

EAST LYME BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 4, 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: Police Chief Mike Finkelstein, Lieutenant Mike Macek, Lieutenant Dana Jezierski, Finance Director Anna Johnson, Town Clerk Karen Galbo, Assistant Town Clerk Brooke Stevens, Registrar Mary Smith, Registrar Wendi Sims, Town Planner Gary Goeschel and Historic Properties Chairwoman Barbara Johnson Low.

First Selectman Nickerson called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m., and stated that he had invited the Town Clerk's office and the Registrars to tonight's meeting to talk about what a great job they did in handling the extraordinary election we had this year, just days following a Town Referendum. Hats off to everyone that chipped in to insure a smooth and accurate election process. Mr. Nickerson noted that we added a third polling place this year and that we had a record number of residents vote this year, just as Ms. Sims noted that she got home that evening earlier than she has on previous election days. Ms. Galbo noted that in addition to herself and Brooke Stevens, she wanted to also recognize Janet, Arlene, Sandi, Sara and Jess for all of their hard work while helping out. Ms. Galbo reported that they returned approximately 5,300 absentee ballots.

1b. Additional Agenda & Consent Calendar Items

There were none.

1c. Delegations

There were none.

1d. Approval of Minutes

MOTION (1)

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020, as submitted.
Seconded by Mr. Salerno. Motion passed 6-0.

1e. Consent Calendar

MOTION (2)

Mr. Seery MOVED to approve the Consent Calendar for the meeting of November 4, 2020, in the amount of \$1,415.61.

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

2a. Historic Restoration Fund Grant

MOTION (3)

DISCUSSION: Ms. Low thanked Mr. Goeschel and Mr. Bullock for their hard work and support in putting this grant together and stated that the matching funds for this grant has already been set aside in this year's

FILED

NOV 12, 2020 AT 3:22 AM (PM)
Brooke Stevens ATE
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

budget and that application process requires clerical approval upon submission of the grant. Mr. Goeschel confirmed that this grant will now be submitted and that they State has indicated that they hope to grant approvals by the end of December.

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

2b. Municipal Coronavirus Relief Fund Program Reimbursements

MOTION (4)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson noted that there are reimbursement programs available for a portion of the Town's Coronavirus expenses through both Federal and State agencies. In Connecticut it is the CRF or Coronavirus Relief Fund; and at a federal level it is called the Eligible Emergency Protective Measures Public Assistance Program. Ms. Johnson stated that for the State reimbursement program, it is required that the Board of Selectman authorize the Director of Finance to submit this application on behalf of the Town. The first application is for \$36,795 and consists of \$11,578 in legal fees; corporate counsel to review the executive orders and make sure that boards and commissions are operating properly under such, and labor counsel to review the applicable laws and answer questions as they arise related to pandemic related issues. She reported that the Town has spent around \$7,500 on computer equipment to allow employees to work remotely, and another approximate \$6,000 on office modifications, such as sneeze shields at all public counters. Ms. Johnson estimates another approximate \$8,900 today has been spent to-date on Covid related expenses that will be submitted at a later date. There is also an additional approximately \$20,000 that we will submit to FEMA, primarily for emergency personnel O/T as we filled shifts of employees who could not make their shift. Mr. Nickerson inquired if there will continue to be funds available through these programs, and Ms. Johnson stated that as far as she knows this is going to continue as long as there are funds available and the pandemic continues. It was noted that the schools operate under a separate Board of Education budget, so they have separate, pandemic related expenses and their own set of parameters for reimbursement.

Mr. Seery MOVED to authorize the Director of Finance to be the Town of East Lyme agent for applications for reimbursement submitted and to be submitted for the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy and Management, Municipal CRF (Coronavirus Relief Fund) Program. In addition, to authorize the Director of Finance to be the Town of East Lyme agent for applications for reimbursement to be submitted to FEMA for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Eligible Emergency Protective Measures Public Assistance Program.

