

Disclaimer. Please note, these Minutes have yet to be approved. Check with the department or Town Clerk for updated versions.

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
September 6, 2023**

Present: Norman M. Needleman, First Selectman
Stacia R. Libby, Selectman
Bruce M. Glowac, Selectman

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Selectman Needleman welcomed everyone to the Board of Selectmen in person and remote public access meeting via Zoom.

In attendance: Selectman Norman M. Needleman, Selectman Stacia R. Libby, and Selectman Bruce M. Glowac.

Others in attendance: Tracey Celentano and Kelly Sterner.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Stacia Libby to approve the agenda. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to approve the August 23, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Informational Items, Communications and Correspondence

Mr. Needleman reported that home sales in Town are exceeding the current levels of assessment from the last revaluation ranging from 20% to 100%.

Public Announcements / Comment: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Capital Committee: Mr. Glowac reported the River Road Sidewalk Project is progressing. He also reported the next Capital Committee meeting is scheduled for September 19th.

NEW BUSINESS:

Appointments and Resignations Board and Commissions - None

Board and Commission Vacancies

Conservation Commission – 2 Alternate Members
Park and Recreation Commission – 2 Alternate Members
Gateway Commission – 1 Regular Member
Gateway Commission – 1 Alternate Member

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CT Water's Customer Advisory Council (CAC)

Connecticut Water & Marine Water is asking the Town to appoint a resident of the community who is a customer of Connecticut Water to serve on CT Water's Customer Advisory Council (CAC). The purpose of the council is to enhance communications with their customers and communities. The meetings are held every 3 to 6 months via Zoom. Please let Selectmen Needleman know if you are interested in representing the Town of Essex or call 860-767-4340 x 112 for more information.

Gateway Commission

Selectman Needleman reported he is looking for two representatives, a regular and an alternate for the Gateway Commission. The commission meets once a month on the fourth Thursday at 7 pm at RiverCOG or via Zoom. Meetings typically last between 1 to 2 hours. At the meeting, the commission members review all referrals. Additional information on this commission can be found <https://ctrivergateway.org/about/>. Please let Selectman Needleman know if you are interested in representing the Town of Essex or call 860-767-4340 x 112 for more information.

There was discussion about the possibility of being able to appoint alternates to the Board of Assessment Appeals, by editing the ordinance. The Town Clerk is investigating this possibility.

Open Town Board and Commission positions can be found at https://www.essexct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3116/f/uploads/boards_and_commissions_website_30.pdf

The application to join a Board or Commission can be found at: https://www.essexct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf3116/f/file/application_to_volunteer_for_board_or_commission_fillable_4_13_18.pdf

The Selectmen discussed whether the Board of Assessment Appeals could have alternates. The Selectmen suggested inviting the current board members to an upcoming Selectmen meeting.

American Rescue Plan Funds:

The remaining balance is \$249,840. These funds must be committed by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026.

Selectmen's Meeting Calendar

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to change the 5:00 pm December 6, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting to December 13, 2023. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Hope Partnership – Tax Relief Request

HOPE Partnership is requesting tax relief from property taxes associated with some of their affordable unit properties. The Selectmen invited Tony Lyons, Karla Lindquist, and Jessica Sypher to the Selectmen's meeting this evening.

The Town has received a request to align the tax payment for HOPE Partnership to be like the Essex Housing Authority. The taxes paid by HOPE Partnership are already below 10%, which is what the Essex Housing Authority pays. The Town Assessor Jessica Sypher looked at Statutes for this type of request and this type of tax change would require a local ordinance and a contract between the Town and Hope Partnership.

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Attorney David Royston mentioned that Old Saybrook affordable housing is a different situation. There are some units at 20%, 30%, and 40%. They want to be able to serve people in lower percentages, so that the rent, is based on their income, and the rent could be lowered. There was discussion of the Town considering a tax credit, which could be done by an ordinance. Under the state statute, it must be a non-profit that would get the tax credit. This credit would directly be helping residents.

Karla Linquist, Executive Director of HOPE Partnership stated that in Connecticut the abatements are done under this statute.

Attorney Royston mentioned there is another statute that could also be used – low moderate income – it would allow a town to give an exemption against the tax assessment.

Mr. Needleman requested HOPE Partnership provide the Town with a 1-year pro-forma budget for the following year.

The Selectmen requested that HOPE Partnership make a proposal to the Town that is uncomplicated and to be able to explain where any tax credit will be going and show that it is directly going towards affordable housing.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to table this request until the next meeting. Stacia Libby seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Public Hearing None

Set Town Meeting

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to set a Special Town Meeting for Wednesday, October 4, 2023 at 4:55 pm in Conference Room A. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Public Comment / Announcements:

DG Fitton thanked the Selectmen for their support for Essex Ambulance Association.

SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to adjourn the meeting at 6:14 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria P. Lucarelli