate Letter of Commitment with Air Temp Mechanical Services for the Great Oak Middle School: Once an Eversource Incentive letter is presented by the Utilities, we intend to proceed with the installation of the project in accordance of the submitted proposal. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Discuss with possible action Utility Man contractual issue

First Selectman George Temple moved to not act on this matter at this time.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

7. Report of First Selectman

- Opioid Candlelight was done very, very well; it was really something. The Opioid Committee did a great job, and a special thanks to Hanes.
- There was bit of criticism thrown for not attending the Board of Education meeting in regards to the masks in the school. The First Selectman reiterates that he understands both sides of the argument, but until Covid is over we have to deal with some things whether we like it or not. Regardless of anyone's opinion we must follow the State Board of Education and what the governor says; it is not up to the Selectmen or the School. This decision is on the state. Selectman Heather Haney asked what is the protocol for when a teacher is unvaccinated. First Selectman Temple replied that they have to show a weekly covid test. If they are out sick, or catch Covid, they are unpaid.
- Selectman Heather Haney asked First Selectman Temple how the recent meeting/gathering at the local church went regarding the disbursement of ARRA funds. First Selectman Temple stated that the meeting went well. People had many ideas about the way the funds should be distributed. He pointed out his knowledge as to our restrictions on spending and what we are allowed and not allowed to do with it. This will come up again in a discussion at a town meeting. But he felt that the meeting at the church was a good approach and stated that there were some good ideas.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Paula Guillet, 175 Good Hill Road, wanted to make note on record of her feelings on the Covid situation. She stated that she agrees it is serious, but it is also confusion and fear, there is conflicting information. She does not feel it is right to have different rules. It is unjustified, segregation and disturbing. There are a lot of facts and numbers that do not add up. She went on to clarify that she understands the rules that need to be followed to make people safe. But now you may lose your job over an injection that doesn't even have long term studies or research. She reiterated that she just wanted to go on record to state where she stands. First Selectman George Temple replied that he does not have a background in health and his job is to follow the advice of those that do, such as Dr. Brown, who's advice he will continue to follow. First Selectman Temple agreed that there is a lot of value in some of what Ms. Guillet said, but the Board of Selectmen need to make regulations for everyone; to keep everyone safe. Ms. Guillet responded that she understands that, she just wanted to be heard. She felt that this whole situation is very money driven and wondered why are we not pushing health, and healthy lifestyles and testing things like antibodies or other options, rather than just focusing and pushing the vaccine. She understands the Board of Selectmen has to do what they have to do, she just wanted to be heard and put on record and felt that we should be questioning these things.

Kathy Johnson, of 68 Dorman Rd., just wanted to share concerns that sparked her attention during the previous discussion about the trails and hunters with Mr. Lanier. She herself won't even ride the bridal trail anymore as there are so many hunters out there. Even the best of horses can be spooked at a gun shot. Mrs. Johnson agreed with First Selectman Temple that regulations are necessary, but agreed with Joe Lanier that there are hunters out there hunting and its dangerous and they shouldn't be. The question is how do we catch them; that is the problem.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 PM. This was seconded by Selectman Heather Haney. 3 Ayes. Motion carries.

Minutes subject to approval

Respectfully Submitted,

Shannon-lee Scott Hicks

Shannon-Lee Scott Hicks
Clerk, Board of Selectman

21 OCT 12 PM 4:11
TO: HOF OF FOR A CT
Clerk of Board of Selectmen
THOMAS CLARK