

**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  
December 20, 2017**

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

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:**

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Agenda. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** was made by Stacia Libby to approve the December 6 Meeting Minutes. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Informational Items, Communications and Correspondence:**

Director of Finance Kelly Sterner reported that effective December 20, 2017 Citizens Bank is increasing the interest rate paid on the Town's investment account from 65 basis points to 80 basis points. As of the end of November the Town had already earned more than 300% of the annual budgeted amount.

**Public Announcements / Comment:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Capital Committee**

Kelly Sterner reported the Walnut Street Bridge is opening late Friday night, December 22nd. The bridge contractors will be demobilizing the equipment. The guardrails are in and the sidewalk will be completed in the spring. It is anticipated that only one side of the roadway will be open at a time during sidewalk installation. Mr. Glowac thanked Ms. Sterner for a wonderful job on coordinating the bridge project. Mr. Needleman suggested sending this information out to the public via an email blast, Town Facebook page, Town Website, and a press release.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Appointments and Resignations Board and Commissions**

**Motion** was made by Bruce Glowac to accept the resignation of David Sousa from the Economic Development Commission with gratitude for his service. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Norman Needleman reported the following First Selectman appointment that will go to the January 3, 2018 Town Meeting.

**Economic Development Commission**

Peter Decker

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### **Proposed Third Amendment to the Ordinance Providing Tax Relief**

#### **Proposed Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses Ordinance**

There was discussion on amending the existing tax relief ordinance and combining the ordinance with the new Proposed Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses Ordinance and making it into one ordinance. The Town attorney was asked to combine them into one ordinance which was received this afternoon by the Selectmen (Copy of proposed Ordinance is on file with the Town Clerk's Office).

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to table the Proposed Ordinance Providing Tax Relief for Elderly or Disabled Homeowners and Gold Star Parents and Spouses Ordinance until the January 3, 2018 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

#### **Limited Ice and Snow Removal Ordinance**

There was discussion on snow removal from sidewalks. There are approximately nine (9) miles of sidewalks in Town and many sidewalks are not being cleared of snow after a storm. Historically clearing of sidewalks has been the responsibility of the homeowner. Mr. Needleman stated that snow left on the sidewalks is a safety concern.

There was discussion on whether to write an article for Essex Events about clearing the sidewalks and making them safe and educating the public about sidewalk responsibilities.

There was further discussion on what would happen if the Town were to have an ordinance and how it would or could be enforced. Mr. Needleman suggested that CCM do a survey to find out which Towns similar in size to Essex have an ordinance that require sidewalks be cleared by homeowners, and which Towns take care of sidewalk clearing themselves.

There are a few options. Residents could shovel the sidewalks of their own free will. Or, the Town could pass an ordinance that would mandate shoveling be done by the homeowner, which would need to be enforced. Or the Town could be responsible for snow removal on sidewalks. If the Town were responsible, the Town would need to purchase a machine that could plow, salt and sand sidewalks. This option would require funding to pay for the machine and the annual payroll line in the budget to pay for the crew needed to operate and shovel the 9 miles of sidewalks.

There was further discussion on what would be the cost of doing all sidewalks in Town and/or purchasing equipment. There was discussion on the upkeep and the maintenance costs of the equipment which was anticipated to cost thousands of dollars. There was discussion on whether to leave it alone or to make it responsibility of the Town.

There was further discussion on holding a public hearing next month to find out how residents of Essex feel about this type of an ordinance.

#### **Prepayment of Taxes**

The Town has been receiving several phone calls and emails pertaining to the proposed tax law payments. Residents are calling the Tax Collector and the First Selectman to find out whether the Town will be accepting early tax payments for next year's taxes. At this time the Town is not taking payments per the legal opinion of the Town attorney. You can pay your January 1 bill now, but pre-payments for anticipated taxes, which are not billed, are not being accepted.

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**Public Comment:** None

### **SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

#### **Election vs. Appointment Town Employees**

There was discussion on converting some of the Town's elected positions into appointed positions. The elected positions that require training and certifications and they are and should be considered professional positions. There was discussion on holding a Public Hearing to have a conversation with residents to find out if this topic of considering making elected positions into appointed is worth pursuing. Get other Towns who have converted from an elected to an appointed position. The Selectmen discussed that this change would competent personnel in these positions. There was also discussion on the possibility of bringing back a four (4) year term for the Board of Selectmen, starting in 2021.

#### **Fire Marshal**

There was discussion that there were nine (9) applications received for the Fire Marshal / Deputy Fire Marshal position. Four (4) candidates interviewed for the Fire Marshal / Deputy Fire Marshal positions this past week. The hiring committee is Norman Needleman, Kelly Sterner, Maria Lucarelli, Paul Fazzino, Jr., David DeLeeuw, and Lisa Fasulo. The committee will be rating the candidates and a determination will be made.

#### **VacAll Truck vs. Hiring a Contractor**

Working Foreman Ryan Welch is investigating whether to purchase a VacAll truck or to hire an outside contractor to do the work. At the moment, it appears to be quite reasonable to hire an outside contractor because the VacAll equipment is very expensive to purchase and maintain. There was discussion that the costs quoted have been \$28 to \$32 a catch basin compared to a new VacAll truck at approximately \$400,000.

#### **Benny's Market**

There was discussion that the Town has been receiving complaints on the blighted conditions of the former Benny's Market and if there are any plans for it. At the moment, there is nothing new to report.

#### **Remediation on Property next door to the Essex Steam Train Station**

There was discussion that there are plans for remediation on the property next door to the Essex Steam Train Property. The plan is that after the train closes for the holiday season, remediation of the property next door to the train station will begin.

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion, it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maria P. Lucarelli