

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the April 20, 2021 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the meeting to order. Ed Bailey, Carol Bufithis, and Bob Yamartino were present via Zoom.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Bailey added the following agenda items:

14.a DEEP Grant for Boat Ramp Education and Outreach

14.b American Rescue Plan Update

14.c Pending update of the Middletown Transit District (Middletown Area Transit) merger with the Estuary Transit District (9 Town Transit)

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

Public Comment

Jim Irish was present. Justin Strickland was present to speak about the Trolley Trail at Peckham Park. The Trolley Trail was added to the park about a decade ago as a result of an initiative started by Justin's grandfather, RJ Cabelus, as a Lion's Club Member. Mr. Cabelus passed away recently and Justin felt RJ would've wanted someone in the family to be sure that the trail was being taken care of, whether by the Lion's Club, Park & Rec, or local volunteers. Justin felt it would be beneficial to get a group together to remember RJ Cabelus and spruce up the trail. Justin noted Hannah Malcolm's work on connecting the trails in the area and Justin would like to have stops added to the marshy areas where the trail tends to wash out as well as plant flowers by the entrance signage to draw attention to the area. Justin said he thinks one particular area needs attention which is immediately to the left at the entrance to the trail where the remains of an old milk farm lay. While there is some signage to explain what the old cages are, and Mr. Cabelus had felt it important for the historic aspect, it is quite unsightly and Justin wanted to explore the feasibility of cleaning it up and removing the rusty old cages. The members of the Board discussed with Justin different options for cleaning up the area, who could do the work, and the effects on the habitat that has been established there over the years. They also discussed different options for preserving the historical value of the area.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

Minutes were not available at the time of the meeting.

COVID-19 Update

Ed reported that case numbers are trending much lower than projected from March and the third wave is dissipating. He explained that all executive orders will expire on May 20th with the exception of wearing a mask where social distance isn't possible. Businesses will be 100% open, however, Ed explained that the Town Hall could remain open by appointment only due to limited space. In Person meetings will resume as well with the possibility for Hybrid meetings depending on availability of technology.

Ed shared the most recent map depicting COVID cases by town, Middlefield is at about 16 cases per 100,000 and sadly 1 death. Middlefield does have fewer cases than many surrounding towns. Infection rates are expected to continue to decline as more and more people become fully vaccinated.

RSD-13 Update

Speaking on the executive orders expiring May 20th Bob explained that the board has asked their attorneys to draft a policy to allow for board members to attend meetings remotely with potential access by the public. Displays would need to be distributed to those in attendance which could be tricky if members of the public were to attend by phone.

The budget meeting was held and the budget is moving forward as presented.

Bob stated that the board has voted to move forward with presenting Durham and Middlefield with the referendum question of whether or not to close John Lyman school no later than the November election. The board has hired a company to handle communication to the public to be sure the most accurate and updated information is available. In closing Bob said that there will be further discussion on Korn and John Lyman schools at the upcoming Utilization Committee meeting.

Change Annual Town Budget Meeting to Monday, June 7, 2021; as authorized per the Governor's Executive Order 10E.2.h, dated April 6, 2021

Ed gave a quick background on this executive order which allows towns to adopt their budget as late as June 30, 2021.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the Resolution to change the Annual Town Budget Meeting to June 7, 2021; as authorized by the Governor's Executive Order 10E.2.h; dated April 6, 2021.

Adopt Resolution opening new bank account with TD Bank for the purpose of transactions relating to the Old Indian Trail Water System Generator Grant

Mr. Bailey explained that the State of Connecticut is requiring a separate bank account for transactions relating to this grant.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis to approve the resolution to open a new bank account with TD Bank for the purpose of transactions relating to the Old Indian Trail Water System Generator Grant.

