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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
January 3, 2024**

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

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

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

Others in attendance: Finance Director Tracey Celentano, Terry Lomme (Virtual), Keith Russell, and Coral Rawn.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Stacia Libby to approve the agenda with one addition under New Business to add 7F Job Description. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to approve the December 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Informational Items, Communications and Correspondence

Board of Assessment Appeals

Keith Russel reported that the Board of Assessment Appeals is gearing up for appeals season in March. Mr. Russel is requesting the Selectmen either appoint an alternate or add additional members to the board. Currently the board consists of 3 members. If a board member is unavailable, it is difficult for the remaining member or members to cover. Mr. Russel reported that most of the Board's business happens in March. The appeals process is that the Application to Appeal must be submitted on or before February 20th. Hearings are scheduled in March. Decisions are required by ordinance and completed by the end of March. It is anticipated there will be more applications this year.

Mr. Needleman thanked Mr. Russel and the other board members for their service.

Mr. Glowac read into the record State Statute Section 9–199 – Board of Assessment Appeals

Section 9-199 - Boards of assessment appeals. Alternate and additional members(a) Unless otherwise provided by law, each town shall elect a board of assessment appeals consisting of three members and shall elect such officers at regular municipal elections for terms of four years. Such members of the board of assessment appeals shall hold office for the term for which they are elected and until their successors are elected and have qualified. When the number of members of the board of assessment appeals to be elected by any town is even, no person shall vote for more than one-half the number, and when the number to be elected is odd, no person shall vote for more than a bare majority of the number, provided the legislative body of any town may provide that the electors of such town vote for the full number of members to be elected thereat, any provision of the special acts to the contrary notwithstanding. The candidates in number sufficient to fill such offices who have the highest number of votes shall be elected. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the method of rotation of members of a board of assessment appeals legally in effect on October 1, 1976.(b) The legislative body of a municipality or, in the case of a municipality for which the legislative body is a town meeting or a representative town meeting, the board of selectmen may appoint an alternate for each member of the board of assessment appeals. Each alternate member shall be an elector of the municipality. When seated, an alternate

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member shall have all the powers and duties of a member of the board of assessment appeals. (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section or of any special act, municipal charter or home rule ordinance, a municipality may, by ordinance, authorize its legislative body to appoint additional members to the board of assessment appeals for any assessment year.

Conn. Gen. Stat. § 9-199

(1949 Rev., S. 501, 502, 503, 515; 1951, S. 106b; 1953, S. 680d; P.A. 76-173, S. 7; P.A. 95-132, S. 4, 5; 95-283, S. 28, 68; P.A. 00-120, S. 11, 13; P.A. 02-49, S. 4; P.A. 10-84, S. 4.)

There was discussion that this statute gives the Selectmen the power to appoint alternates to the Board of Assessment Appeals. The Board is requesting the Selectmen add an alternate member this year. There was discussion that you could add up to 3 additional alternates, one per each elected member.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to appoint Coral Rawn as an alternate member to the Board of Assessment of Appeals. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

Mr. Glowac reported that to add and appoint another full member to the Board of Assessment Appeals would need to be done by an Ordinance. Mr. Needleman requested that Attorney David Royston write the ordinance to allow the Town to appoint additional full members to the Board of Assessment Appeals. This Ordinance would need to go to a Public Hearing and be approved at a Town meeting.

The Selectmen also stated the three elected members would have the final decision on all appeal applications and the recommendations from the appointed alternates must be vetted by the three elected members.

IGA / Dollar General Store / DG Market

The old colonial market IGA building was sold and DG Market is coming. DG Market would like to open quickly. The Selectmen stated the Town does not pick what businesses or brands come into town and there was an administrative zoning permit. It is not in the purview of the Selectmen's decision of what to allow or not allow in Town. The Selectmen are aware the parking lot lights are not working at this location and the new owner of the store has been notified.

