

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the August 12th, 2019 ****Special Meeting****

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the Special Meeting to order at 6:36 PM. Ed Bailey, Dave Burgess, and Bob Yamartino were present

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

Marianne Corona was present and voiced some concern regarding water and sewer at Powder Ridge and provided a copy of a letter about concerns.

She then stated that she and Ed had met with a prospect for the Town Planner position and provided a brochure and letter from the planning company. She explained that she doesn't like that the job opportunity ad in the newspaper directs people to apply to the First Selectwoman of Durham, she said Middlefield really needs our own planner. She told the board for their information that the Durham Planning and Zoning Commission voted unanimously that they wanted their own planner.

Marianne continued by saying one of the things she likes about hiring the planning service is that they attract a lot of grant money which would help the town. She urged the board to go with the planning service.

Mr. Bailey responded by saying that the Administrations of both Durham and Middlefield feel we would be well served by a shared staff planner. He said that the towns have had a consulting planner for the past 30 years and they served both towns very well. He continued to say that the plan is to provide a fulltime job, split between town towns. The town would only pay for hours the planner spends in Middlefield. Ed continued by saying that Marianne is correct, the town is short on staff. He then said that this engineering firm would only cover one day a week as apposed to having a staff member at 20 hours per week. He said that the individual that fills this position will not only be doing planning work but will be pursuing grants, will help with economic development and assist with supervising and running the Land Use

Department. He stated that the Durham Planning and Zoning would like to have a fulltime planner however, budget constraints only allow for 20 hours per town. He continued by saying that having a shared position will hopefully allow for us to have a highly qualified candidate that we can present a decent wage and benefits to.

Dave Burgess mentioned that a comment from the public was made at a previous meeting that the previous planner spent 75% of their time in Durham. Ed then said that while that comment was made in reality in the last year our planner worked for Middlefield about 200 hours which is far from a 20 hour a week job. Ed reiterated that we do need the staff.

Marianne then reviewed all of the functions that CME has provided for the Town of Essex since 2008. She reviewed what our town had spent on a planning service during the purchase of Powder Ridge in 2013 which was \$44,836. At this time the town fire whistle began to sound and obscured this portion of the recording.

Ed responded to Marianne by saying the functions she listed are what the town planner would provide to our town. Ed explained that the feedback that he has gotten from the Planning and Zoning commission in Middlefield is that they want an individual on staff. Ed then pointed out that the planner would be with us on a regular basis rather than just one day a week and a consultant would not provide the same service.

Marianne continued to state that the planning service would be with us for one full day a week and attend all required meetings and that they wouldn't just be a consultant.

Mr. Bailey felt that this discussion was getting repetitive.

Dave Burgess commented that he would like to get involved with helping to get portable restrooms back at Wadsworth park and asked for contact information from Marianne. Ed stated that he would be discussing Wadsworth Park during his Selectman's Report.

Marianne reiterated that she would really like them to take a look at the recommendations she provided.

Ed stated that they have created a panel to select the proper candidate. The panel includes the current town planner and the chairman of the planning and zoning commission. Anyone that gets hired will be vetted by the panel and be presented to the planning and zoning commission for acceptance. The commission has expressed how they would like to have someone available to help with issues as they arise.

On a separate topic Marianne offered to provide a handout regarding solar panel installation.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectman Meetings

- a. August 5th, 2019
- b. July 16th, 2019
- c. Revised June 18th, 2019

Bob Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the minutes of August 5th, 2019. Motion carried.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the minutes of July 16th, 2019. Motion carried.

Ed Bailey made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the Revised minutes of June 18th, 2019. Motion carried.

Approve a Lease to permit installation of Emergency Communication Equipment on the SBA Cell Tower located on town property.

Ed gave a quick overview of the agreement and said that the term is 4 years and commencement date is 11/1/2019, rent will be \$1.00 in equal monthly installments. The agreement reviews site description, details of the equipment to be installed and dimensions of the shelter space being rented (249.5 square feet). Ed reiterated from a previous meeting that any time the town enters into a lease agreement it must be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Dave Burgess made motion, seconded by Bob Yamartino, to authorize the First Selectman, Edward P Bailey, to execute an Antenna Site Agreement (Lease) dated June 28th, 2019 between the Town of Middlefield and SBA 2012 TC ASSETS for the purpose of the installation of Emergency Communications at the Tower known as Ste: CT46135-A-05; Middlefield-Jacson Hill Rd. Motion Carried.

