

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, 2011**

Present: Norman M. Needleman, First Selectman
Stacia R. Libby, Selectman
Joel B. Marzi, Selectman

Norman Needleman called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion was made by Stacia Libby to approve the Agenda. Joel Marzi seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve the November 16, 2011 Regular Meeting Minutes. Joel Marzi seconded the motion with one correction at the bottom of Page 1 ECO should read EOC and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Communications and Correspondence:

Mr. Marzi inquired about a letter of inquiry on Laurel Road. Mr. Needleman reported that he is looking into it.

Public Announcements

Mr. Needleman stated that public comment would be explained in more detail during Selectman's general discussion. Public Announcements would allow for announcements to be made at the beginning of the meeting, and then people can stay for the meeting or leave.

No other public announcements.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Mr. Needleman reported that the auditors are going to print tomorrow with the FY 2010-2011 audit. The undesignated Fund Balance did increase as of fiscal year end. The Board of Selectmen expenditures in aggregate were below budget. This was due in part because we reclaimed some money from sinking funds for the septic lagoon closure and landfill improvements which came in under budget.

Mr. Needleman stated that he received the Household Hazardous Waste & Vehicles figures and this service is actively used by towns that participate.

Mr. Needleman reported that he attended the CRERPA meeting this morning. Our district has decided to aggregate itself with upper Connecticut, many towns up through Middletown and east Hampton. Groups have decided to combine and not allow themselves to be dictated by the state. The Connecticut River Valley shares a commonality and that is important. They are looking for a model of base level of services for all the towns. Another change is instead of having a council of elected officials, to have a council of governments.

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Mr. Needleman reported on a GIS Grant update that would provide information on the whole 17 towns that are involved. All properties are recorded, but it is town specific. The grant is an \$800,000 funding request and would allow for one site to contain all the towns' information. Each town will need a resolution for the grant to go forward.

OLD BUSINESS:

Emergency Operations Center Refit / Move

Mr. Needleman reported that the EOC room, especially during the tropical storm Irene, was not habitable. There is a lot of communications equipment in that room. The first phase of tonight's public hearing to discuss the enhancements to the emergency management operations center in the Essex Town Hall.

Emergency Operations Center Refit Narrative

Tropical Storm Irene caused water damage in the basement of the Essex Town Hall causing mold and mildew in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Our insurance carrier, CIRMA, investigated the water damage and they have developed a scope of repairs to the EOC room which will include demolition of the ceiling and wall sheetrock, and removal of the floors to remediate the mold.

CIRMA will pay for costs associated with the relocation of the EOC and the communications equipment up to the first floor and then moving it back down to the basement once the construction is completed. CIRMA will also pay for the mold remediation. CIRMA does not cover any renovations to the building that might prevent water from re-entering during another event, nor does it cover asbestos abatement. CIRMA is willing to restore it as it was prior to the damage.

The decision was made at the November 4, 2011 Special Board of Selectmen meeting to move the EOC office to the first floor permanently. Therefore, the Town has negotiated a claim settlement with CIRMA for an amount that would reasonably cover the relocation and re-establishment of the EOC in its present location. The Town will utilize these funds to offset the cost of the project.

The Expense Detail to permanently move the EOC and Insurance Settlement breakout is:

Essex Town Hall Emergency Operating Center

Expense Detail and Insurance Proceeds

Relocation of EOC (Riggio & Sons)

Proposal

Drill through floor/intall wiring conduit
Build countertops - Radio Room and Conference Room
Complete all necessary electrical
Frame and re-install glass doors to radio room
Install (2)split system air conditioner units
Replace and repair wood floors as needed
Sheetrock/tape/spackle/paint

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Total	\$48,727.21
Sump Pump & Drainage Pit Install (Riggio & Sons)	Proposal
Cut concrete floor remove concrete/dig pit Install sump pit & backfill with stone Install sump pump & piping provide & install humidifier	
Total	\$4,866.70
Cabling/Move Antenna (Stevens Communication)	Proposal
Cable radio rooms/extend antenna cable Re-intall cable via repaired conduit Move emergency lines and data switches	
Total	\$8,575.02
Cable Extensions (A-Dec Communications)	Proposal
Cable extensions for radio room	
Total	\$1,680.00
Asbestos Abatement-former EOC (JP Maguire)	Proposal
Abatement cost for former EOC area (est)	
Total	\$1,500.00
Contingency	Proposal
Estimated project contingency	
Total	\$6,654.27
Total Expenses	
\$72,003.20	
Insurance Claim Proceeds (CIRMA)	Negotiated
Proposed Settlement net of deductible	
Total	\$34,003.20
Net Appropriation Request	
\$38,000.00	

The plan is for Public Works to dig up the sidewalk and possibly remove the cedar tree.

Mr. Marzi inquired about a settlement from CIRMA. Mr. Needleman stated the settlement is a bit more than was originally proposed due to the high cost of the communications system. Mr. Marzi inquired about refinishing the basement.

Mr. Needleman stated that the basement will not be finished at this time because if the water comes in, then mold will form again. We are also not raising the floor in the vault or the EOC room.

Mr. Marzi inquired about the contingency and the bids. Mr. Riggio stated the proposal includes a dehumidifier and an air conditioner for upstairs.

