

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the August 5th, 2019 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Ed Bailey, Dave Burgess, were present, Bob Yamartino was running late.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Ed Bailey requested to eliminate agenda item #7 "Approve agreement for shared Town Planner (Durham & Middlefield)" as it has not been finalized yet.

Ed Bailey made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion carried.

Public Comment

A member of the community who did not identify herself before speaking shared her strong objection to the shared Town Planner. Firstly, she felt that sharing the planner is an inherently unequal position as the town of Durham wants several other things from this position such as a Zoning Enforcement Officer and Inland Wetlands Agent in addition to planning services. She went on to state that this position offers full medical and retirement benefits which is not offered to any other part time employees of the town. She then sited an example from many years ago in which she said that benefits such as this had cost the town a lot of money. She questioned how the town would be able to deny the same benefits to other part time employees. She continues by siting minutes from Durham's Planning and Zoning department meeting held 3/20/19, she noted Mr. Bailey and the Middlefield Planning and Zoning Chair attended, where different options were discussed on how the towns should proceed with the shared planner position. She stated that Mr. Colegrove didn't split his time equally between the two towns, it was said that Mr. Colegrove spent approximately 75% of his time in Durham. She

then inquired how the time for the new planner would be split and who would prorate costs of benefits if it is not equal. Secondly, she pointed out that the Middlefield Town Charter states that the Planning and Zoning Commission should be picking the planner and from a financial perspective CME Engineering sent a letter of interest in the planning position with their consulting services department. She said that they are a professional firm and came recommended by our current Land Use Attorney who thinks very highly of the firm. She said that this company does planning for the towns of Essex and Clinton. The firm also maintains benefits for their staff (clearing up her first issue) which would cost the town less money. She pointed out that we already share DMIAAB and the School Board with Durham and she does not feel it would be a benefit to the residents of Rockfall and Middlefield to share more services with Durham especially something so inherently unequal.

Marianne Corona then spoke. Unfortunately, Marianne's voice is very soft and the recording was inaudible, therefore her comments could not be transcribed.

Nelson Prue of 94 Main St. Rockfall then began to speak. He said that since Memorial Day there has been overflow from Wadsworth Falls and State park as well as the Meadow's property in his back yard and that he's seen many people swimming in "No Swimming" areas. He went to the park to speak with an officer regarding the problem and the officer said "we're overloaded down here and we can't do anything" and told Mr. Prue to contact the first selectman.

Ed Bailey stated that DEEP is unresponsive to the issues with Wadsworth. Ed has assigned overtime to our troopers to handle parking issues along Main Street, Cherry Hill and the Meadow's property but the sheer influx of cars is difficult to handle. The only response that the DEEP has given is that they don't have the resources. Ed said that he met with the site manager of Wadsworth State Park along with a member of the DEEP Environmental Police who explained to Mr. Bailey that they would not go into the park to enforce regulations. Dave Burgess then commented on the hygiene issues that are occurring as the park is full to capacity and there aren't sufficient restrooms or port-o-potty's for people to use, especially since people stay there all day, and that it's terribly unsanitary for park goers as well as surrounding neighbors, not to mention the amount of garbage that is left behind once the park is closed.

Ann Zawacki from Hubbard Street then said that the park goers are using St. Colemans church for parking and she has witnessed some people going a few steps into the woods and going to the bathroom in full view from the road. Ann wondered why many of the people using the park are coming from New York and New Jersey and asked if it was possible to find out who is promoting this small park. Ed replied by saying if you search the "Top places to swim in CT" that it does mention Wadsworth State Park and unfortunately the park becomes full and closes so the people seek other places to go which includes the falls area. Ann went on to say that she's spoken to people from other states and they say they go to the falls because they've been dropped off there as part of a bus tour.

Ed explained that the town put a stop to the bus issue several years ago and this is the first he's heard of it since then.

Marianne Corona spoke again regarding the issues at the park she mentioned her involvement with lobbying for port-o-potty's at the park and possibly parking people who want to hike the trails at Memorial School. Again, her comments were very difficult to hear clearly.

The next public comment was from the same woman who spoke earlier regarding the shared town planner and did not identify herself. She spoke regarding agenda item #6 "approve corrected Board of Finance FY19 year-end transfers for Town Meeting. She states that she saw the estimated cost of \$27,000 for the sanitarian but that the Health District said they are providing Lee Vito's services which she said is according to the State of CT website for Public Health. She continued to say that the Health District should be paying this \$27,000 rather than the town and she felt the whole thing was very irregular. She said if these monies were due for the period that ended on June 30th this should've been before then, not as part of the 2019-2020 budget.

Mr. Bailey addressed her comment briefly by saying this is not being handled by the 19-20 budget, it is a final transfer for the 18-19 budget. The town officially joined the Plainville – Southington Health District on January 1st and they wanted to keep Lee Vito on for about two months, which they did. Since Lee Vito was already an employee of the town the town continued to pay him and the Health District paid the town the differential funds of \$7400 and that is why the line item ran over. This line item is offset by funds coming in from the Health District. Mr. Bailey also noted that the town received a grant for joining the district of \$15,000 which is not reflected in those numbers because they are on the revenue side of the equation.

Next the same unidentified woman continued to ask about Agenda item 8 "Approve a lease to permit installation of Emergency Communication Equipment on the SBA Cell Tower located on Town property". She asked if the tower site was sold to which Ed replied "no" and she continued by asking why we are going to lease the site which she read a description of. She then said it has always been a point of contention because Mr. Brayshaw and previous administrators who wanted to sell the ground the tower sits on, she said that this seems to indicate that we're leasing back space.

Dave Burgess stated that this is for a building and space on the tower.

Ed Bailey then explained that SBA has a ground lease as they have facilities placed on the ground as well as on the tower. The town has requested use of the facilities and SBA requires the town to enter into a lease agreement with them to install Emergency Equipment on the tower and enable is to use one of the shelters. Ed said that the town is not selling anything, not the land under the tower, we are only entering into a business agreement with the current lease holder of the tower as they will not permit us to install Emergency Equipment on the tower or to use the shelter without the lease agreement.

Adjournment

Ed Bailey made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to adjourn, to a later date, the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya Hogan

Tonya Hogan
Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes Approved _____

Confirmed by _____

