

MINUTES

Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 2023
7:30 PM - Town Hall

First Selectman George Temple called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

1. 3/1/23 Regular Meeting

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the 3/1/23 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. 3/3/23 Special Meeting

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the 3/3/23 Special Meeting minutes as presented. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

AMENDMENT OF AGENDA

1. Oxford Agricultural Advisory Committee Appointments

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to amend the agenda to add Oxford Agricultural Advisory Committee Appointments under Appointments. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

2. Rockhouse Hill Trails Update

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to amend the agenda to add Rockhouse Hill Trails Update as Item #3 under New Business and move the following items down one. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS

1. Oxford Agricultural Advisory Committee Appointments

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to appoint the following to the Agricultural Advisory Committee:

Debbie Alterio with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/24
Alicia Belinsky with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/24
Tyler Grailich with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/24
Tony Periera with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/25
Corky Burke with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/25
Lewis Belinsky as an Alternate with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/23
Abigail Risi as the FFA Representative

This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion: First Selectman George Temple met with the committee and stated they are very committed for the Community Garden Project. They have been given the task to contact other towns to find out how they got started. The First Selectman will provide more information as the project advances.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Recognize Pop Warner U9 Team for New England Regional Championship

The Board of Selectmen recognized the Pop Warner U9 Team by presenting each team member with a certificate and a town coin. First Selectman George Temple told the children how very impressed he was with their hard work and dedication. The town is proud of the entire team and he also congratulated the parents for their dedication; the town could not be prouder.

2. Recognize Mighty Mite Cheer Team for Northern CT Pop Warner Local Championship and New England Regional Championship

The Board of Selectmen recognized the Mighty Mite Cheer Team for winning the Local Championship and the New England Championship. First Selectman George Temple stated it was an honor to present the cheer team members with a town coin and a certificate. He stated that the Board is very proud of the team and understand how much work this was; the town is very proud of all of them.

3. Rockhouse Hill Trails Update

Mr. Joe Lanier, Conservation Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency Commission member, spoke about the Youth Conservation Corp and their commitment to maintaining the trails with a focus of improving bridge crossings. He stated the wood on some bridges are getting old; it is time to replace them. Mr. Lanier explained that grants have been applied for but we will not be notified if the grant will be received until May or June.

First Selectman George Temple stated that maintaining the trails is a win-win for everyone, including the town. Everyone appreciates the work that has been put into maintaining the trails. First Selectman Temple stated that there is a concern of work being done without consulting the Board of Selectmen or the Land Trust. It was brought to the First Selectman's attention that the number of mountain bikers using the trails have increased and pedestrians have been struck by bikes.

Mr. Lanier asked that the Land Trust and Conservation Society come to him when a problem arises. He stated that he would go to their meetings to discuss and solve the problem.

Selectman David McKane stated the trails were initially meant for hiking, not mountain bikers. Mountain biking is an aggressive sport. Selectman McKane stated that the Land Trust offered another parcel for mountain bikers in order to keep walkers and mountain bikes separate.

First Selectman George Temple explained that safety is the top priority. However, there seems to be an issue with communication. Mr. Lanier or a member of the Mountain Bikers Association should attend the Land Trust meeting to get answers and then this will be easily solved. First Selectman Temple stated that we have to come together to work on this.

Ms. Margaret Elliot, Land Trust President, explained that the Land Trust is a non-profit organization celebrating 35 years. She discussed the safety concerns regarding mountain biking and stated they have suggestions and would like to have conversations to work together.

Mr. Peter Petrochko read from a prepared statement. He pointed out that the property should remain open space. He referenced that the Land Trust stepped in to manage the property from 1998 to 2018. He went on to say a new dimension has been added with mountain biking. Mountain biking is a huge activity. The three boards need to come together for a solution.

Mr. Dave Zanowiak discussed that the sanctuary is an amazing place. A half mile in and you only hear water. Trails have been built and rebuilt to accommodate mountain biking. He went on to say he has been involved in a collision on the trail. Future generations should be able to enjoy the sanctuary without the worries of safety.

First Selectman George Temple discussed speaking with other towns for their input of how they accomplished making compatible for both mountain bikers and walkers. We want to avoid accidents.

Mrs. Nancy Clark, Oxford Land Trust Board of Directors, asked that the regulations be reviewed. The State of Connecticut has statutes that govern this activity. She discusses the tree cutting that has been done and that a permit is required for that. There's been erosion, dumping and littering on the property. There is a program for monitoring Open Space and they are looking for a solution.

First Selectman George Temple discussed that our Inlands Wetlands Officer walks the trail to monitor wetland violations. He went on to say he appreciates the research that has been put in to this concern. He pointed out that we need to work together to solve this, we need to educate people on wetlands.

There was discussion about making trails handicapped accessible and adaptable for special needs. Also, discussion on installing a gate. Selectman McKane had a concern about the gate being opened and closed. Mr. Lanier mentioned pre-registration, to receive a code to open the gate. The code would be changed often.

