

Board of Selectmen  
Municipal Office Complex  
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2  
June 26, 2024  
Special Meeting Minutes

Selectmen Present: I. Haines; T. Bourgoïn; E. Dill

Also Present: L. D'Aquila; T. Gelston; M. Pierson; M. Roberts; A. Shaltiel; M. Thiede; K. Tosi;  
L. Woodward; L. Zemienieski; and other members of the public

1. First Selectman Haines called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoïn, to approve the agenda as written.  
Unanimous aye.

3. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting of June 5, 2024

Ms. Bourgoïn recommended a clarification be made to the correspondence from Sandra and David Rollinson noting that they complimented Public Works on "... *the removing and clean-up of trees on Wickham Road.*"

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoïn, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 5, 2024 as amended. Unanimous aye.

4. Correspondence: The following correspondence was discussed at the meeting:

A. Cutting Trees Emails

- Amalia Shaltiel wrote to encourage a better relationship between Tree Warden Velez and the Conservation Commission relative to the management of the Towns woodlands and urban forests. She noted that previous tree cutting notices posted by Public Works were not sufficiently apparent.
- Three communications from Susan Kinsman:
  - Requesting the Public Hearing concerning tree removal scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup> be continued to such time as it can be held at the Municipal Office during evening hours so that more of the public can attend and, also, so the meeting can be recorded and viewed on YouTube.
  - Reiterated her first request to continue the June 25<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing and also requested the July 9<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing be continued until such time as it can be held at the Municipal Office Complex for similar reasons. Ms. Kinsman also

requested Tree Warden Velez provide an outline of her overall tree removal plan with specifics, including an itemized cost of the project.

- Reiterated her request to continue the July 9<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing and hold it at the Municipal Office Complex. She noted several gaps in what was addressed by Tree Warden Velez at the June 25<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing. She cautioned against allowing this issue to raise to the level of a legal battle.
- Robert Simmons expressed his opinion that the tree removal project on Cherry Swamp Road was done properly and will reduce power outages from downed trees and limbs and also provide better road sight lines.
- Andrew & Susan Magri expressed their gratitude for clearing and cutting trees on North Moodus Road. Mr. Magri stated that several tree limbs hanging over the road have been a safety concern of his for a while.

#### B. Ambulance Funding Emails

- Maureen Pierson requested the Town ask the Fire Department to submit a cost analysis for running an emergency medical response service following the format previously submitted by the EHAA so that an “*apples to apples*” comparison can be made.
- Colleen Shaddox expressed her support for the Town to grant the funding request submitted by the EHAA.
- Denise DiStefano stated she is on the Executive Board of the EHAA and expressed her support of their request for funding from the Town. She noted her frustration with First Selectman Haines’ efforts to remove the EHAA as the community’s EMS provider in favor of the Fire Department.
- Giovanna & Erica Waters expressed their hope that the conflict between the EHAA and the Fire Department can come to an end soon. They noted that the conflict has been going on for too long, is taking away needed Town resources, and wasting time. They suggested the two organizations put aside their differences and work together to serve the Town. They expressed their support of the Town approving EHAA’s request for financial assistance.

5. First Selectmen’s Report: There was no First Selectmen’s report provided at the meeting.

#### 6. Public Comment

There following public comments were brought up at the meeting:

- Maureen Pierson commented on the increases to the Town’s mil rate during the past two fiscal years. She referenced the cost of legal fees the Town is incurring regarding the situation with the East Haddam Ambulance Association (EHAA) and noted that First Selectwoman Haines had not attended Mr. Tosi’s presentation to the Board of

Finance concerning the EHAA's financial situation. She expressed support for the Board of Selectmen to approve the Ambulance Association's request for funding.

- Mark Thiede suggested that the Fire Department has been attempting a “*hostile takeover*” of the Ambulance Association for a number of years and expressed his disappointment that the issue of who provides the Town's emergency medical response has not been resolved in over a year. He criticized incurring legal costs regarding this issue and stated it is “*shameful that the Town doesn't get what is happening with the EHAA*”. He stated that he supports the EHAA's request for funding from the Town.
- Amalia Shaltiel recommended granting the EHAA's request for funding for this fiscal year and creating a volunteer group to vet all options for the Town's emergency medical response and recommend an approach to move forward. Ms. Shaltiel also encouraged Public Works to provide better communication to the public concerning proposed tree removal on the streets of the Town.

