

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting
February 26, 2019**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Eric Claman, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Members of Economic Development Commission Shelly Lloyd, Mary Ann Gunning, Robyn Buzzi, Damon Bean; Members of the Public Noel Gauthier, Karen Gauthier, Polly Pobuda; Member of the Press Kathryn Boughton; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Mr. Jerram stated that he would honor a request made by Polly Pobuda to start the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of her husband, Paul Pobuda.

Review of Economic Development Commission Ordinance:

First Selectman Jerram welcomed members of the Economic Development Commission to the meeting. He stated that he had asked his fellow Selectmen to review the current Ordinances in place for the EDC, specifically Ordinance 59-1 in order to gain a better understanding of the goals and objectives for this Commission. The ordinance states "The Commission shall conduct researches into business and industrial conditions in the Town and shall seek to co-ordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for such purposes, and may advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts and other data which in its judgment will further its official purposes;" The Selectmen agreed that the charge still 'works'.

Mr. Jerram commented that he had some suggestions of areas where the EDC could focus their efforts on that would be consistent with the charge. He would like to see increased collaboration with some of the other entities that have interest in economic development, such as the Business Council. He thought it might be prudent for the EDC to review sections of the Zoning Regulations that have impact on how businesses operate in town. Parking lot requirements, setbacks, signage... are they conducive to attracting and keeping businesses in New Hartford?

Jerram noted that representatives from Goman & York, guests at an EDC presentation last year, had stated that a speedy and efficient process with respect to the approval of zoning applications is essential to new businesses. Jerram remarked that New Hartford is already pretty good at this, noting that most applications are reviewed within 60 days.

The First Selectman also suggested that EDC could review the Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Plan to see where things stand with recommendations made for consideration with respect to Economic Development.

Jerram also mentioned Agribusiness and stated that he would be interested in receiving a recommendation from EDC regarding how New Hartford can promote Agribusiness. He stated that New Hartford is still a farm based community that could draw from its roots.

Another suggestion made by Mr. Jerram was for the EDC to review the Sewer Line Extension Analysis, noting that this request for review had been made a while back by the Water Pollution Control Authority. Jerram stated that businesses often need to know where the sewer lines are located and it might be appropriate for EDC to have an understanding of the system in case potential businesses are looking for guidance/recommendations from the EDC.

Selectman Claman remarked that this summary presented by Mr. Jerram was a major step in getting the EDC and the Board of Selectmen synergized in moving forward together. He was in favor of the ideas presented and felt that bringing these to the table could result in a good team effort where everybody works together to make the best ideas work.

EDC member Shelly Lloyd commented that the essence of the Ordinance for the Commission has stood the test of time and remains relevant 60 years later. She responded to some of the suggestions made by Mr. Jerram; stating that the EDC did write a letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission expressing concerns re housing options for residents. She stated that the EDC is considering an open farm date and work continues on that. She added that the EDC is a great group of individuals who work well together. Mary Ann Gunning, another EDC member present at the meeting, commented that the Commission needs a full group in order to accomplish what is needed to be done. She encouraged the Selectmen to fill vacancies as they occur; noting that there are currently 2 regular member vacancies and an alternate. She spoke in favor of reappointing former EDC Chairman Mark Russo; stating that his leadership had served the Commission well. Ms. Gunning expressed her disappointment in the lack of support that has been shown to evening presentations hosted by the EDC.

Selectmen Kennerson questioned the status of a survey that was being developed by EDC regarding businesses. Ms. Lloyd replied that the questions are ready but it needs to be uploaded to Survey Monkey and no one had done that yet.

Ms. Gunning stated that she would like to see New Hartford EDC meet with other small town EDC's to share ideas. She opined that New Hartford needs affordable homes. Selectman Kennerson suggested that the EDC and Commission on Aging (COA) might want to discuss this together as the COA is currently researching this topic.

EDC member Damon Bean agreed that the charge for the EDC seems appropriate. He feels an important role of EDC is communication – need to talk to businesses. EDC needs to find out what their problems and challenges are, what are their successes?

Member Robyn Buzzi agreed that communication with businesses and collaboration with other boards and commissions is necessary. There needs to be good conversation so that appropriate goals can be set.

Member Gunning stated that she would like to see another meeting where all Boards and Commissions are brought together like the meeting held a couple of years ago in the Senior Center.

Resident Polly Pobuda commented that she has attended many meetings of the EDC in the past and she knows that they are doing good work, but she feels that they also need to look at the infrastructure of the town to see what it can support. Affordable Housing is needed, however, the infrastructure may be lacking.