Mr. Lanier went on to say that he has 500 student volunteering, they put in 15,000 hours and have also raised \$320,000. He went on to say that the trails are used by his biology classes for education. Last year a mountain bike club was created. The children that use these trails do not participate in a sport. This is getting the kids outside and doing something they love. Mountain biking is their sport and 50 children use the trail through the club. There is a concern of limiting hours. Mr. Lanier stated that this is very important him and the children who use the trails.

First Selectman George Temple stated he approves of anything that involves the children and getting them away from computers and get them outside. He went on to say there must be good communication between everyone involved. He would like to thank everyone in advance for their cooperation.

Ms. Olivia Randall stated that when she was a student at Oxford high school, the Youth Conservation Corp was her favorite program. She explained that many children do not

have this opportunity to be involved in such a great program. Regarding the trash on the trails, she does not believe it is the children that are leaving this garbage on the trail. They are very careful to protect the trails. It's a wonderful program. There are not many things in Oxford and having this program is important to everyone who is involved in it. Communication between the two groups is needed.

Ms. Margaret Formato pointed out that the children who join the Youth Conservation Corp love the program and outdoors, they appreciate the beauty of nature and they are working for free. These children definitely work together and a program like this is a wonderful opportunity for the kids as well as Oxford. Ms. Formato thanked Mr. Lanier for his hard work.

Mr. Scott Volpe stated that both of his kids are part of the Youth Conservation Corp and pointed out that Mr. Lanier works tirelessly. He explained that Rockhouse Hill is approximately 550 acres and feels that there is plenty of room to provide space for both walkers and bikers. He encourages mountain biking.

Ms. Laura Johnstone thanked Mr. Lanier and the Youth Conservation Corp for the work that they do. She went on to state that she would like to be a liaison between the Land Trust and the mountain bikers so both can enjoy Rockhouse Hill.

First Selectman George Temple thanked everyone for their input and explained that everyone has to work together to solve this problem. He pointed out that everyone agrees more than they disagree on this topic. First Selectman Temple would like to revisit this matter in three months. He thanked everyone for their input and reiterated that everyone can work together on this.

4. Pulte Homes Bond Release Request for Oxford Greens Pump Station 7 at Fairview

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the release of the Performance Bond, in the amount of \$100,000.00, for Pulte Homes for Oxford Greens Pump Station 7 at Fairview; as approved and recommended by the Water Pollution Control Authority in their letter dated 2/23/23. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. Hawley Road Project Asphalt Invoice

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to compensate Guerrera Construction for the asphalt used for the installation of bituminous curbing in lieu of scheduled overlay asphalt on the Hawley Road Project. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion: First Selectman Temple explained that he met with Guerrero and the curbing needed to be done. He stated that the project went slightly over however, it could not have been avoided. First Selectman Temple stated that Guerrero is an honorable firm. The funds will come out of the Public Works Asphalt Account.

6. Tax Refunds

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to approve the tax refunds, for a total of \$12,296.35, as presented and recommended by the Acting Tax Collector in her letter dated 3/8/23 and to authorize two signatures. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion: Acting Tax Collector Helen Leung noted that the bulk of refunds were real estate.

7. Hire Part-Time Finance Clerk

MOTION:

Selectman Arnold Jensen moved to hire Laurie Carr as a Part-Time Finance Clerk with a pay rate of \$21.00 per hour and a start date of Monday, April 3, 2023. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion: First Selectman George Temple explained the need for hiring of a part-time Finance Clerk. He believed Mrs. Carr will do well and would be a great asset. He pointed out that she is highly qualified and he supports this hire.

8. Report of First Selectman

First Selectman George Temple attended the Fireman's Ladies Night. He stated that it was a great night and appreciate the firemen and their hard work.

On March 12, 2023 First Selectman George Temple marched in New Haven's Annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade.

First Selectman Temple explained that we are continuing working on setting a date to thank Senator Blumenthal for the \$3.4 million dollars for the multi-use path, bridges and sidewalks along Route 67. We are possibly looking into having the event at the Oxford House Tavern which runs along the new sidewalks.

First Selectman Temple pointed out that he had heard discussions of the Board of Education moving from the Old Center School to Great Oak Elementary School. He explained that there is a great relationship between the Board of Selectmen and the Board

of Education. This Board supports anything that is in the best interest of the children of the town. However, he was not involved in this decision.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Mr. John Downs, of Roosevelt Drive, stated that individuals are still trespassing on the cell tower site on Coppermine Road. Mr. Down's is asking for a No Trespassing sign to be put in place and he would like to see a gate installed and locked. Mr. Downs explained that they are ripping up the driveway by riding on the property.

First Selectman George Temple explained that, unfortunately, the police cannot chase the persons doing this as the riders cut through the woods and disappear. He pointed out that an Ordinance should be passed.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

First Selectman George Temple moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 PM. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted By

Kathleen Sundstrom

Kathleen Sundstrom

Clerk

2023 APR 18 PM 12:43
TOWN OF OXFORD, CT
Arnold Jensen
TOWN CLERK