

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the May 16, 2023 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Bob Yamartino called the regular meeting to order at 9:00 PM. Bob Yamartino, Carol Bufithis and Jim Irish were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to approve the agenda, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

A member of the public stated that she did not feel that dirt bikes should be a priority for police and people should not be calling 911, but rather the non-emergency number. Bob Yamartino explained that when someone dials the trooper's office and they are not there, it immediately switches to 911 dispatch. She then added that Jon Brayshaw's granddaughter rides her quad back and forth on West Street and asked if she should call that in. She also mentioned that Alan Brayshaw's golf cart goes on the road up to 10 times a day and does not have a flag on it that is required by Connecticut state law. Mr. Yamartino stated that he was only suggesting people call 911 about dirt bikes and quads that are going at excessive speeds and running stop signs. He added that they are looking to create an ordinance regarding dirt bikes and quads. Bob Yamartino explained that citizens are always welcome to call the police if they see someone breaking the law, but he will reach out to let Mr. Brayshaw know he has received a complaint. She added that she noticed a video camera pointing into her bedroom and bathroom and she will speak to the trooper tomorrow. She has had an ongoing issue with all of this for years and it is not getting any better.

Bob Yamartino stated that he has spoken to different members of the Brayshaw family and they stated that they would address the issue with the lights, but the member of the public noted that they have not done so. She has also talked with an attorney and has some good options which

would involve the town as well, but she did not want to go that route. Mr. Yamartino offered to get all parties together to discuss this.

Public Communications

Bob Yamartino stated that, as of Monday, the eviction at Ross Road is ongoing. He has instructed the town crew to not enter the building if it is not safe.

Joint Meeting June 20th for “Middlefield’s Future” - plan agenda/notifications

Bob Yamartino noted that they received a complaint during tonight’s earlier meeting that it may not have been noticed properly but FOI stated that what was done was okay. He will post the notification of the “Middlefield’s Future” meeting multiple times. Carol Bufithis added that she is more than willing to reach out to various board chairmen to let them know of the meeting, but Mr. Yamartino noted that they will be sending a letter to each of them, hopefully this week.

Jim Irish would like to open the June 20th meeting as a working session, with everyone contributing. He proposed to start with a list of possible projects, followed by input from everyone. Carol Bufithis added that the boards and commission members will need time to think about all of it after the meeting as well. Jim Irish felt that there may be some friction about whose domain each project falls under. Bob Yamartino felt that this meeting is just the beginning of the process.

Registrar of Voters Proclamation and Early Elections

Bob Yamartino explained that they will hold a luncheon on Friday, May 26th to celebrate Barbara-Jean DiMauro’s 24 years of service to the town as Registrar of Voters and they will notify both the Democratic and Republican Town Committees. The three members of the Board of Selectmen signed the proclamation.

Jim Irish sent the Secretary of State a note expressing the board’s opinion about early voting and she responded within 30 minutes. It was explained that there had been a bill for early voting by absentee ballot in the legislature two years ago that failed. The current discussion about early voting is only about in-person voting. The legislature can reconsider the addition of early absentee ballots at a later time. For now, they will have to run some in-person early voting. Bob Yamartino worried about who would run early voting and where it will happen.

Finance Director Search Update

Jim Irish explained that they have now received three resumes for the position and Bob Yamartino suggested they discuss this in Executive Session. Mr. Irish indicated to the

candidates that the interviews would probably take 45 minutes, leaving the committee 15 minutes to talk about each interview.

Notice of Recent Appointments - Description of Remaining Openings/Appointments

Bob Yamartino stated that Judi Rand has provided a list of all boards and commissions and felt that they really need to double down their efforts for the Conservation Commission. There are now four candidates for Planning and Zoning, including Kathy Weber, Sue McNamara, Bob Bascom and James Caramanello. Mr. Yamartino will reach out to Ken Hinsch to be sure he'd like to continue on the commission. Carol Bufithis noted that several members of the commission have terms expiring in December. It was agreed to interview candidates for P&Z on June 8th. Bob Yamartino suggested they invite Jan Wojas to participate in the interviews.

Selectmen/Selectwoman Reports

a. Cell Tower Update

Bob Yamartino reported that a conference call was held with SBA, Bob Yamartino, Jim Irish, Al Rusilowicz and attorneys from both sides. They have reached agreement on all items except two, including the dollar amount, the term and some of the particulars. Two items remain but they may be doable as well.

b. Other

Bob Yamartino reported that a new sergeant will be appointed to be in charge of all Resident Troopers and he would like the Board of Selectmen, Rob Poturnicki and Peter Tyc to meet with them.

Mr. Yamartino explained that the Resident Trooper can pull someone over for being on a dirt bike, fine them and may also impound the vehicle. The owner would then have to pay a charge to get the bike back. The proposed ordinance suggests a \$1,000 fine for a first offense, \$1,500 for a second offense, \$2,000 for a third offense. Mr. Yamartino has notified the barracks that no further offenses in Middlefield can be issued a warning. Under Connecticut state statute, an unregistered vehicle being driven on the road by an unlicensed driver warrants a fine. The town's fines can be set at a town meeting. There is also a provision for forfeiture of the vehicle.

Carol Bufithis asked how the public will be notified of this ordinance and Jim Irish explained that it will be done by town meeting. Bob Yamartino does have some remaining questions about the proposed ordinance. He added that there will be a public hearing before the town meeting. Discussion continued about the damage being done by dirt bikes. Mr. Yamartino will forward the proposed ordinance to Matt Willis for his review and the board will discuss this again at the next meeting.

Jim Irish mentioned that the Fire House Building Committee would like to hire a grant writer. He also noted that he attended the first regional housing committee meeting with RiverCOG, with at least 16 communities represented. They are asking for a representative and an alternate from each town. He noted that many of the representatives were zoning people, building officials or land managers.

Carol Bufithis asked why Randy Bernotas needs an office and Bob Yamartino explained that he is the Wetlands Enforcement Officer and reviews any projects that come into town. Ms. Bufithis wondered if Mr. Bernotas would be interested in the regional housing committee, but Mr. Yamartino felt that that was not really his role. Bob Yamartino added that Jerry Russ has been taking a lot of enforcement action.

Mr. Irish felt that this commission is a valuable thing to stay well-connected with other towns. Bob Yamartino added that there has been an influx of developers interested in property in Middlefield and wondered if there were incentives available for affordable housing. Mr. Irish will forward that question to the coordinator of the commission.

Adjournment

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First