

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, January 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Killingworth Town Hall/Remote Access Available

BOS Members in Attendance: First Selectman Eric Couture, Selectmen Joel D’Angelo and Eric Nunes

BOS Members Absent: None.

Visitors: Joan Gay, Wayne Lindsey, Richard Pleines, Eileen Blewett, Nancy Gorski, Annie Stirna (Via Remote), Eileen Unger-Pleines (Via Remote), Jackie Vece (Via Remote), Regina Regolo (Via Remote), and Jamie Sciascia (Via Remote)

Called to Order: First Selectman Couture called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment:

Nancy Gorski inquired about receiving an update on the design phase of the PFAS Filtration System.

Eileen Blewett shared information on the Helping Hands Pantry putting together a comprehensive year-end report for 2023 which included the number of clients served, an estimate on how much food they served, volunteer hours and who they partnered with. The Pantry served 47 different clients for Thanksgiving and 45 clients for Christmas, totaling approximately 5,000 pounds of food, and serving over 1300 clients for the year. Eileen asked the Board to keep the Helping Hands Pantry Report in Town Hall in case anyone has questions.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - Selectman Nunes ***Moved*** and Selectman D’Angelo ***Seconded*** a motion to approve the Minutes of the Monday, January 8, 2024 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Refunds, Abatements and Transfers:

Motion #2 - Selectman D’Angelo ***Moved*** and Selectman Nunes ***Seconded*** a motion to approve the following Refunds, all for overpayment and allow them to follow their normal course as presented.

Refunds

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1. Scott Struzinski	69 Blueberry Hill Reserve	\$87.78	Overpaid

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Abatements - KAA & KVFC Annual List:

First Selectman Couture provided the Abatement List in the Board’s packet. Director of Finance Regolo reported that the people owning property in Town get the maximum amount of \$2,000 off their tax bill and the people that don’t own property or land would get the money in the form of a stipend. Discussion of what the maximum allowed per name on the list took place. Nancy Gorski provided input that this started as an incentivized program that the Town was working towards to encourage young people to come into the Fire Department to continue to volunteer but at the same time to retain older volunteers to continue to serve. The stipends were brought in to support people who didn't have real property in Town. The qualifications and the abatements are managed by the Fire Department and Ambulance Association in conjunction with the Assessor's office.

Motion #3 - Selectman Nunes *Moved* and Selectman D’Angelo *Seconded* a motion to accept the Abatements as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Transfers: None.

Budget:

Director of Finance Regolo reported that she cleaned up the status of the ARPA Funds Projects creating an Exhibit which shows the name of the project, the amount that was approved by the Town and if the Town spent the funds or not. Regolo also reported on proposed closeouts for projects that came in under. Regolo advised that the Board of Selectmen agreed to allocate assigned funds towards any shortfalls that the Eric Auer Multi Use Baseball Field Project might have, stating it already went through the Board of Finance, just needs to go to Town meeting for approval. If there are any funds remaining that the Multi Use Field Project doesn’t utilize or that can't be utilized before 2026, Regolo will suggest to the Board that the remaining money be applied against Capital Projects and/or roads for the year and bring it to Town meeting. Lastly, Regolo gave an update that requests are coming in for next year’s Budget and she will be ready to look at numbers in early February.

2024 Appointments:

First Selectman Couture reviewed the 2024 Appointment List with the Board. Selectman Nunes brought forth to the Board’s attention that the Sustainable CT Committee is without Majority representation, noting he is unsure if the Committee can move forward to hold meetings. Nunes

further spoke about the challenge the Town faces to find Candidates to fill open positions, and appreciates Thomas Hogarty willingness to serve on the Sustainable CT Committee. The Board had further discussion about the number of members on the Sustainable CT Committee and the Republican vacancy is due to Walt Adametz's retirement.

