

Minutes

Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting Wednesday, September 20, 2023

First Selectman George Temple called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Acceptance of Minutes

1. 9/6/23 Regular Meeting

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the 9/6/23 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Amendments to Agenda

None

Appointments

1. Agricultural Advisory Committee Appointment

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to appoint Lynette Steeves to the Agricultural Advisory Committee with a term to commence immediately and expire on 12/31/25, as recommended by the committee in their letter dated 9/12/23. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

First Selectman George Temple stated that this committee is very active and does a great job; he fully supports this appointment.

2. Elderly Commission Re-Appointment

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to re-appoint Joyce Niestemski, Betty Andrews, and Harue Bailey all to the Elderly Commission with terms to commence on January 1, 2024, and expire on December 31, 2027. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

First Selectman George Temple stated that all three reappointments are great members and fully supports the motion.

New Business

1. ARPA Funding Request for Oxford Center Fire Department Sign - Approve

Motion:

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

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the ARPA funding request, in the amount of \$55,000, for the installation of a sign at Oxford Center Fire House. This was approved by the Oxford Space & Funds Advisory Committee at their meeting held on 7/11/23. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

First Selectman George Temple asked if the Center FireHouse was helping with any of the work or funding. Captain Ken Blood stated that the Fire Department is doing about 20% of the work. This will include paying for the concrete and electrical, the Christmas tree removal, and the landscaping.

Firefighter Scott Halstead went over the updated proposal for the sign. He noted that the Fire Company would be responsible for four of the five things. They would not be responsible for the sign itself, the footings, and the foundation.

Selectman Arnold Jensen asked what would be posted on the sign. His concern was that if it were used for recruitment, with the same message every time, no one would bother to look at the sign anymore. Selectman Jensen stated that he would like to see the sign used for more information than just recruitment and emergency messages, such as for town meetings or summer concerts at Jackson Cove.

Captain Ken Blood explained that Center Fire House would have control of the sign. The sign will be used for emergency management information, such as the shelter is open or a storm is coming. He stated that the letters fall off or have been lost with the current sign; it has run its course.

First Selectman George Temple asked why other messages besides emergency management wouldn't be put on the sign. Fire Chief Scott Pelletier stated that through a study from the National Fire Department Council, people tend not to read the sign if there are too many messages. The intent of this sign is to build it for the future. For example, if a storm is coming, they would post 'Slow Down, Storm Coming.' Fire Chief Pelletier stated that the sign could also be used for Police and EMS emergency purposes. However, the main focus is recruitment, as they are trying to get volunteers to build the future of the Fire Department.

Communication has been had with the other departments. Captain Blood stated that a letter was sent. One member reached out for more information, which was provided. However, the other departments have projects of their own that they are currently working on.

First Selectman George Temple agreed it should be used for emergency management announcements and recruitment. He pointed out that two departments were notified, but it doesn't seem they are interested. Fire Chief Scott Pelletier explained that the other departments have projects they are raising funds for and trying to complete. First Selectman George Temple stated he knew this. He went on to say he appreciates all the efforts from the Fire Department.

Selectman Arnold Jensen stated it should be one simple message. First Selectman George Temple said they will confine it to emergency management and recruitment only.

Selectman David McKane pointed out that the town still has the other sign that could be used for voting day or something of that nature.

Motion:

First Selectman George Temple moved to amend the motion to approve the ARPA funding request, in the amount of \$47,000, for the installation of a sign at Oxford Center Fire House. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

2. Water Pollution Control Authority's Towner Lane Pump Station Renovations - Award Bid

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to award the Water Pollution Control Authority Pump Station Bid to Tucker Mechanical, Inc. in the amount of \$350,053.00, with a contingency of \$53,000.00; as recommended by the Authority in their letter dated 9/14/23. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Scott Halstead, Water Pollution Control Authority Maintenance Man, stated that this was approved on 6/13/23 by ARPA for \$500,000.00. It was then approved by the Board of Selectmen on 6/21/23 for \$500,000.00. The bid went out, and Tucker Mechanical, Inc. was the lowest bid and was recommended by the Town Engineer. The Town Engineer recommended a contingency due to the age of the building and the fact that we don't know what we will find once the project begins.

First Selectman George Temple stated contingencies are usually 10%. Mr. Halstead said the Town Engineer suggested 15% due to the age of the building and there are some pipes outside.

Selectman Arnold Jensen inquired about the terms of the contingency, if it has to come before the Board of Selectmen before use of the contingency. First Selectman George Temple stated yes, the Board must be notified.

3. Water Pollution Control Authority's Towner Lane Pump Station Renovations - Hire Engineer

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to hire Town Engineer Nafis & Young, at a rate of \$85.00 per hour, not to exceed \$12,750.00, to provide part-time inspection and construction administration for the Water Pollution Control Authority Towner Lane Pump Station Renovations Project; as recommended by the Authority in their letter dated 9/14/23. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Scott Halstead, Water Pollution Control Authority Maintenance Man, explained that Tucker Mechanical must provide us with drawings and that an engineer must certify the drawings.

The engineers from Nafis and Young will certify the drawings, perform inspections, sign off on all mechanicals and equipment installed, and handle administering the money by submitting the pay requests.

Mr. Halstead explained that we must have engineers to ensure we are getting the correct equipment and everything in the specs. Mr. Halstead also explained that the Water Pollution Control Authority will do their daily inspections and do their best to keep the cost under \$12,750.00.