Bob thanked Ed for all the work he's done getting this agreement in place as it has been a big challenge and was a long time coming.

First Selectman's Report

Mr. Bailey reported that he's been working with the resident troopers on the ongoing issues at Wadsworth Falls. He said that he feels they have a pretty good handle on the cars being parked along Cherry Hill Rd. There have been some cars towed and unfortunately the crowds have now started to park in other areas such as Janet and Aresco Drive, as well as Memorial School, St. Colemans Church, and behind Trackside Deli. Unfortunately, residents in the area are still disappointed in how overrun the park has become. Mr. Bailey and the troopers are still seeing issues with pedestrians walking in the roadway. Ed met with the new Troop F Commander as well as the Sargent that supervises our resident troopers on the Wadsworth Falls issues and the

commander was going to reach out to his counter-part in E-Con about the ongoing issues. DEEP continues to report that they are understaffed and the Park Rangers are overwhelmed. Discussion continued regarding putting back portable restrooms at the falls. Ed explained that the State removed the picnic tables and port-o-let's a while back to curb the over-usage of the area however, as we have experienced that hasn't helped. DEEP isn't enforcing the rules of the falls area and it's really not up to the troopers to try to go in and enforce the rules. There are only a few weeks left of the summer and Mr. Bailey said that he intends to keep weekend coverage of the park by troopers on overtime. Ed noted that there are two dams along the river where people have been congregating. One resident said that one of the dams is in his back yard and that he saw at least 35 people swimming in the river at the dam. Pete Tyc was notified of the people swimming along the river. In the event of an emergency this could prove difficult for first responders to locate someone in trouble since there are people all over the place and not just in designated areas.

Bob Yamartino questioned if it was possible to have a time restriction on parking at the Falls area. Ed replied by saying the state would have to approve and post the time limit and, of course, there's the issue of who would enforce it. Dave suggested that the police could ticket and tow those in violation however, limiting time at just one of the state parks wouldn't really work. The state typically likes to keep all parks hours uniform. Ed did confirm that troopers have been ticketing and towing when people park inappropriately.

Regarding the town planner position; Ed felt that Marianne is advocating for a particular person and said that she certainly is entitled to do so. Ed feels having our own staff will provide the same functions but be better for the town where staffing is concerned. Ed acknowledged that if we can not find a person to fill this need the town would then have to go to a plan B which could be bringing in a consultant which he feels would be expensive and would not provide the same level of service.

Ed continued by reiterating the details of the funds transfer for the Plainville-Southington Health District as discussed at previous selectman's meetings and the Public Hearing.

He then reviewed the details of the cell tower lease and confirmed that we are not selling the tower or the land under it, we are simply entering into a lease as previous minutes detail.

The Old Indian Trail road closure is set to begin 8/19/19 through 8/23/19 to replace the collapsed culvert. Details of this project are being finalized at this time.

An upcoming drainage project at Lake Beseck will require obtaining some easements from a property owner in the area. Once these are in place construction will begin. Ed explained that an old drainage watercourse that likely dates back to original construction when it was a private community collapsed and must be modified and repaired because if this drainage were to get blocked houses could be washed away with the runoff from the mountain.

Ed said that the Road Survey and Culvert Survey is ongoing. He expects by next budget season he should be able to include repairs in the Capital Budget. Ed shared his thoughts about how other towns list out roads and the cost of repairs to each in their budget and thought that doing

so might help in keeping a schedule and detail the exact cost. Dave felt the detail of road by road should really be kept under a single line item.

Ed stated that he had done a review of the Debt Service and that within 1 to 2 years Powder Ridge will be paid for and the Storm Sewer Project will also be paid for freeing up about \$300,000. He then suggested they analyze how these funds should be allocated i.e. Firehouse, road work, etc.

Bob then commented about the Firehouse renovations and said for what it would cost to renovate the Firehouse could the building possibly be made into a multi floor Town Hall Building housing more departments. Ed said it could certainly be explored but a large project like that would be complicated and would need to be carefully researched.

Ed continued by saying that 7 years out we would have a 1-million-dollar deficit when it comes to ECS Funding so a building project would compound that deficit.

Discussion continued about construction possibilities with the Firehouse. Ed noted that it has always been a challenge having departments in several different buildings and that having all departments in one building would be beneficial for management purposes.

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya Hogan

Tonya Hogan
Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes Approved _____

Confirmed by _____