Motion #4 - Selectman Nunes **Moved** and Selectman D'Angelo **Seconded** a motion to approve the List of 2024 Appointments with Terms as presented below:

Anthony Louis Gentile (U) - Emergency Management Term 01/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

Margaret I. Tobelman (D) - Committee on Aging 01/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

Thomas W. Hogarty (D) - Sustainable CT 01/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

Tage A. Carlson (R) - Emergency Management 01/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

Ethan Daniel Drain (U) - Open Burning Official 01/1/2024 - 12/31/2024

Chris Robert Smalley (U) - Park & Recreation 01/1/2024 - 12/31/2026

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Department Reports:

First Selectman Couture reported that he is working to fill Walt Adametz's Foreman position as quickly as possible. Couture noted the position will be posted externally tomorrow and the posting will be up for approximately two weeks, conducting interviews thereafter. The Tax Collector/Clerk's Office Floater position was also briefly discussed.

Old Business:

Permitting Software – OpenGov.

First Selectman Couture brought back to the Board for approval the Permitting Software - OpenGov. to be implemented in the Town Hall.

Motion #5 - First Selectman Couture **Moved** and Selectman Nunes **Seconded** a motion to Award the bid to OpenGov for the Permitting Software and to send the additional cost of \$19,892 to Town Meeting, funded from the Capital Account, to cover the total cost of \$29,892 for the system setup.

Discussion - Nunes thanked Couture for his thorough work with the financials. Discussion took place about the other Software companies not being compatible with the Assessor's office. OpenGov would be an efficiency savings for the Town. Training setup, recorded training sessions, and full access to their University if questions arise would be included.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Traffic Safety:

First Selectman Couture reported that Traffic Safety will continue to be scheduled on the Agenda for the second half of each month due to speeding continuing to be a high concern in Town. Couture noted moving into the Budget season that he is looking at either adding an additional Resident State Trooper in order to patrol more in Town or adding two Public Works positions which would be able to help put up speed spys and move them in different locations around Town, hopefully having a reduction in the speed that is occurring. Couture will get an update on the parts for the Traffic Safety Camera that was broken on Route 80 a few months back, and will report back to the Board. Couture further reported that there are grants available for traffic studies, especially in areas of most concern (main sector of Route 80/81 and Green Hill Road and Roast Meat). Selectman Nunes suggested trying to obtain the data out of the speed spy cameras in order to report the data back to the Town to see if placement of the speed spy is producing results. Further discussion took place about seeking State grant money and reaching out to Town of Madison Police Chief Jack Drum to gather more information regarding the traffic safety studies.

Committee on Aging:

Chair Gay spoke about the Committee on Aging's charge and one of their first priorities the Committee had identified was to get an outreach program to identify the needs of Seniors. A Survey was put together consisting of 13 questions: Communication Issues, Health, Recreation, Resources, Programs, Housing, Ecominics, Employment and a Senior Center. Chair Gay reviewed the Survey process, total responses received, as well as the reported concerns that the Committee put in a Prioritized List based on the percentage of Seniors that said yes. These were: Housing and Taxes, Health/Safety, Recreation/Activities, Senior Center/Community Center, Nutrition/Food, Socialization/Loneliness/Fuel Assistance/Rent Rebate/Employment Opportunities A Concern, Need Assistance Navigating Medicare/Medicaid, Help with Smartphones, Computers, Communicating with Others, Transportation to Doctors and Shopping and Issue. Chair Gay further reported that the Beechwood Community had additional concerns and she will be meeting with the Community in a few weeks to address those and go over the Survey results. Chair Gay will set up separate meetings with the Regional School District 17 Recreation Committee, Youth & Family Services and River Valley Transit. Chair Gay stated that the Committee's priority is addressing communication and developing an outreach that will target all Seniors (Newspapers, Websites, and possibly putting together a Newsletters) all of which the Committee is actively pursuing. Chair Gay left the Board with the Comments regarding Housing/Taxing issues. Lastly, Chair Gay stated that when the Committee was formed, and until such time as the Town Meeting establishes an Ordinance, she is hopeful that at one of the future Board of Selectmen's meetings, the Board will make the Committee of Aging into a Commission. Chair Gay thanked the Board for all they have done thus far and for their

continued support, and for Nancy's Administration for establishing the Committee. Lastly, Chair Gay reported 60 years and over defines a Senior in Town and there are 2,173 Seniors based on the information they received in the Registrar of Voters.

