

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF OCTOBER 7, 2020
MINUTES

This meeting was held via Zoom online meeting services and was available for the public to view, listen and participate via videoconference and dial-in options.

This meeting, in its entirety, is available to view by visiting the East Lyme Town Hall webpage.

PRESENT: Mark Nickerson, Kevin Seery, Rose Ann Hardy, Marc Salerno, Paul Dagle and Dan Cunningham ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Anna Johnson, Human Resources Becky Lukovich, ELPD Lt. Mike Macek, and Chairman of the Town Building Committee Ray O'Connor

First Selectman Nickerson called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

1b. Additional Agenda & Consent Calendar Items

MOTION (1)

Mr. Seery MOVED to add an executive session for the purpose of discussing real estate matters.

Seconded by Ms. Hardy. Motion passed 6-0.

FILED

1c. Delegations

There were none.

Oct 20 2020 AT 3:05 AM/PM
Kevin Seery
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

1d. Approval of Minutes

MOTION (2)

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve the Regular Meeting Meetings of September 16, 2020, as submitted.

Seconded by Mr. Salerno. Motion passed 6-0.

MOTION (3)

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve the Special Meeting Meetings of September 21, 2020, as submitted.

Seconded by Ms. Hardy. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Seery stepped away from the meeting for a moment.

1e. Consent Calendar

MOTION (4)

Ms. Hardy MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar for the meeting of October 7, 2020, in the amount of \$9,623.47.

Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Seery re-joined the meeting.

2a. Special Appropriation - HR

MOTION (5)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson stated that Ms. Lukovich is doing a great job and has been very busy, especially with the increase in retirements, as well as the COVID pandemic. Ms. Lukovich addressed the Board and stated that she is requesting an additional three hours per week in order to effectively handle this increase in

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workload. Mr. Salerno inquired if this bumps the position into a full-time position with benefits, and Ms. Lukovich stated that this position is already a full-time position. Mr. Nickerson reported that this position was initially created to report to the Finance Director, but that they have since shifted that to have HR report directly to the First Selectman.

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve a Special Appropriation and transfer in the amount of \$3,576.18 from account number 01-01-120-200-500 (Contingency) to account 01-01-106-100-211 (HR Manager) to allow for up to an additional three hours per week and forward to the Board of Finance for approval. This request comes during the fiscal year due to workload.

Seconded by Ms. Hardy. Motion passed 6-0.

2b. Allocation of FEMA Funds

MOTION (6)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson suggested that we take the remaining ~\$300,000 of FEMA money and put that all into Contingency until we know exactly what we would like to use it for and how much that will cost. For example, we know that we will use some of these funds for the purchase of body cameras for the police department, but we do not yet know how much this will cost or how much we might be able to get in grant money. Lt. Macek stated that they have met with three vendors for the camera systems, and those options will be presented to the Police Commission at their meeting on October 8th. He noted that they are trying to get these purchased expeditiously as OPM is currently reimbursing 30% of the cost to the municipality; this reimbursement was previously at 50% so time is of the essence.

Mr. Salerno inquired if it is known how the Board of Education is doing with their budget considering the additional expenses incurred due to the pandemic. Mr. Nickerson reported that they are over budget but that the situation is still changing, and Ms. Johnson noted that the forecast that they have seen thus far from the Board of Ed is a worst-case scenario, and we will address this topic in an upcoming meeting.

Mr. Dagle noted that all the options that have been laid out for possible uses for these funds all have merit, but he agrees that the money should go into contingency until we have a solid plan.

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve a special appropriation of the remaining FEMA funding received from Storms Irene and Sandy in the amount of \$327,046.72 to account number 01-01-120-200-500 (Contingency) and forward to the Board of Finance for approval. This resolution is passed under the guidance of Executive Order 7S with no town meeting and being less than 1% of the current budget.

Seconded by Mr. Salerno. Motion passed 6-0.

2c. PSB – Noble Construction Contract

MOTION (7)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson stated that this contract has been thoroughly reviewed by both the Town Attorney as well as the architects, and that Noble is ready to start work as soon as we can get the contract fully executed. He stated that the projected timeline would put the completion of this project around September 1, 2021, but he is hopeful that things will go smooth and we can complete this earlier. Ms. Hardy asked if there would be a Clerk of the Works, and Mr. Nickerson responded that yes that is a part of the contract and that the cost is built into the budget. Mr. O'Connor noted that he recommends Mr. Bill Cornelius for the role of Clerk of the Works.

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve the contract between Noble Construction and the Town of East Lyme for work to be done at the Public Safety Building located at 277 West Main Street, Niantic, and to authorize the First

Selectman to execute any and all documents and take any and all actions necessary or desirable to effectuate the foregoing. This contract has been reviewed by the Town Attorney as to form and to execution. Seconded by Mr. Dagle. Motion passed 6-0.

