

BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR MEETING
March 6, 2012

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Tuesday, March 6, 2012 in the Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members present: First Selectman Michael Criss, and Selectman Jon Truskauskas.
Absent with prior notice, Selectman Frank Chiaramonte.

Attendees: Don Truskauskas, Attorney Mike Rybak, Wes Seixas, Candace Jones-Pacholski, Christina Emery, Peter Thierry, Janet Burritt, Sal Bonola.

Call to Order

Mr. Criss called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Mr. Truskauskas moved to accept the minutes from the meeting held on February 21, 2012. Mr. Criss seconded. All in favor.

Public Participation

Christina Emery asked who served on the budget task force, if they've looked at the new budget, if they've given any recommendations, and were minutes provided. Mr. Criss explained that he asked some members of the community to look at the budget. There were no formal meetings. It was more of a one on one basis; therefore, there are no minutes.

Appointments and Resignations

A letter from The Historic District Commission recommends Mr. Brian Nedley to serve as an alternate. Mr. Truskauskas moved to approve the appointment of Brian Nedley as an alternate to the Historic District Commission. Mr. Criss seconded. All in favor. Mr. Criss read a letter from Jim Keith announcing he will be moving out of town and will be resigning as the town's Burning Official effective June 1, 2012. He recommends William Rinko as his replacement noting that Mr. Rinko was the burning official before he was. Mr. Truskauskas moved to accept the resignation of Jim Keith and the appointment of William Rinko as the town's Burning Official effective June 1, 2012. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion passed.

Mr. Truskauskas moved to add the following to the agenda: Tax Collector Proposal to Charge Fees Addendum and Region 10 Surplus Funds. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion passed.

New Business

Tax Collector Proposal to Charge Fees Addendum:

The tax collector is requesting a change to the listing of fees previously approved. Following state statute 1-212 the charge for copies shall not exceed fifty cents per page.

Mr. Truskauskas moved to accept the rate adjustment. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion passed.

Region 10 Surplus Funds:

Mr. Criss reported the surplus money of \$517,000 is actually extra money received from special education grants. Burlington is entitled to \$345,718 and Harwinton is entitled to \$171,282 in accordance to enrollment. Mr. Criss asked Dave Fortin with Region 10 to discuss the need to replace the unit ventilators at Lake Guarda School and possibly using the surplus to do so. Mr. Fortin stated that the ventilators are way past their life, motors cannot be bought for them, the filters have to be custom made because they don't make them anymore, and the plastic lines are brittle and deteriorating. He would like to replace the ventilators with the surplus money. He would use his qualified staff to do the installation which will also save taxpayer money. Janet Burritt, a former officer of the taxpayers group, mentioned the group agreed to have surpluses returned to the town and would not like the policy changed. Mr. Thierry and Mr. Criss both think it makes sense to use the surplus to change the unit ventilators with a digital system rather than increasing taxes in the future for the repairs. Mr. Truskauskas made a motion to send to the Board of Finance for consideration, the option to retain a maximum of \$300,000 for full replacement of unit ventilators and designate \$217,000 as revenue for the 2012-2013 budget. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion passed.

Request for Refund of Property Tax:

Mr. Truskauskas moved to approve the following tax refunds- \$127.34 to Susan or Gerald Lapenta and \$1,556.37 to Nicholas Ferguson and Vanessa Ardry. Mr. Criss seconded. Motion passed.

Budget Presentation by First Selectman:

Mr. Criss stated this is a zero based budget and has spent approximately 70 hours a week going line by line and speaking with the departments. Unsuccessful efforts were made to contact Mr. Chiaramonte for his input on the budget. Mr. Criss noted that Mr. Chiaramonte's comments will be heard before budget is finalized. Mr. Criss presented a "soft" budget to the Board of Finance last week and has since made some changes to reflect a .62 per cent increase. The largest costs are fuel and asphalt. Savings will be made on the resident trooper's pay, animal control, and the tax department's mailings. Health insurance has increase so the town is looking for quotes. Contributions to the pension plan always fall short so an adjustment has been made to that. Mr. Criss returned eight budgets that did not meet the criteria. When they are available, they will be added to the budget. The last part of the book shows a paving project in which LOCIP money can be used. Mr. Criss is also looking into a shared small cities grant with the town of Burlington. Mr. Criss would like to address some safety concerns such as the sidewalks at Town Hall and the Library. He noted that the town responded to an application from Pepsico for a community day help project.

Mr. Truskauskas asked Land Use Coordinator, Polly Redmond, to compare building permits taken in 2005 and 2011 and found that permits are down by 56 per cent. Mr. Truskauskas suggested eliminating the part time Land Use Clerk position thereby saving \$9,000 per year. Mr. Criss recommended leaving \$2,000 in that line item to allow for a per diem position. Mr. Truskauskas noted savings can be made by having the town crew mow and plow town owned parking areas rather than contracting it out. Mr. Criss voiced concern over adding more duties to the highway crew. Mr. Truskauskas

tabled the item until he can speak with Mr. Fredsall. Regarding the open position on the highway crew, Mr. Truskauskas recommended hiring two (2) part time people instead of filling the full time position in order to save money. Mr. Criss was not opposed to the idea but would like to speak with Mr. Fredsall first. Mr. Truskauskas made a motion to forward the budget to the Board of Finance pending Mr. Chiaramonte's comments. Mr. Criss seconded. All in favor. Mr. Criss thanked everyone for their hard work on the budget.

First Selectmen's Report

Mr. Criss explained that the town has been awarded a grant through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department to develop a fishing area along the Naugatuck River of which half of the \$40,000 grant has been spent acquiring property. It came to his attention that some reports were missing as a requirement of the grant. The issue of the paperwork has been resolved and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department has agreed to expand the funding by adding \$50,000. Mr. Criss would like to purchase more land in that area and develop and parking area.

Regarding the Harwinton House, Mr. Criss reported that the STEAP grant application that was submitted last fall for the Harwinton House has been rejected. The town is in the process of correcting a budget submitted from the first STEAP grant in order to be reimbursed \$80,000 from the town's surplus. Full reimbursement is expected shortly.

Attorney Rybak's Update on the Ambulance. After lengthy negotiations the LEP (licensed environmental professional) certification has been resolved. We are currently waiting for response from Chartis Insurance. If all goes as expected, a closing should be forthcoming soon.

Correspondence

At the last meeting Mr. Criss requested names as nominees for the position of Town Clerk. The Town Clerk is retiring and her assistant, Debra Sedwick is certified but not an elector of the town which is a requirement. Mr. Criss announced he has received two names and will be speaking with both candidates next week. The position of Assistant Town Clerk is appointed by the Town Clerk and they do not have to be an elector of the town.

Mr. Criss reported that he received a copy of a letter sent by the Historic District Commission to a homeowner on Harmony Hill Road stating the house is a blighted property. Mr. Criss conferred with Attorney Rybak who stated the house is not violating any health codes and is not blight problem. Mr. Criss stated no action is required.

Adjournment

Mr. Truskauskas moved to adjourn at 8:57 p.m. Mr. Criss seconded.

Minutes submitted by: _____
Melissa Santoro