

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

REVISED Minutes of the February 3, 2020 Regular Meeting
**italic denotes revision*

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM. Ed Bailey, Bob Yamartino, and Carol Bufithis were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Add Item 7.a. Approval of Valley Shore Emergency Communications Agreement

Robert Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

a. January 21, 2020

In the "Habitat for Humanity" section, correct the definition of "A.L.I.C.E." to Asset Limited, "Income Constrained", Employed

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2020 Board of Selectman Meeting as amended. Motion carried.

171 Hubbard Street sale to Habitat for Humanity. Approval of sales agreement and set Town Meeting Date

Discussion to Approve the Purchase and Sale Agreement pending final changes and approval by Town Counsel for the sale of 171 Hubbard Street to Habitat for Humanity for the amount of \$53,424.00 and send question of the sale to a Town Meeting on February 18th, 2020 as read into record and per attached.

Ed Bailey made a motion, second by Robert Yamartino, to approve actions as stated regarding the sale of 171 Hubbard Street. Motion carried.

Discussion of Memorandum of Understanding for Municipal Solid Waste Disposal – Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority

Ed was recently appointed to the board for MIRA which is made up mostly of First Selectman and Mayors from around CT. The issue MIRA is currently facing as discussed in previous meetings is that the facility is extremely outdated and in dire need of reconstruction. Estimated costs for this reconstruction are in the neighborhood of about \$333 Million. The intention is to have towns using the facility sign a new 30-year contract that will supersede our current contract, which expires in 2027, and result in an increase to the tipping fee over the next several years. The town currently pays \$82 per ton and that will eventually reach \$145 per ton. Signing on to the new contract will allow for the reconstruction project to be bonded. It was noted that recyclables will be included in the tipping fee. If MIRA recovers other items such as scrap metal which can be sold separately it could result in a rebate back to the town. There is the chance of additional fee increases in the event of a major emergency or disaster at the plant. The option to use other trash to energy plants within our state is an option but not a cost effective one.

Ed explained that approximately 3,400 tons of trash come from Durham & Middlefield combined. He noted that after a study they had done of DMIAAB there was a decline in the amount of trash being deposited at the facility which could be due in part to closer attention being paid to who was using the facility.

The discussion continued around the fee structure and socialization of the trash transportation costs. Bob expressed concern over the fact that some towns don't have to travel as far to haul trash to a MIRA site as other towns and felt that the distance to the MIRA site should be taken into consideration when determining the transportation costs on a town by town basis. Ed pointed out that the town's high percentage of recycling helps reduce the amount of municipal solid waste being deposited at MIRA which in turn saves us money. Carol advocated for composting as a way to manage waste as well. Ed continued the conversation detailing

different options for the State to get involved to reduce costs to the towns including guaranteeing the bonding for MIRA as well as providing a power purchase agreement.

Approval of Valley Shore Emergency Communications Agreement

Valley Shore is the organization that provides our area with emergency dispatch services. This agreement is a 25-year contract obligation for \$58,142.00 per year with incremental increases and the fee is based on our population as part of the budget. This agreement does provide for an Opt-Out option if we find that the fee has increased too much.

Bob Yamartino made motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to Authorize First Selectman, Ed Bailey, to execute the Valley Shore Emergency Communications Contract per Terms and Conditions in presented "Agreement Between Valley Shore Emergency Communications Inc. and Town of Middlefield CT."

Discussion on upcoming FY21 Budget

Ed explained that our Grand List is generally finalized with an approximate increase of about \$12M due in part to some business expansions in town as well as sensible Economic Development. This should result in about \$405K in revenue. Bob explained that the school budget is currently in draft form and that with the uncertainty around what will happen with the referendum the Administration is putting together several different budget scenarios which allow for budget increase anywhere from 2.4% to 5.5%. The higher increase could happen if the Board of Education doesn't get authorization to close John Lyman School. In the event the Board of Education cannot close the school they will immediately need to budget for \$2.4M in Capital Improvements. Bob said that the superintendent is going to put forth her first draft next week and he mentioned that per student costs remain a continued concern.

Ed continued the budget discussion by saying he is looking to go on a budget "diet" since revenue projections are down. Additionally, the state continues to hold back the Town Aid Road funds which is approximately \$197K and we have also not gotten our Municipal Projects Grant from the State of about \$248K which puts us in a very difficult position. Ed noted that by this time last year we had already received 2/3 of that same state funding and as of now we have received nothing. The educational cost sharing funds have come in timely at this point.

Ed stated that some Town Budget line items will increase and others will decrease resulting in the budget remaining flat. He provided the board with a copy of the Town Audit and explained that we ended the year in a surplus due to underspending on some line items which increased our fund balance.

RSD-13 Referendum – Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Mr. Bailey provided a copy of the ballot and explanatory text for the upcoming referendum scheduled for February 11th. Bob pointed out that Absentee Ballots are available in the Town Clerk's office which are available in person only.

Public Safety Radio Communication Equipment Update

Tactical Equipment has been on site working to install the radio equipment in emergency vehicles and the project has been moving along smoothly. Organization and testing still remains to be completed and should be done sometime in March. Tower equipment still needs to be installed.

L.E.D. Streetlight Conversion Update

We are still awaiting the delivery of the lights and once all the lights have been received the vendor will begin installation. Ed noted a link has been placed on our town website to report issues and outages of streetlights to **Red Thread*.

Appointments

- a. Conservation Commission
 - i. Jerry Finch – 01/01/2019 to 12/31/2022 – Fill Vacant Term

Ed Bailey made a motion, second by Robert Yamartino, to approve the appointment to the Conservation Commission. Motion carried

First Selectman's Report

Mr. Bailey reported that he will be attending legislative meetings in the upcoming weeks and will report on what he's learned at the next meeting. He also stated that the State budget will be forthcoming and he will report on that as well.

Adjournment

Carol Bufithis made a motion, second by Ed Bailey, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya Hogan

Tonya Hogan
Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes Approved _____

Confirmed by _____