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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
September 20, 2023**

Present: Norman M. Needleman, First Selectman
Stacia R. Libby, Selectman (via Zoom)
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 (via Zoom), and Selectman Bruce M. Glowac.

Others in attendance: Tracey Celentano (via Zoom), Kelly Sterner, Paul Fazzino, Sr., Jeannine Fazzino, and Doug Senn.

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 September 6, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Informational Items, Communications and Correspondence

Mr. Needleman reported that the River Road Sidewalk Project is progressing. The Hubbard Park project plans are also progressing.

Public Announcements / Comment: Emergency Management Day has been postponed due to weather to Sunday, October 15 from 11 am to 3 pm.

OLD BUSINESS:

Capital Committee: Mr. Glowac reported the committee just met and they are keeping all the critical items on the list and they took off non-critical items. There are some things on the list such as the River Road Bridge Replacement and there was discussion on whether to implement solar panels at the Town garage and look at the cost savings. We'd need a plan of action. There was discussion you could take the energy offset and divide it by 5 municipal buildings. There was discussion you could get a tax credit, but how do they give a tax credit to non-taxable entities.

There was discussion of possibly creating a Public Safety Building and moving the police out of the Town Hall Campus to another location.

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The committee discussed remediation for Comstock field washing away during rainstorms. You cannot stop the field from flooding, but you could possibly stop the “flow” and the field washing away.

Another item discussed was upgrades to the dog pound. Mr. Needleman stated the pound meets the current statutory requirements but could do with some upgrading.

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

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 Selectman 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/file/application_to_volunteer_for_board_or_commission_fillable_4_13_18.pdf

American Rescue Plan Funds:

The remaining balance is \$241,084. These funds must be committed by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026.

Kelly Sterner reported the digitalization project is progressing. Land Use personnel have gone through files and removed floor plans, uncashed checks, and copies of drivers’ licenses. 90 boxes of documents were sent out to be scanned so far. The additional costs being requested tonight are for

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the re-preparation of the original files. The Town would like the files returned in the order they were submitted, which is an additional cost.

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to approve and recommend to Board of Finance an additional appropriation in the amount of \$15,000 to be allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds for the digitizing project in the Land Use Department. Stacia Libby seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Merit Service Plan

Paul Fazzino, Sr. stated becoming a firefighter takes a huge amount of time and training. There was discussion that there may be an opportunity of recruiting people who have moved here and are working remotely and who may be available to volunteer.

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.

Non-Profit Organizations – Opioid Settlement Disbursement

To date the Town has received \$13,791.43 for the Opioid Settlement. The Town distributed \$2,271.57 to Tri-Town Youth Services in September, 2022. There is a balance of \$11,519.86 to be disbursed.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve and recommend to the Board of Finance to allocate 75% of the remaining balance to Tri-Town Youth Services and 25% to the Connection. Stacia Libby seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

The Connection and Tri-Town do a great job with their substance abuse programs.

Centerbrook Meeting House

Selectmen Glowac and Libby are waiting for the draft letter of agreement from Campbell Hudson's office. Selectmen Libby and Glowac and the Board of Finance are in support of the possibility of the Town acquiring the Centerbrook Meeting House, but they would like to review the agreement prior to making any decisions.

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 None

Public Comment / Announcements: None

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SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:

America 250th Anniversary

Mr. Needleman reported the Town is starting preparations for the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence which will be held on July 4, 2026. The Town will be working with the Historical Society to create commemorative activities for the event.

Land Use Digitization Project

There was discussion that the project is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2023.

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria P. Lucarelli