

**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 7, 2022**

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

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

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

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

Others in attendance: Jeff Going, Herbert Clark, Finance Director 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 Stacia Libby to approve the November 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes Appointments and Resignations. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Informational Items, Communications and Correspondence**

Mr. Herbert Clark presented to Selectmen Stacia Libby and Selectman Bruce Glowac. First Selectman Norman Needleman recused himself from the discussion. Mr. Clark stated that he was here this evening representing the Needleman and Clark families. Mr. Clark would like to offer the Centerbrook Meeting House as a gift to Town of Essex. The property was purchased more than 17 years ago, so that people could use the building for meetings and events. The Ivoryton Playhouse, Alcoholics Anonymous, Essex Garden Club, the Connecticut River Museum, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and several other groups used the space. Presently the property has a parsonage building which would be given to the Ivoryton playhouse and the Town would be given the church building. The church building was built in 1882 and rebuilt in 1952. There are three major meeting places in the building including a full kitchen. The building is air-conditioned, heating and ventilation systems are functional, and a new roof was installed recently and has been recently painted. Centerbrook Properties would like to convey the property to the Town. The two biggest costs presently are the taxes and insurance.

There was discussion that if the Town were to accept this gift, the Town would be responsible for the utility costs which are approximately \$10,000 annually. The Town would also have custodial costs and other costs overseeing the building.

Selectmen Glowac and Libby thanked Mr. Clark for the interesting offer. Selectmen Libby and Glowac want to make sure the benefits of accepting this gift would outweigh the costs.

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Mr. Glowac inquired what would happen to the building if the Town did not accept the gift. Mr. Clark responded that if the Town does not assume ownership, the property would be up for sale.

Ms. Libby inquired if there were any other major building concerns that we should be made aware of. Mr. Clark stated the boiler in the back section will need attention due to its age, but the boiler is fine and in working condition.

Ms. Libby inquired if the oil tank was in the basement. Mr. Clark responded the oil tank is outside in the rear of the building.

There are three meeting spaces in the building and parking is a problem with approximately forty parking spots, but it is tight. The maximum occupancy in the largest meeting space is one hundred per the Fire Marshal.

Selectmen Libby and Glowac said this is a big decision for the Town. They would like a spreadsheet of anticipated operating costs to compare with the use of the building. In conclusion the Selectmen thanked Mr. Clark for the great offer of this gift, but they would need to communicate this to the people and would need to see how everyone feels.

#### **Public Announcements / Comment:**

Jeff Going requested a meeting with Brian Thomson from the Department of Environmental Protection, and Selectman Bruce Glowac sometime this month. First Selectman Needleman requested Maria setting that up as soon as possible.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Capital Committee: Nothing new to report.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Appointments and Resignations Board and Commissions**

##### **Region 4 Board of Education**

Norman Needleman reported he is looking to fill this position.

##### **Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC)**

First Selectman Norman Needleman appointed Susan Malan as the representative to the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission (MCRC).

##### **Representative South-Central Emergency Medical Services Council**

Norman Needleman re-appointed Judith Reynolds as the Representative for the South-Central Emergency Medical Services Council for term January 1, 2022 to January 1, 2023.

Norman Needleman reported the following **First Selectman appointments** that will be placed on the next scheduled Town Meeting:

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## **Gateway Commission**

Claire Matthews

Misha Semenov (alternate)

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](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](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:**

Mary Ellen Barnes reported she is experiencing a long turnaround time with the State of Connecticut and their application approval process is lengthy. Ms. Barnes stated the Town has the ability to assist quickly with the funds designated to energy assistance for residents.

Ms. Barnes mentioned that Live Heat can take care of oil, but it is an exceptionally long application. Once the application is submitted, the Town social services department cannot track the status of application. Then CRT contacts the applicant directly and will only contact the Town's social services representative if anything is missing. Operation Fuel can award an applicant a \$500 grant for oil or a \$500 grant for electricity.

