

**MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**405 Main Street**  
**Middlefield, Connecticut 06455**

Minutes of the February 7, 2022 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Mr. Yamartino called the meeting to order at 6:39 PM. Bob Yamartino and Jim Irish were present. Carol Bufithis attended by telephone.

Approval of Agenda

Add to: Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen: "b. January 18, 2022 – Regular Meeting"

***Jim Irish made a motion, second by Bob Yamartino, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.***

Public Comment

Alma Elder was present and suggested that meetings such as this one also be offered through Zoom to allow for more members of the community to listen to the information being presented to stay up to date with what is happening throughout the town.

Bob explained that he is currently working on improving our emergency response services and has also created a communications subcommittee to establish a more efficient means to get important information out to residents.

Alice Malcolm questioned if there were ARP funds or other grants available to construct an additional ingress to Lake Beseck. With only one way in and out of the lake area there are concerns if there were a natural disaster or major fire that would require evacuation.

Alice went on to note that there was a significant lack of clear information provided to the residents of Durham and Middlefield regarding the John Lyman Bonding Project. She felt that the wording of the referendum question was confusing and misleading. Discussion continued around the bonding project and the possible outcomes of the referendum scheduled for February 8<sup>th</sup>.

Angela Malia reiterated the need for better communication to residents regarding what is happening with the town. Angela also inquired if the town receives any revenue for the cell tower behind town hall. Jim explained that we do, however, he didn't have exact figures with him.

### Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

- a. December 21, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- b. January 18, 2022 – Regular Meeting

***Jim Irish made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2021, and January 18, 2022 Regular Meetings of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried.***

### Economic Recovery Coordinator

The Economic Recovery Coordinator position will be funded with American Recovery Plan Act funds and will jointly serve Durham and Middlefield. Jim Irish has been working to develop a job description for the position. Jim was in contact with Laura Francis to confirm that Durham would put aside ARP funds to pay for this position's salary over a two-year period.

### COVID Update

Bob reported that he meets regularly with the Health Director for the Plainville Southington Health District. He was pleased to announce that the Omicron variant spike has dropped off almost as quickly as it appeared.

Appointments are still being encouraged when visiting Town Hall or Community Center offices however, when individuals drop by, staff has been able to assist as needed. Bob also noted that we have a good supply of masks on hand at the Town Hall available for those who may need them.

### Budget Update

The First Selectman's budget is due March 1<sup>st</sup>. The grand list has increased and Bob is working to deliver a level if not slightly reduced budget. He hopes to offset the school enrollment swing with a decrease in the undesignated fund to try to hold taxes level. Jim noted that the net taxable grand list rose by 20%. Bob will be presenting his budget to the Board of Finance at a meeting scheduled for March 10<sup>th</sup>.

### ARP Distribution Plan

The distribution plan for Middlefield was approved by the board back in October for the first installment from the government. The next installment will be coming soon. The funds are only to be used for specific needs such as Infrastructure or well-being, however, the Legislature

changed those requirements recently. Funds are now eligible to be used for expenses incurred or loss of revenue due to COVID and that amount can be added to the town general fund. Discussion continued around the projects to be funded when funds would be distributed.

### New Business

- a. Road Survey
- b. Culvert Survey
- c. Railroad Vegetation Control

Road Survey: The town received a draft report from Nathan Jacobson who completed the road survey this past fall of all town roads. The report categorizes the degree of damage of each road and framed a proposal of improvements based on those conditions. They broke out the condition into 5 categories: 1) Full Depth Reconstruction 2) Reclaim and Pave 3) Mill and Pave 4) Chip Seal, Surface Treatment 5) Crack Seal. Jim presented a color-coded map that he created to illustrate which roads fall into those 5 categories. He met with the Highway Foreman to make a rough initial plan which will be addressing roads in the top two categories over the next five years. They will work to figure out the cost of those repairs and how to get them done to incorporate that cost into the future budget. Bob noted that we should expect Town Aid Road Funds from the State as well this year.

Culvert Survey: A review was conducted of every culvert throughout town and aside from the major storm washout of the Lake Shore Drive culvert which is currently being engineered, the worst was noted to be the Strickland Road culvert near Peckham Park. This culvert will likely need to be replaced. Bob explained that a grant opportunity just opened up that would cover 75% of the cost. Discussion was had around the Lake Shore Drive culvert and the timing of completing that repair. Bob described all of the permits required and all of the different agencies that have to be involved with the project.

Railroad Vegetation Control: Bob received a report explaining how the railroad will be controlling vegetation along the railways throughout town. Some herbicide will be used as well as manual trimming or cutting of excessive vegetation.

### First Selectman's Report

Carol discussed the ProAct Card which is a prescription discount card that was distributed several years ago and we still have a large supply available. The card can be used by those who do not have insurance with prescription coverage or in the event a specific drug is not covered by insurance. Carol is working on gathering all of the details on the benefits the card can provide and hopes to get them distributed to residents soon.

Bob has been working through the Firehouse Building contract. There had been some issue with verbiage in the contract that the architect is expected to change. Once the changes are accepted the contract should be signed. Auto Electric Defibrillators (AED) have been installed in both the Town Hall and Community Center and training for staff will be coming soon. The board also discussed vacancies on our boards and commissions.

Executive Session – Compensation and Benefits

*In Recognition of the Extraordinary effort of a Registrar of Voters operating under unprecedented circumstances, the Board of Selectmen hereby authorizes a one-time payment of \$1,500.00 to Barbara-Jean DiMauro.*

***Jim Irish made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the one-time payment as noted. Motion carried.***

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Tonya Hogan*

Tonya Hogan  
Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Confirmed by \_\_\_\_\_