2d. PSB – Appoint Town Building Committee

MOTION (8)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson stated that it is time to turn this project over to the Town Building Committee and its Chairman Mr. Ray O'Connor; he noted that the Town has had the benefit of Mr. O'Connor's expertise on this committee for many years. Mr. O'Connor thanked Mr. Dagle and the Vision Committee for their hard work in getting the project to this point. He stated that the Town Building Committee will have its kickoff meeting for this project on October 15th. Mr. Salerno inquired if the Board of Selectmen should appoint members of the Police Commission, such as was done with members of the Board of Education for the schools renovation project. Mr. Nickerson stated that both Mr. Dagle and Mr. Salerno will be attending meetings as an ex-officio member and that should be enough involvement. Mr. Nickerson is hopeful that members of the Police Commission stay involved throughout the project as all meetings will be open.

Mr. Seery MOVED to appoint the East Lyme Town Building Committee to oversee the Public Safety Building project.

Seconded by Mr. Salerno. Motion passed 6-0.

4a. Ex-Officio Reports

Mr. Cunningham reported that the Historic Properties Commission held their meeting last night at the Barn at Brookside Farm, and that they are working primarily on grants, focusing on securing money to replace the roof. The Samuel Smith Farmstead is working on putting in a vegetable garden in the spring. They have all been doing a lot of work around all the properties, including painting.

Mr. Salerno reported that Planning continued its public hearing and that there was a referral for affordable housing. He noted that the POCD subcommittee appreciated our public meeting on September 30th and appreciated all the feedback they gathered from that meeting.

Ms. Hardy gave a shout out for a job well done to the Town Clerk's and Registrars' offices for their hard work in getting the referendum done. Thank you to all the voters for coming out to vote on this important Town issue; over 2,000 people voted; Mr. Nickerson confirm that around 2,300 people voted at the referendum.

4b. First Selectman's Report

Mr. Nickerson reported that around 2,300 people came out to vote at the referendum on October 1st, and the vote passed for the public safety building project to move forward. He reported that there is a very large and very old tree in front of Town Hall, and unfortunately it is aging and dropping very large limbs and branches onto the building. He reported that the Town Hall was actually designed and was built around this tree, so it means a lot to all of us but it has become a hazard to the property, and dangerous to the employees and taxpayers that visit Town Hall. He stated that the Tree Warden has posted its removal, and it is hopeful that it will be removed by winter.

Mr. Nickerson reported that COVID is on the rise rapidly in our region, and now is not the time to ease up on social distancing and wearing our face masks. He reported that the high school is currently closed for two weeks, and they are trying very hard to keep the lower grades in-person, but we will have to wait and see how this progresses. He stated that southeastern Connecticut is ground zero for this current 4% spike in cases, and he wants everyone to be prepared for there to be roll backs on activities, such as tighten restrictions at restaurants and at parks and ballfields, and he may consider closing Town buildings to the public again. Mr.

Nickerson reiterated that this is a very serious situation, and everyone needs to do their part and social distance and wear your mask. Ms. Hardy inquired if the Police could break up large gatherings, and Mr. Nickerson stated that they can but that the executive order really doesn't give the municipality and police department a lot of help. We should continue to encourage people to follow the law and remind people to wear their masks and wash their hands. Ms. Hardy stated that if the Town is going to put restrictions on Halloween trick or treating this year, we should do that soon. Mr. Nickerson stated that he plans to follow the Governor's recommendations and will publish that information as it becomes available.

Mr. Nickerson reported that we did have some residents lose power during this last storm, and that he and Chief Finkelstein met with Eversource, at their request, for our feedback on their response to storms. He stated that their clear message to Eversource is that there needs to be better communication, and that they provided some suggestions on how we can work better together in order to get the power back on quicker for our residents. On that note, Mr. Nickerson reported that we have already spent over \$50,000 out of our tree budget, and the Board should expect that the tree warden will be requesting additional funds.

5. Public Comment

There was none.

6. Selectmen's Response

There was none.

Executive Session

MOTION (9)

Mr. Seery MOVED to enter into executive session at 8:28 p.m. for the purpose of discussing real estate matters.

Seconded by Ms. Hardy. Motion passed 6-0.

MOTION (10)

Mr. Seery MOVED to exit executive session at 9:17 p.m. and he reported that no formal votes were taken.

Seconded by Mr. Dagle. Motion passed 6-0.

MOTION (11)

Mr. Seery MOVED to adjourn the October 7, 2020, Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 9:17 p.m.

Seconded by Ms. Hardy. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sandra Anderson

Sandra Anderson
Recording Secretary