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

2c. Body Cameras

MOTION (5)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson opened the discussion by reminding the Board and viewers that this was previously discussed and is also now mandatory because of the recently passed Police Accountability law. He stated that Chief Finkelstein, Lt. Macek and Lt. Jezierski were in attendance to discuss this matter and handed the discussion over to the Chief. Mr. Nickerson and Chief Finkelstein congratulated both Lt. Mike Macek and Lt. Dana Jezierski for their recent promotions to Lieutenant.

Chief Finkelstein stated that they have met with three vendors; Panasonic, Watch Guard and Axon Enterprises, Inc., and have consulted with neighboring municipalities on their experiences. The current in-car system and equipment are Panasonic, but they have not really kept up with the most current technology. He stated that after extensive review, they are recommending the Axon system for the Town of East Lyme. He noted that all three products offer different capabilities, so the review of systems is not apples-to-apples. Other municipalities that are either currently using or transitioning into the Axon system are the Town of Groton, the City of Groton and New London; he noted that both of our Lieutenants have met with the Town

of Groton police department and are in favor of the recommendation to use the Axon system. Chief Finkelstein stated that although the cost of the Axon system is higher than the other two systems, the Axon system includes an automatic 2-year replacement program, includes repairs and fixes to equipment, and also includes automatic upgrades as they become available over the 5-year contract period. The Axon system includes unlimited cloud storage, video redaction, and the ability to upload and save all applicable videos and documents to the case file; including cell block video, interview video, on-body and in-car camera footage. Chief stated that OPM is still offering a 30% reimbursement on the body camera equipment, but he noted that the last time he checked there was only about \$500K left in the OPM reimbursement fund and other municipalities are a step ahead of where we are so it's important to move forward as soon as we can. He noted that the total amount of the reimbursement should be around \$45,000 and is only eligible for reimbursement the first year on the ~\$150,000 for the body camera equipment; the remaining four years of the contract will have the storage fees and other installs spread out. The proposed payment schedule is ~\$151K the first year, and ~\$32K each year thereafter for a total of five years. The Watch Guard and Panasonic system quotes do not include installation and are both server-based; the Panasonic system requires a separate server for redaction capabilities. GPS is not included with the Axon system, but can be added for \$108 per year, per user; this equates to ~\$13,000 over the course of the five-year contract. Lt. Macek noted that for FOIA requests, the Axon system's use of evidence.com makes it compatible for such requests, whereas the Watch Guard and Panasonic systems are not up to speed with that capability. Chief Finkelstein noted that we currently utilize STARR Computers for the PD's IT needs, and that we will no longer required to contract with them as the Axon system includes their full IT maintenance and support.

Ms. Hardy noted that Axon Enterprises is headquartered in Arizona and inquired why we shouldn't go with the Panasonic product since it is what we currently use, and they are headquartered here in Connecticut. Chief Finkelstein stated that the Panasonic system has not kept up with the new technology and is really not working well with what we currently use it for. He noted that currently only the State of Connecticut is using the system, and they are also looking into changing vendors for an updated system. Chief Finkelstein noted that during their review of the systems, the feedback about Axon's customer service is very positive and it is reported that they are attentive and helpful despite being headquartered on the other side of the country.

Chief Finkelstein stated that the choice to go with the Axon product was reviewed and endorsed by the Board of Police Commissioners at their meeting of November 3, 2020.

Mr. Seery MOVED that WHEREAS, the Board of Selectmen has determined that a true and very real need exists for the acquisition of Body Cameras for the Police Department as recommended by the Police Commission.

BE IT RESOLVED, to approve an appropriation in the amount of \$279,549.32 for the purpose of purchasing body camera equipment more particularly described in the 5-Year Quote Summary prepared by Axon Enterprise, Inc. The acquisition of said equipment for purchase, for a total price of \$279,549.32 to be payable in annual installments as follows over a period of five (5) years: Year 1 - \$151,601.08. Years 2 through 5 - \$31,987.06 each. The First Selectman is authorized, in the name and on behalf of the Town, to execute and deliver any documents that may be required in connection with said transactions.