At this point in the discussion, First Selectman Jerram stated that he had 2 recommendations for consideration of appointment to fill vacancies on the EDC; Polly Pobuda as a member and Meg Toro as an alternate member. He noted that the current vacancy (position formerly held by Mr. Russo) will remain vacant for an additional month in order to allow for additional time for a meeting to occur between he and Mr. Russo as he (Jerram) had requested. He stated that he had reached out for a meeting a couple of months ago and as of now, that has not happened.

MOTION: by Kennerson to appoint Polly Pobuda to fill a vacancy on the Economic Development Commission; term to expire December 31, 2023; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Jerram to appoint Meg Toro to fill a vacancy as an alternate member of the Economic Development Commission; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Opportunity for Public Comment:

No commentary

Appointment to Board of Assessment Appeals:

First Selectman Jerram stated that he received a recommendation from the Republican Town Committee to appoint Noel Gauthier to fill the vacancy on the Board of Assessment Appeals.

MOTION: by Kennerson to appoint Noel Gauthier to fill a vacancy as a member of the Board of Assessment Appeals until the next municipal election, seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Appointment of Tax Collector, per Ordinance 2019-3

First Selectman Jerram commented that the Ordinance regarding appointing a Tax Collector takes effect on February 27, 2019 and therefore the elected term expired at the close of business today. A subsequent appointment to fill the position in accordance with the newly adopted Ordinance is necessary.

MOTION: by Kennerson to appoint Karen S. Wieduwilt to serve as the appointed Tax Collector for the Town of New Hartford in accordance with Ordinance 2019-3; seconded by Claman.

Mr. Jerram stated that Retired Tax Collector Linda Sheffield has agreed to provide guidance and assist Karen as needed during her first few months.

Unanimous.

Operations Updates:

Current Budget

Mr. Jerram discussed current expenditures with the Board. All departments are within budget, however, he pointed out areas where line items may be or already are in excess of their funding amount. The bookkeepers assistant line item shows an overage due to the fact that this position has now been changed to full time status. This individual will no longer be just the assistant bookkeeper but will also have added duties as an office assistant. This position will provide additional assistance in the First Selectman's office and will also be available as a "floater" to assist other offices within Town Hall. She will also be available to assist in the Tax Collector's office during tax season as needed.

Longevity pay is also an area that has an overage and this was due to an error in calculations made pre-budget approval. Litchfield County Dispatch contract came in a little higher than anticipated. Highway contracted services and tree removal are both over. Trees are one of the biggest concerns expressed by residents and the cost of removal is high.

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that overtime expenses are high due to the fact that most storms have come off shift. There have been several storms where ice has been an issue and the storms with ice are extremely costly because the crew needs to stay on for longer periods of time.

The Zoning legal and professional line item has been hit hard due to several legal issues that have required legal advice and assistance. The Zoning Board of Appeals requested advice regarding defining their authority. A quiet title action with regards to access to property was argued in Court and the town was required to be part of this action as it had to do with the status of a road. Subdivision Regulations were reviewed and changes were made to them; which required legal assistance.

A question was asked regarding where the legal expenses incurred for Carpenter Road Bridge matters were booked to. Jerram replied that those charges are considered to be part of the overall project expense.

Mr. Jerram explained that there are savings in the Police wages line item due to the extended absence of an employee and a period of time where there was a vacancy.

First Selectman Jerram commented that the audit is completed. Town departments were under budget, Antolini School project wrapped up under budget, the Pension Fund is at an all-time high. Fund Balance has increased to \$3,475,273. Jerram noted that the auditors have recommended a budget director at some point in the future, however, Mr. Jerram does not feel that it is warranted at this time.

Helen Butler Trail Easement:

The First Selectman briefed the Board on a conversation he had with Attorney Linda Francois, the attorney assisting the Land Trust with developing an easement for the Helen Butler Trail. Mr. Jerram relayed to her the concerns of the Board regarding the restrictive language currently included in the agreement. The Board does not want language that places restrictions in perpetuity. They feel it is important to allow for future decisions to be made as warranted. The Town wants to be sure to protect the rights to create, operate and maintain the trail in the best interest of its residents. Jerram noted that it is not necessary to have the easement completed prior to opening the trail for public use.

Carpenter Road Bridge:

A brief update on Carpenter Road Bridge was given to the Selectmen. The bridge is now fully installed. The sheet piling has been compressed into the base so that water can flow through the bridge.