River Road Sidewalk

Mr. Needleman reported the residents along River Road had a little sidewalk party the other day along the new sidewalk. It was like a block party, on the sidewalk, with cookies.

Merchants in Essex

Mr. Needleman reported the recognition in the magazine along with the Today Show has helped the merchants and all business in Ivoryton, Centerbrook, and Essex. There were reports of lines in front of some stores.

Centerbrook Meeting House

On Friday, December 29, 2023 the Town of Essex became the owner of the Centerbrook Meetinghouse. There was discussion that the property will need a new sidewalk and more gravel in the parking lot. There was discussion that these improvements could come out of the municipal property sinking funds.

Westbrook Road Sidewalk (Route 604)

There was discussion pertaining to a letter to the editor requesting installation of a sidewalk along Westbrook Road. The Selectmen stated that everyone wants a sidewalk there. Unfortunately, the ability to do that is not easy. It is estimated to be a two-million-dollar project and is on a state road.

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Public Announcements / Comment:

Attorney Terry Lomme inquired if Essex Glenn Road was accepted by the Town at the earlier Town Meeting. The Selectmen reported the road was accepted. Attorney Lomme thanked the Selectmen.

OLD BUSINESS:

Capital Committee: Mr. Glowac reported the committee just met to discuss an alternate location for the police department and emergency management department or the creation of a Public Safety Complex. There was discussion of the location being next to the Essex Fire House. The committee met with the fire chief to discuss relocation of the police department and the emergency management department. The committee's recommendation is to do a study of the location to produce conceptual design. The estimated cost for the study would be approximately \$50,000.

Merit Service Retirement Plan

Motion was made by Stacia Libby to table the Merit Service Retirement Plan agenda item until the next Selectmen's meeting. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

Signage Selectman Stacia Libby had nothing new to report.

250th Anniversary

Selectman Libby reported she met with Melissa Josefiak of the Historical Society for their initial planning meeting and Melissa has been sitting in on the state meetings. They are planning on meeting again in February.

There was discussion of placing all the different church signs along West Avenue onto one sign.

NEW BUSINESS:

Appointments and Resignations Board and Commissions

VACANCIES:

Park & Recreation Commission

Vacancy (alternate)

Vacancy (alternate)

Conservation Commission

Vacancy

Vacancy

Vacancy (alternate)

Vacancy (alternate)

Gateway Commission

Vacancy

Vacancy (alternate)

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

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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

The Town 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 at <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.

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

American Rescue Plan Funds:

The Capital Committee recommended the Town do a study on the Public Safety Complex. The study project will cost \$50,000.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve and recommend to Board of Finance an appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 to be allocated from the American Rescue Plan Act Funds for the Public Safety Complex Study. Stacia Libby seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Appropriations None

Public Hearing None

Set Town Meeting None

Job Descriptions

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve the one (1) job description listed below. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

1. Administrative Assistant/Secretary

Public Comment / Announcements: None

General Discussion

Short-Term Rental Ordinance

There was a discussion on the short-term rental ordinance. There was discussion that two key items are to have a minimum stay of 2 nights, and the proximity of the owner, and the maximum number of rentals an owner can rent out.

Grant Idea

There was discussion that the next CDBG Grant Application could be for Essex Place to replace the HVAC system.

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Tri-Town Youth Services (TTYS)

Mr. Needleman reported he met with Interim Executive Director Rob Bibbiani to discuss Tri-Town Youth Services. There is a statutory requirement to having a youth services. TTYS budget requests to municipalities are expected to double for them to be sustainable. The Town of Essex is paying 45% of their budget. The Selectmen stated that TTYS needs a stable or better source of funding. TTYS reported 122 Essex residents were served in 2022-2023. TTYS mentioned they need to rebuild their Board and they are looking for new members.

Mr. Needleman met with Executive Director Ann Thompson from the Essex Library. The library is also seeking additional funding.

Motion was made by Bruce Glowac to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria P. Lucarelli