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut has stated there will be grant funds in the amount of 30% reimbursement for said body camera purchases. The 30% reimbursement will be based upon the year 1 amount of \$151,601.08, estimated to be \$45,480.32. When grant funds are received, they are to be deposited to the general fund. The First Selectman or his designee is authorized, in the name and on behalf of the Town, to execute and deliver any documents that may be required in connection with the grant application and reimbursement.

WHEREAS, the Town maintains a contingency account in the general fund which has enough resources available to make the year 1 payment in the amount of \$151,601.08. Therefore, move to transfer \$151,601.08 from account 01-01-120-200-500 (Contingency) to an account to be established titled, PS-Police Body Cams. Upon adoption by the Board of Selectmen, this resolution is to be forwarded 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.

2d/e. Fire Fighter Administrator

MOTION (6)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nickerson explained that this proposed position would be a supervisory position to oversee the two volunteer chiefs and the day-to-day operations of the fire departments; currently, the chiefs are elected by the fire fighters and they report to the First Selectman. He stated that this will be a temporary position, will be part-time, and will remain active for as long as needed, but he envisions that it could take six months to a year, or longer if needed. Mr. Seery stated that the subcommittee should be appointed first and have them review the job description with members of both fire departments before the Board of Selectmen approves it; other members of the Board agreed with this suggestion.

Mr. Seery MOVED to create a subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of reviewing the current Fire Department organization. The subcommittee will include three members from the Board of Selectmen; Marc Salerno, Dan Cunningham and Kevin Seery. Additionally there will be at least one member from both Fire Departments, and the subcommittee will consult with the Fire Departments directly regarding their participation.

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

3. Communications

There were none.

4a. Ex-Officio Reports

Mr. Dagle reported that the Town Building met and appointed Bill Cornelius as the Clerk of the Works for the Public Safety Building project. He reported that Noble Construction is setting up their kick-off meeting and the work will be fully underway.

Mr. Cunningham reported that the Historic Properties Commission has been working on the grant that the Board approved tonight, so there is no additional report, but he thanked the Board for moving this grant application forward.

Mr. Seery reported that a Giving Garden has been created on Church Street, and that a presentation will be made to the Board of Selectmen at an upcoming meeting with more information. This is going to be a great program for our community, as well as surrounding communities, and is being created to help combat food insecurities in our community.

4b. First Selectman's Report

Mr. Nickerson stated that this is the last meeting of the Board of Selectmen before Veterans Day, so he would like to recognize a few people. Mr. Nickerson thanked all Veterans for their service to their communities and the United States of America. He stated that because of the pandemic, it has been decided to cancel all Veterans related activities, including suspension of the monthly Veterans Coffeehouse meetings and this year's Poppy sales. Mr. Nickerson recognized Brian Burrige as East Lyme's Veterans Representative and thanked him for his daily work that he does for and on behalf of our community's

Veterans. He recognized Mr. Harry Danos, who is our oldest living Veteran in town and served in Iwo Jima. Mr. Nickerson noted that we have two Veterans that have recently passed away that he would like to remember; Mr. Eric Kwasniewski and Mr. Floyd Welch. Mr. Kwasniewski was a Veteran, as well as a former employee of the East Lyme Police Department; and Mr. Welch served at Pearl Harbor. He thanked Mr. Patrick Hughes and Mr. Tim Yuhos, Commanders of the VFW and American Legion, respectively, for all of their hard work in supporting the Veterans in our community. Mr. Nickerson recognized Mr. Kevin Seery, the Board's Deputy First Selectman, for his service in the Navy. Thank you to all of our Veterans!

5. Public Comment
There was none.

6. Selectman's Response
There was none.

MOTION (7)

Mr. Seery MOVED to adjourn the November 4, 2020, regular meeting of the East Lyme Board of Selectmen at 8:59 p.m.
Seconded by Mr. Cunningham. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted By:



Sandra Anderson
Recording Secretary