Ms. Barnes reported that if you qualify for Live Heat, then you would qualify for Town assistance. The Town has discretion to help residents with their energy bill. Currently there is approximately \$51,000 in the Social Services Assistance Fund.

First Selectman Needleman would like to publicize that the Town can help residents with their energy bills that qualify, especially if they are experiencing exceptional circumstances. The Town is willing and able to help those that are in need of energy assistance. Ms. Barnes stated that she would put together a press release on the Town of Essex Social Services Program and how residents can request and apply for assistance.

The Selectmen discussed allocating \$25,000 of ARPA funds to the Social Services Assistance Fund to be used to help residents.

The Selectmen discussed that fund requests would need to go through an approval process and would also require two people signing off on all requests. The Selectmen agreed that the Social Services Representative would approve and recommend to the First Selectman all fund requests.

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to recommend to the Board of Finance an appropriation in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.00 to be allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds. Said funds will be used to support the Social Services Assistance Fund. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

## **Resolution – Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Amendment**

For the 2023 calendar year, an individual may contribute up to the 2023 IRS maximum of \$3,050 with a rollover of \$610. The Town must approve a resolution adopting the amendment to increase to maximum salary deferral contribution.

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**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Certificate of Adopting Resolution. Stacia Libby seconded the motion; it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

### **Permit Fees**

**Motion** was made by Stacia Libby to waive all Town of Essex Permit Application Fees on Town property and Town facilities until December 31, 2024 and Town non-profits. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

### **Short Term Rental Ordinance**

The Town is investigating creating a short-term rental ordinance. Mr. Needleman asked the Town Planner and Zoning Enforcement Officer to draft up an ordinance which would outline a set of recommendations and rules. The current zoning regulations state that short-term rentals are not allowed. The Selectmen requested the Town Planner John Guskowski and Carey Duques the Enforcement Officer attend the first Selectmen meeting in January. Mr. Glowac suggested doing the ordinance in coordination with Planning and Zoning and the Board of Selectmen would set and hold public hearings. The ordinance would function as a set of guidelines and regulations the Town could follow. The Selectmen are interested in what Planning and Zoning is recommending and what licensing is required to operate a short-term rental.

### **Security Cameras Request**

There is a request for a couple of additional cameras in Town Hall. The cost for the additional cameras is \$6,193.83.

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to approve the purchase of the additional cameras. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

### **Town Hall Finance Department Invoice**

Finance Director Tracey Celentano reported the Finance Department construction invoices from Richard Riggio and Sons was over the quoted amount by \$7,730.69. The Selectmen discussed the overage and voted to pay the invoice from the Municipal Property Sinking Funds.

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to approve and pay the overage of \$7,730.69 from the Municipal Property budget. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

### **Audited Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2022**

MahoneySabol CPAs and Advisors prepared the financial statements for the Town of Essex for the year ending June 30, 2022. They have communicated information and their findings in their engagement letter to the Town.

Ms. Celentano reported MahoneySabol is requesting the Town implement two policies. A credit card policy and a purchasing and procurement policy.

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to accept the six reports prepared by MahoneySabol CPAs and Advisors (On File in Town Clerk's Office). Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

1. Communication With Those Charged with Governance Letter Regarding Significant Risks
2. Financial Statements
3. Federal and State Single Reports

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4. Communication of Internal Control Related Matters
5. Communication With Those Charged with Governance Letter at the Conclusion of the Audit
6. State of Connecticut OPM Municipal Audit Questionnaire

**December 21, 2022 Board of Selectmen Meeting**

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to cancel the December 21, 2022 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Public Hearing** None

**Set Town Meeting**

**Motion** was made by Bruce Glowac to set a Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:55 pm in Conference Room A. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Public Comment / Announcements:** None

**SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

There was discussion that there is a problem with the piping and the ductless split system in Essex Place. There have been reports of leaks inside the walls, which can cause mold. The repairs are thought to be several thousands of dollars.

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 p.m. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maria P. Lucarelli