

Received 9/18/2023
11:45 am
Tonya Hogan, TC

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the September 5, 2023 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Bob Yamartino called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Carol Bufithis and Jim Irish were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

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

Public Comment

None.

Public Communications

Bob Yamartino has had additional followup about putting a speed bump on West Street which will be discussed later in the meeting. He has also received inquiries regarding easements.

Approval of Minutes of Selectmen Meetings

- a. May 16, 2023 - regular meeting
- b. August 7, 2023 - regular meeting
- c. August 17, 2023 - special meeting

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to approve the above-listed minutes, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Boards and Commissions

- a. Conservation Commission
- b. Inland Wetlands Commission Members
- c. Other

Carol Bufithis reported that there are two people interested in Inland Wetlands and one person interested in the Conservation Commission. Bob Yamartino may also have one or two people for the Conservation Commission and is still working on WPCA. Carol Bufithis will ask people to come to the next meeting on September 19th, but it is Durham Fair week. Bob Yamartino felt it could be delayed until the October 2nd meeting. Ms. Bufithis reviewed that there are four vacancies on Inland Wetlands (three being for alternates) and re-appointments and a vacancy on the Conservation Commission. There are two Rockfall vacancies and two reappointments for WPCA. Bob Yamartino will reach out to the Republican Party tomorrow night. Jim Irish asked if they have asked members of ZBA if they want to be reappointed as there are several whose terms are over. Mr. Irish will reach out to the ZBA members, Mr. Yamartino will reach out to WPCA and Inland Wetlands and Ms. Bufithis will reach out to Conservation.

Charter Revision Report

- a. Vote to Send Recommendations to Referendum

Bob Yamartino explained that the board members have all received a redlined copy of the final report and they reviewed each of the suggested changes. After much discussion, a motion was made as follows.

Jim Irish made a motion, seconded by Carol Bufithis, to adopt the recommendations of the Charter Revision Commission's final report dated 8/16/23, and to send to referendum the following three questions: (1) Shall the town adopt the proposed amendment to Section 303B of the Charter changing the office of Town Clerk from an elected position to an appointed position by the Board of Selectman?; (2) Shall the town adopt the proposed amendment to Section 303B of the Charter changing the office of Tax Collector from an elected position to an appointed position by the Board of Selectmen?; (3) Shall the town adopt the remaining proposed amendments to the Charter contained in the Charter Revision Commission's final report which was accepted by the Board of Selectmen on August 5, 2023? Motion carried unanimously.

Jim Irish felt that they will need an item-by-item list showing what changes were made from the original document. Bob Yamartino didn't feel that would be difficult to do, but wasn't sure he would want an itemized list. It was agreed to publish the final report with the revisions.

The Board of Selectmen took a break at this point in time.

West Street Speed Hump

Bob Yamartino explained that they received a petition signed by a number of residents of West Street who requested that a speed bump be placed on the road because they have found it to be very dangerous when walking. Mr. Yamartino reviewed that after the last request they had for this, they decided they would hold a public hearing to get input from residents. Mr. Irish felt that the speed bump that was installed on Lake Road results in people slowing down for the speed bump, but speeding back up again within 100 yards. Many people use West Street as a cut-through. Mr. Yamartino has also asked the Resident Troopers to monitor the area which they have done, but they have yet to see anybody speeding but they will ticket anyone who does. They are also using a radar gun while they sit there. Jim Irish suggested the use of traffic cameras and Carol Bufithis felt that more signage is important. It was decided to hold a public hearing on this issue.

Jim Irish made a motion, seconded by Carol Bufithis, to schedule a public hearing for a speed bump on West Street on September 19, 2023 prior to the Board of Selectmen meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Community Center Rental Fees

Bob Yamartino explained that a prior Board of Selectmen had adopted a set of fees for the rental of the Community Center and if a nonprofit wanted to use it, they could. If they held an event where they charged admission, there was a modest fee. Commercial entities did have to pay a rental fee. Recently, a nonprofit wanted to use the Community Center and Mr. Yamartino wanted to discuss the fees with the board. The current fees do not even cover janitorial expenses.

Mr. Yamartino felt that they could discuss this at the next meeting.

"Middlefield's Future" - survey results to date

Bob Yamartino noted that Jim Irish has done a great job summarizing the results of the survey and they are trying to get a cover letter together to publicize them. It was agreed to schedule the next meeting for September 28, 2023. Mr. Irish will get the results of the survey to the boards and commissions before the meeting. Carol Bufithis suggested a backup date of Tuesday, October 3, 2023.

Selectmen/Selectwoman Reports

a. Draft Anti-Blight Ordinance status

Jim Irish explained that Meriden's plan is to have everyone keep everything in good repair and to rely on the blight ordinance for any notifications. Mr. Irish felt that Middlefield could have a property maintenance and anti-blight regulation which extends the timeline for engagement of the property owner with a town official. Bob Yamartino reviewed that they had had a town meeting where zoning enforcement rules were adopted regarding environmental hazards and zone violations. He felt that, given what they have seen on various properties, they would get a lot of support for this and people would not want to allow extended timelines.

b. Lake Shore Drive Culvert Status

Bob Yamartino reported that he signed a letter of substantial completion today which basically confers the liability for the bridge and the road to the town. There are a few items on the punch list that do not affect safety. Some landscaping also still needs to be done and they hope to keep it as maintenance-free as possible. Both Carol Bufithis and Jim Irish have received positive comments. Mr. Yamartino summarized that the project was finished and ahead of schedule and within 2 to 3 percent of budget.

Bob Yamartino also noted that they did not take the lowest bid on the tree contractor because the lowest bidder's references were not favorable. The company that was chosen had done most of their work in the Waterbury area but came highly recommended. Mr. Yamartino was also very impressed with the company who installed the guardrails.

c. Other

None.

Executive Session

Carol Bufithis made a motion, seconded by Jim Irish, to go into Executive Session to discuss some personnel policy issues. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board of Selectmen returned from Executive Session at 9:15 PM. No motions were made nor votes taken. Discussion focused around personnel management and resources that may or may not be available. It was agreed to pursue contracting HR resources to assist the town moving forward.

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 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
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