Review of proposed draft Zoning Violation Citation Ordinance and Inland Wetlands & Waterway Agency Enforcement Ordinance

The town's current course of action to enforce zoning and inland wetlands regulations when there has been a violation is taking the person violating the regulation to court, making enforcement difficult and expensive. As there is no administrative means of encouraging people to follow regulations the decision was made to adopt ordinances. Ed shared model ordinances for citations with the board that have been reviewed by Town Council and are similar to those used in other towns. He went on to briefly explain how the process would work for both Zoning violations and Inland Wetlands violations. He asked that the board members review these drafts and said that he would provide a final draft at the next meeting.

Community Road Clean Up – Saturday May 1st

Carol was excited to report that the town wide clean up will be held on May 1st. An announcement will appear in the paper and signs will be posted around town. Volunteers will be treated to donuts donated by Lyman's.

Appointments

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the appointments as listed below. Motion carried

- a. Middlefield Housing Authority
 - i. Susan Zingle – Resident Commissioner – Fill Vacancy (Vincent),
Term expires 9/30/2021.
- b. Conservation Commission
 - i. Christopher Hurlburt – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2024, 1/3
 - ii. Steven Wolk – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2024, 1/3
 - iii. David Cekala – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2024, 1/3
 - iv. Thomas Capega – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2024, 1/3
- c. Planning & Zoning Commission

- i. Jan Wojas – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2019 – 12/31/2021, 1/3
 - ii. Scott Wheeler – Appoint as Alternate to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2023
- d. Zoning Board of Appeals
 - i. Michael Janis – Reappoint to Term 05/01/2017 to 04/30/2022, 2/3
 - ii. Peter Neidhardt – Raise Alternate to Regular Member (fill Angello vacancy), Term 5/1/2017 to 4/30/2022
- e. Park & Recreation
 - i. Brian McDermott – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2025, 2/3
 - ii. Frank Wolak – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2020 to 12/31/2024, 2/3
 - iii. Cynthia Sanchez – Correction to Term 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2023, 2/3
 - iv. Christopher Hurlburt – Correction to Term 01/01/2018 to 12/31/2022, 1/3
- f. Inland Wetlands & Watercourses
 - i. Rebecca Adams – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2023, 3/3
 - ii. Dr. James Brown – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2023, 3/3
 - iii. Linda Li – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2023, 3/3
 - iv. Irene Angiletta – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2021 to 12/31/2023, 3/3
 - v. Robert Poturnicki – Reappoint to Term 01/01/2019 to 12/13/2023, 3/3
 - vi. Robert Veeley – Raise Alternate to Regular Member Term 01/01/2020 to 12/31/2022, 1/3

First Selectman's Report

DEEP Grant for Boat Ramp Education and Outreach

Ed reported that the town has received a grant to hire two people to serve as educators at our boat launch at Lake Beseck. The staff will be trained by DEEP and will be providing information and best practices to people using the boat launch from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The staff will be there for education purposes only, they will not serve to enforce any rules at the launch.

American Rescue Plan Update

Middlefield is expected to receive a total of \$430,000.00 in rescue funds directly from the federal government that will be available for use until 2024. The federal government will also be sending funds to Connecticut Counties which will be distributed by the state. Middlesex County is expected to get \$31.5M which translates to a share of \$735,000.00 for the town of Middlefield. The calculation per town is based on population. Ed noted that he is hoping to spend some of the funding on an Economic Development Coordinator. He said that the funds could also be used on infrastructure such as water and sewer or internet and spoke about the possibility of replacing the Brookside Drive pump station.

Pending update of the Middletown Transit District (Middletown Area Transit) merger with the Estuary Transit District (9 Town Transit)

A merger is expected of these two transit districts based on a transit study done by the state of Connecticut. Negotiations took place with the Department of Transportation and the transit boards. One item of note that was agreed upon is that the Department of Transportation will acquire land in Middletown and build a new maintenance facility. Combining the agencies stand to create new employment opportunities as additional staff will be needed. Once the merger is finalized Middlefield would then need to agree by town meeting to join the new merged transit district.

Adjournment

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, 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 _____