

**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  
April 7, 2021**

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

Bruce Glowac called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

First Selectman Needleman welcomed everyone to the Board of Selectmen remote public access meeting. This meeting was made available to the public via Zoom Meeting.

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

Others in attendance: Kelly Sterner, Elizabeth Reinhart, Mary Ellen Barnes, and Tracey Celentano.

First Selectman Needleman announced that audio attendees will be muted during the meeting except during public comment. Attendees were asked to please identify themselves for the record prior to making any comments.

**Approval of Agenda:**

**Motion** was made by Norman Needleman to approve the Agenda with two additions under New Business: 7E River Road Sidewalk Project – Infrastructure Highway and Transit Project Grant and 7F New Executive Order – Absentee Voting Eligibility Municipal Budget Vote at Town Meeting. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion** was made by Stacia Libby to approve the March 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes. Bruce Glowac seconded the motion. All in favor.

**Informational Items, Communications and Correspondence:** None

**Public Announcements / Comment:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Appointments and Resignations Board and Commissions**

**Motion** was made by Bruce Glowac to accept the resignation of Jim Leo from the Inland Wetlands Commission with gratitude for his service. Stacia Libby seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

The Selectmen discussed there are the following vacancies: Two alternate members on the Park and Recreation Commission, one regular member on the Economic Development Commission, one alternate member on Harbor Management Commission, one alternate member on Conservation Commission, and one alternate member on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

**Disclaimer.** Please note, these Minutes have yet to be approved. Check with the department or Town Clerk for updated versions.

### **Permit Fees – Essex Land Trust**

The Essex Land Trust is applying for a permit from the Inland Wetlands Commission covering general maintenance activities by the stewards at Millrace Preserve and requested a waiver of the Town permit fee. The Selectmen reported they had already made a motion on December 2, 2020 to waive all Town of Essex Permit Application Fees on Town property and Town facilities until December 31, 2022 and Town non-profits, which would include The Essex Land Trust.

**Schedule Public Hearing**     None

**Set Town Meeting**     None

### **River Road Sidewalk Project – Infrastructure Highway and Transit Project Grant**

Norman Needleman reported there is another grant opportunity for the River Road Sidewalk Project through Congressman Joe Courtney's Infrastructure Highway and Transit Project. The grant was announced last week, and the application is due Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. The scope of the proposed project is the rehabilitation of Bridge No. 04663 River Road over Falls River and sidewalk replacement and extension of the sidewalk from N. Main to Heritage Cove.

The Board of Selectmen stated they extend their full support and commitment to this Infrastructure Highway and Transit Project Grant application for new sidewalk installation and the replacement of Bridge No. 04663 over the Falls River on River Road in Essex. The Town of Essex will be responsible and hereby commits to fund twenty percent (20%) of total project costs to match the anticipated Federal allocation and to finance any ineligible costs. The Town of Essex will also commit to operate, maintain, and insure the completed improvements as municipal assets. The local matching funds will be drawn from Town Sidewalk Installation / Reconstruction Capital Accounts and Bridges/Infrastructure Sinking Funds.

### **New Executive Order – Absentee Voting Eligibility Municipal Budget Vote at Town Meeting**

The Selectmen discussed the New Executive Order 10E on Absentee Voting Eligibility during the COVID-19 Pandemic which provides that an eligible elector may vote by absentee ballot at a primary, election, or referendum held before May 20, 2021 if the elector is unable to appear at the polling place because of COVID-19 sickness. The Selectmen stated that they will move forward with an in-person voting with Zoom for those who are uncomfortable attending.

### **Park and Recreation Summer Camp Director**

There was discussion that the current Summer Camp Park and Recreation Director is stepping down after 20 years in her role and the position is now open. A draft job description was created and received by the Selectmen and will be tabled until the April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting for approval. The Selectmen agreed to post the Summer Camp Park and Recreation Director starting at Level 3 and to post the Seasonal Camp Counselors starting at \$12 with an increase to \$13 on August 1, 2021.

Park and Recreation Director Mary Ellen Barnes reported camp this summer will be a good time for the new Summer Camp Director to transition. Ms. Barnes is looking to recruit a professional with recreational experience and strong attention to detail. The former summer camp director has agreed to assist the new hire. Ms. Barnes also mentioned that summer camp will be with limited hours and limited weeks. Rather than a 40-hour weekly camp, it is anticipated to be between 25 and 30 hours and rather than 6 weeks of camp, it will likely be 5 weeks.

**Public Comment:**     None

### **SELECTMEN GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

The Food Scrap and Recycling Program started on April 5, 2021 and residents are already using this service.

**Disclaimer.** Please note, these Minutes have yet to be approved. Check with the department or Town Clerk for updated versions.

Mr. Needleman announced that the Public Works Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations are complete and went well.

There was discussion that the Police Accountability Act will be effective July 1, 2022. There are concerns with the costs associated with the purchase and maintenance of the equipment and the data storage. Mr. Needleman reported he is working with the state on a plan to attach the resident trooper towns onto the state system and possibly the state adding a cost to the trooper towns for this service. Trooper Roberts is working on obtaining a quote for body camera equipment and looking into options and costs for the video data storage.

There was discussion of a few concerns regarding the heating system in Town Hall. The system in the auditorium, when it turns on, is very loud and you cannot hear presenters. Mr. Glowac reported he would like to investigate and try to find a way to reduce the noise when the heating system powers on. The heater in the Emergency Operations room cannot be turned off and the room is always too hot. Conference Room A is always too cold and even during the Selectmen's meeting this evening, both the wall heaters and the new system air conditioning were both running at the same time. During the winter, the Tax Office and the Health Director's Office are too cold. Mr. Glowac stated that he would reach out to Tom King to try and remedy these issues.

There was discussion on the American Rescue Plan which is anticipated in giving financial aid to local governments. The expectation is somewhere around \$650,000, but we just do not know. Funds can be used to invest in infrastructure and to expand the broadband network. The Selectmen would like these funds to be pandemic, emergency, or first responder related or for a capital purchase. There was discussion of looking at replacing an ambulance or improving the technology in the auditorium. The Selectmen asked the Finance Director to create a capital list of projects so that we are ready if these funds become available. Mr. Needleman mentioned that Public Works is interested in purchasing a new truck. There was discussion of the need for radios and air packs for the Fire Department and eventually the Town will need another lift truck.

The Selectmen unanimously agreed to discontinue the greeter sign in table at the end of May. Effective June 1, 2021 the Town Hall will be fully open to the public.

**Motion** was made by Bruce Glowac to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Norman Needleman seconded the motion. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maria P. Lucarelli