4. Transfer Request for Completion Of Radio System Upgrade for the Fire Department, EMS, and Public Works - Approve

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to approve the transfer request, in the amount of \$7,600.00 to be taken from the General Fund, for the completion of the Fire Department, EMS, and Public Works Radio System Upgrade, as presented and requested by the Board of Fire Chiefs in their letter dated 9/8/23. This was seconded by First Selectman George Temple. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Fire Chief Scott Pelletier explained that during the implementation of the new fire optic phone lines at Public Works, prices were changing daily, including some equipment and cable needed to complete the project. He went on to say that they were awarded \$64,000.00 from the ARPA funds. As the projects moved forward during the implementation process, a special cable was needed to run from the Public Works building to the radio room, and additional equipment was required. The total project cost was \$68,100.00, leaving a shortfall of \$4,100.00.

Also, when doing the Public Works side of the fiber optics, it was realized that Public Works equipment was never upgraded, which was necessary to hook up with the fiber optic phone lines. The total cost of this would be \$3,500.00. So, the total amount requested for both projects comes to \$7,600.00.

First Selectman George Temple asked if this was a safety issue. Chief Pelletier stated it was.

Selectman David McKane asked Chief Pelletier if this would also help us communicate with other towns. Chief Pelletier stated no, this clears the channel to be more audible. We can hear what's coming over the radio much clearer than the interrupted communications we have been experiencing.

5. Hire Part-Time Police Officer

Motion:

First Selectman George Temple moved to hire Robert Desmarais as a Part-Time Police Officer at a pay rate of 10% below the police union contract scale, with a start date of September 2, 2023. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

First Selectman George Temple stated that Officer Desmarais retired from the Oxford Police Department and will work part-time as needed. He is an excellent officer, and I highly recommend him for this part-time position.

Selectman Arnold Jensen stated that his first thought is to table this issue as we keep hiring part-time officers who only take private duty jobs.

Selectman David McKane inquired if Officer Desmarais would be working patrol or just private duty. First Selectman Temple understands that Officer Desmarais has been working on patrol 2 to 3 times per week and does not believe he has done private duty detail.

Selectman David McKane mentioned that we keep hiring part-time officers, and the budget keeps increasing. There needs to be a reevaluation put in place for all of the part-time police officers.

6. Hire a Parks & Recreation Open Swim Lifeguard

Motion:

Selectman David McKane moved to hire Hannah Goodwin as a Park & Recreation Open Swim Lifeguard at a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour from September through June, as presented by the Parks & Recreation Director in her letter dated 9/13/23. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Discussion:

Parks & Recreation Director Kyra Nesteriak explained to the Board that, unfortunately, this happens yearly with the college kids returning to school. Open Swim goes from September through June, and since many of our lifeguards are only available in the summer, we often have to request additional hires at this time of year.

7. 2022- 2027 Affordable Housing Plan - Discuss with Possible Action

Motion:

First Selectman George Temple moved to **table** the 2022 - 2027 Affordable Housing Plan. This was seconded by Selectman Arnold Jensen. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

8. First Selectman's Report

- On Tuesday, September 12th, the First Selectman met with Bryan Nesteriak, Town Engineer, regarding the Community Garden. Mr. Nesteriak will assemble a plan for the community gardens and an estimated cost. Once the estimated cost is received, we must figure out how to fund the project.

- This week is Constitution Week. Sunday, September 17th, marked the 236th anniversary of the framing of the Constitution. The First Selectman met with Judy Maier from the Trumbull-Porter Chapter of the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution at the Oxford Public Library, where he presented a Proclamation. The library provided a great display of books and other Constitutional-themed documents.

- Next week, the First Selectman will have the honor of presenting Proclamations to two Oxford High School Special Olympic Youth Ambassadors who were accepted into the Special Olympics of North America's U.S Youth Ambassador Class of 2023 - 2025. Only 14 students across the United States were selected to serve in this program as national youth leaders. This is quite an honor for Freddy Blum and James Badeau and well deserved.

Audience Of Citizens

Kathy Barte, of 20 Hogsback Road, addressed the Board regarding the Community Gardens. She understood that First Selectman George Temple met with the Town Engineer and was happy to hear the updates on the progress.

First Selectman George Temple stated they discussed logistics and water supply at the site of the proposed gardens. They looked over the map of the land. There is already a paved roadway entering the property. Brush would need to be cleared to the right of the paved road. All the cleared brush would be put to the left of the roadway. First Selectman Temple explained that he would like to start with about 40 plots, but will have a better idea of how many can fit once the plans are received from the engineer. However he feels that 40 plots is a good start to see how much interest there is. A nominal fee will be charged. First Selectman Temple said he believes having a fee is fair because items must be purchased, such as push carts and other gardening supplies.

First Selectman Temple explained he would like to put cinders between the plots. This way, it would be easier for people to push carts, etc. He would like low maintenance.

Mrs. Barte stated that, hopefully, the roof for the greenhouse at the Children's Garden at Great Oak Elementary School will be installed within the next two weeks. First Selectman George Temple complimented the garden and agricultural committees for their work at the Children's Garden. He said he is happy they are working with the school, and is very thankful for the volunteers.

Nil Gillet, of 2 Douglas Drive, addressed the board regarding flooding at his home. He believes it is due to a drain in the road and the culvert across the street. He would like the culvert in his neighbor's yard across the street to be cleaned out by the Public Works Department.

Adjournment

Motion:

First Selectman George Temple moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM. This was seconded by Selectman David McKane. All 3 Ayes. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Kathleen Sundstrom

Clerk

TOWN OF OXFORD, CT
Kathleen Sundstrom
TOWN CLERK

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