Mr. Needleman stated that the only number we don't know is for the asbestos removal. J. P. Maguire will set up a vapor barrier during the removal of the asbestos.

Mr. Marzi stated that this could come from undesignated funds, which have already been paid for in taxpayer's dollars, or we could put in next year's budget, which may increase taxes for next year.

Mr. Needleman stated that the conditions outside of the building are not helping with the problem of the water coming into the building. Mr. Needleman stated the public works department will be doing the outside work, while using public works budget.

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Mr. Riggio stated that he would install a sump pump which would de-water the whole basement area and this remediation would be less expensive for the town.

Mr. Marzi stated we have a roof problem and a groundwater problem on town hall property.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to recommend to the Board of Finance a special appropriation to budget line 10427-508850 (Emergency Management – Special Appropriations) in the amount not to exceed \$38,000.00 for the relocation of the EOC to the first floor of the Essex Town Hall (former probate office). Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

2012 Budget Workshop Dates

Mr. Needleman proposed four budget workshop meetings this year. The workshops would be held in Conference Room A:

Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 1, 2012 immediately following the regular meeting

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 immediately following the regular meeting, if necessary

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Budget Workshop dates. Stacia Libby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Mr. Marzi suggested a press release. Mr. Needleman agreed.

Mr. Needleman stated that the public is welcome to attend, but not able to participate. Mr. Needleman stated that public comment could be added to the end of the workshop.

Appointments and Resignations Board and Commissions

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to accept the resignation of regular member Gudrun LeLash from the Conservation Commission. Joel Marzi seconded the motion. All in favor.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman for the re-appointment of Joseph Heller as the Animal Control Officer for the Town of Essex. Joel Marzi seconded the motion. All in favor.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman for the re-appointment of Jerry Roberts as the Central Regional Tourism District Officer for the Town of Essex. Stacia Libby seconded the motion. All in favor.

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Motion was made by Norman Needleman for the re-appointment of Judith Reynolds as the Representative South Central Emergency Medical Services Council for the Town of Essex. Joel Marzi seconded the motion. All in favor.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman for the appointment of Norman Needleman as the Municipal Agent for the Town of Essex. Joel Marzi seconded the motion. All in favor.

Public Comment

Melanie Phoenix inquired what CIRMA stood for. Mr. Needleman stated Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency.

SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Agenda – Public Comment

Mr. Needleman stated that the Board of Selectmen has had at least one Public Comment section on their agenda, and then the Selectmen changed it to being listed twice. Mr. Needleman suggested placing Public Announcements at the beginning of the Selectmen's meeting for public announcements and at the end of the meeting to have Public Comment for everything else.

Review Budget Process

Mr. Needleman stated that he was looking over the budget process. Years ago the selectman's assistant, the selectman, and the treasurer looked over the budget first. There were inquiries about why the first budget request and cuts weren't presented to everyone. Mr. Needleman stated he wants to change that and would like for the budget process to be done differently.

Mr. Needleman stated that historically everyone typically requested the same amount from the prior year. There will be three different types of letters going out. There will be internal letters, another letter for requests for funding from fire and ambulance, etc. These letters will be requesting reasonable documentation like their audited statements, what they are asking for, and what they are using it for. We are asking all the partners for details on their tax returns. The public has a right to know. The public is welcome and this is a great time for questions and answers.

Anthem Insurance

Mr. Needleman reported that the health insurance for town employees is effective immediately on the first of the month after the date of hire. Mr. Needleman stated that most companies have a waiting period and he would like to put in place a policy that there is a 90 day waiting period for new hires to be eligible for health insurance.

Newsletter & Email List

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Mr. Needleman would like to report that he is developing an email list for a newsletter and for information items. This will be a totally voluntary email list. We may use a group called Constant Contact.

Personnel Manual

Mr. Needleman stated that the town personnel manual is quite outdated and that he is working on updating it.

CRRA

Mr. Marzi stated that CRRA is holding a public meeting in Deep River and in order for the towns to join there needs to be a town meeting. CRRA is a refuse collection with many towns, and we are a host town for their collection site. We signed on for them to take our garbage. There are 9 towns worth of garbage collected at the Essex dump. The management of this site has been mismanaged. For instance, there was to be no garbage in there over the weekend, doors were not to be left open, etc. Their contract is over and they are trying to get the towns to sign on.

Mr. Needleman stated that WPCA is thoroughly looking through the contract and the lease. All the documents are being pulled together. The Sanitary Waste Commission met with them and had a tour. Since we are a hosting town, we may have some leverage. Susan Malan is reviewing the documents thoroughly.

Gateway Conservation District

Mr. Marzi inquired about the Gateway Conservation District and he stated that he was going to attend the upcoming meetings. They are modifying the programs which may cause zoning regulations to change. There may be restrictions all the way to the ridge line, which is over by Route 9. It would have restrictions on lawns, houses, etc. Mr. Marzi is going to see what the proposal is all about. Mr. Needleman stated that Mr. Anthony Chirico is the gateway representative and we should have two representatives and we should look into a second person.

Motion was made by Norman Needleman to adjourn the regular meeting at 6:10 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria P. Lucarelli