## 7. Unfinished Business

- A. Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects Renewal Discussion: Discussion of this agenda item was postponed.
- B. 2024 Neighborhood Assistance Approvals: Ms. Haines reported that on June 12, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., a public hearing was held concerning the proposals received for the Neighborhood Assistance Act. She noted that the Goodspeed Opera House applied for \$23,250.00 for a LED House Light System Upgrade, HOPE Partnership, Inc. applied for \$150,000.00 for Affordable Housing in Moodus, and the Town of East Haddam applied for \$20,000.00 for the Open Space Trust Fund. Ms. Haines advised that the next step is for the Board of Selectmen to approve the applications and send the proposals to the State for final approval. In response to a question from Ms. Bourgoin, Ms. Haines confirmed that the HOPE Partnership funding request was to conduct a study.

Motion made by Mr. Dill seconded by Ms. Bourgoin to approve and forward to the State, for their approval, three (3) projects requesting funding by the Neighborhood Assistance Act for 2024. Unanimous aye.

## 8. New Business

- A. East Haddam Ambulance Presentation and Request for Funding: Mr. Tosi provided a presentation to the Board regarding the EHAA's request for funding for FY2023-2024. He covered the background for the funding request, the Connecticut Department of Health's hearing concerning the Primary Service Area Responder (PSAR) designation for the community, the need for sustained operations of the Ambulance Association, a summary of the EHAA's current response statistics, and a chart of the financial status of the Ambulance Association.

Mr. Tosi noted that the Fire Department has not publicized their plan for sustained service and, to date, their cost estimates have not been vetted. He stated that, while the application for the PSAR designation to be awarded to the Town is being considered by the state, a sustained emergency medical response program needs to remain in place. He encouraged the Town and the EHAA to repair its relationship and keep service to residents their primary focus. Mr. Tosi volunteered to participate in a community task force that can figure out how to move forward.

Mr. Tosi responded to questions from the Board. Ms. Haines noted several discrepancies in the EHAA's financial documents. Mr. Dill stated that, in general, he is not in favor of the Town subsidizing non-profit organizations and noted that he feels the EHAA needs to have a clear plan to achieve solvency. There was a general discussion regarding the EHAA's funding request.

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to support and recommend the Board of Finance approve the East Haddam Ambulance Association's request for \$59,316.52 in funding from the Town of East Haddam. Unanimous aye.

- B. State Historic Preservation Survey and Planning Grant Authorizing Resolution: Ms. Haines advised that the Redevelopment Agency will be applying for a number of grants to assist them in their charge and the one they are currently submitting is through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). She noted that SHPO requires an authorizing resolution to be part of the application process.

Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED, that Irene M. Haines, as First Selectman of the Town of East Haddam is empowered to execute and deliver on behalf of the Board of Selectmen of the Town of East Haddam any and all documents regarding a certain contract with the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development, entitles State Historic Preservation Office Survey and Planning Grant, and to affix the Town seal. Unanimous aye.

- C. Beer & Wine Service – Rathbun Library: Ms. Haines called the Selectmen's attention to an email in their meeting packets from Evelyn Morgen, dated June 4, 2024, advising that the Rathbun Library is hosting an art show opening on Friday, September 6, 2024 and would like to serve beer and wine.

Motion made by Ms. Bourgoin, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve beer and wine service at the Rathbun Library for the "Art Show Opening" on Friday, September 6, 2024. Unanimous aye.

- D. Board/Commission/Committee Changes: There were no Board, Commission, or Committee changes considered at the meeting.

E. Tax Refunds: There were no tax refunds considered at the meeting.

9. Public Comment: There was no additional public comment brought up at the meeting.

10. Selectmen's Discussion

A. Liaison's Reports: Ms. Bourgoin advised that on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Sustainability Committee held their Spring-into-Summer event on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, at the Grange, in celebration of achieving a Silver certification. She stated the Committee is currently promoting its Energy Assessment campaign.

B. Other: There were no other items discussed.

11. Adjournment: There being no additional business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Ms. Bourgoin, to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,  
Erik Dill, Secretary