*****The Combined Results from the RiverCog/Online and Paper Survey is attached to the Minutes.*****

BOE Master District Plan Discussion:

First Selectman Couture reported that the RSD17 Board of Education presented on January 18th their plans for a more robust Capital Improvement plan regarding the High School. The Board provided their input on the District's proposed short term, medium and long term options and costs associated with the possible renovations of the District schools including Bond terms, and possible State reimbursement.

Public Comment:

- Nancy Gorski commented that she spoke with the Guidance Office at the HKHS, and in her first year trying to get people to do Community Service she received zero response. Gorski's suggestion to the Committee on Aging is to get a small group of students who are interested in doing the landscaping/construction type of work in the future.
- Eileen Blewett commented on several items: 1) Eagle Scouts are looking for projects this Winter noting the Committee on Aging could look into possibly partnering with them to build benches; 2) Committee vacancies - in terms of the Sustainable CT Committee, Eileen commented that it is concerning to her that this Committee has no majority party representation, and questioned if they can meet and if the Board needs to advise the Committee of that, possibly providing the Committee with a new charge. Eileen will look into finding potential candidates willing to serve on this Committee. Eileen also commented that she wished all Committees in Town did their charge like the Committee on Aging; 3) School Capital - Eileen inquired what percentage of the Town falls into the assessed value of \$280,000; 4) The \$10M that was spent on the High School projects, Eileen feels that there should have been meetings set up in terms of the tracking of \$10M and feels that if those funds couldn't be properly managed, how could the \$150M be tracked. Eileen commented on how they are still waiting on funds to come in from the State reimbursement.
- Richard Pleines commented on several items: 1) He suggested using the leftover ARPA funds for the OpenGov setup; and 2) He was concerned when he did a walk through of the High School, feeling it was intentionally left in a state of disrepair. He feels the repairs are more cosmetic in nature, and there are grants available for things like the HVAC systems. Richard feels the schools should be shifted around, noting the elementary schools should become the Town Campus instead of spending funds on a new High School. Lastly, Richard stated how Seniors are 50% of the taxpayers of the Town and feels that this is a heavy burden to put on them.
- Wayne Linsley inquired about the open Foreman position and asked timewise when the external posting will be completed and where it will be posted.

Selectmen's Comments:

Eric Nunes -

- Nunes thanked Joan Gay for shining a light on Seniors as well as the needs of Seniors and thanked the Board for a positive meeting and the Community for providing their feedback.

Joel D'Angelo -

- D'Angelo thanked Joan Gay for a concise but thoughtful informational report. He stated he might not have all the answers for her right now, however, remains committed to working with her and the Committee, as well as the Constituents. D'Angelo would love to meet with her and the Committee at any time and offered his hand to help.

First Selectman's Comments:

Eric Couture -

- Couture echoed the comments of Selectmen D'Angelo/Nunes regarding Joan Gay and thanked her for all she has done on the Committee on Aging.
- Couture will be meeting on Friday with GZA, Rob Albert from the Schools, one of the Town Engineers, Ryan Brenann, the Santarian for the Town and DEEP via phone to discuss the filtration system and the design. This is regard to the waste water from the reverse osmosis system they want to install on the Town Campus noting they don't want to put the salt water back into the ground.
- Couture is meeting with RiverCOG on Wednesday along with Joe Courtney and other Legislator Leaders at the State Level to discuss how the State Government is spending money and handling taxes.
- Couture met Friday with Deep River's First Selectwoman at Town Hall and discussed what opportunities are available for Killingworth to work with the Department of Transportation on what Grants and funding are available.

Adjournment: First Selectman Couture *Moved* to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia

Clerk