Church Street parking:

Mr. Jerram informed the Board members that he would like to be able to complete the new parking area on Church Street that had been agreed to by the Community Club. He reminded the Board that this project had been discussed last year, but there were no funds available to move this forward at the time.

MOTION: by Kennerson to refer the plan for new/additional parking on Church Street North behind the New Hartford Post Office to the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration under CT Statutes 8-24; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Website:

Mr. Jerram showed the Selectmen the new website using the monitor in the Sessions Conference Room. He praised Assistant Town Clerk Debbie Ventre for all of her efforts in getting the new site running. Ms. Ventre spent countless hours updating the content on the new site as it was transferred from the old one.

Senior Director:

The First Selectman applauded the work of the new Senior Director, Diane Barrett. She has been publicizing the new Senior Van and has been successful in increasing the use of the van. There are still only a handful of Seniors taking advantage of this service, but it is still a work in progress. Diane has introduced several new programs and is seeing some success in her offerings.

Review of proposed gift of land to Town of New Hartford from Beekley:

First Selectman Jerram informed the Board of potential “gift of land” from the Mason Beekly family. There are 37 acres of land on Town Hill known as “Northviews” that the foundation is considering gifting to the town. They require a plan of intended use prior to making a formal decision as they want the land to be used in a manner consistent with the vision of Mason Beekley. Mr. Jerram stated that he had some preliminary plans drawn that include an observation tower. The Tower would provide the

opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy the view that was the impetus for Mr. Beekley acquiring this land to begin with. Ms. Kennerson questioned what the loss of tax revenue to the town would be if the town gained ownership of this parcel. Mr. Jerram stated he would get that info and report back at a future meeting.

Budget 2019-2020:

The Selectmen discussed dates for budget workshop meetings. They agreed to set a meeting for Tuesday, March 5 at 6:30 and would wait to see what other dates they might need after the completion of that meeting.

Request for Refunds of Taxes:

2017 Grand List:

Joan O’rourke	overpayment	\$26.74
Bryan Sellman	proration after payment	\$56.35
Honda Lease Trust	vehicle sold	\$228.21
Craig McCurdy	overpayment	\$213.30

2016 Grand List:

Susan Stagg	Adjustment after payment	\$22.71
Hewlett Packard	Overpayment	\$61.99

MOTION: by Claman to approve the 2 requests for refunds from the 2016 Grand List and the 4 requests for refunds for taxes from the 2017 Grand List as recommended by the Tax Collector, seconded by Kennerson.

Unanimous.

Correspondence:

First Selectman Jerram stated that he had received a letter from the MDC requesting that the Town of New Hartford abandon their rights to water from the Reservoir so that they would be able to assign these rights to Ski Sundown to use for their water supply for their snow making equipment. Mr. Jerram told the Board that he does not think that this is a decision that can unilaterally be made by the Board of Selectmen. It is his opinion that this might be a Town Meeting decision. He will check with the Town Attorney regarding this matter.

Any Other Business to Come Before this Board:

Selectman Claman expressed his concern regarding the recent Town Meeting; stating that he thought it was not well run. He felt that it took too long for the paper ballots to be distributed and he had a general feeling of disorganization. Mr. Jerram and Ms. Kennerson disagreed with this assessment and stated that when a paper ballot vote is cast, one must expect additional time because voters need to be vetted.

The Board briefly discussed what the next steps should be with respect to the request made by the Burning Officials to consider an ordinance governing open burning. They agreed that the burning officials should be involved in the process since they are the ones who will be most affected by this. It was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to review ordinances and make a recommendation.

Minutes:

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated November 27, 2018 as submitted; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated December 18, 2018 as submitted; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated January 27, 2019 as submitted; seconded by Claman.

AYE: Kennerson, Jerram

Abstain: Claman

Motion passes, minutes approved.

MOTION: by Kennerson to approve the minutes dated February 19, 2019 as submitted, seconded by Claman.

AYE: Kennerson, Jerram

Abstain: Claman

Motion passes, minutes approved.

MOTION; by Kennerson to add Executive Session for the purpose of discussion related to Carpenter Road Bridge pending legal/contract negotiations; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

MOTION: by Kennerson to enter into Executive Session at 9:50 PM for discussion related to pending legal/contract negotiations re Carpenter Road Bridge; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Jerram, Kennerson, Claman and Hayward entered into Executive Session at 9:50 PM.

Jerram, Kennerson, Claman and Hayward exited from Executive Session at 10:04 PM

MOTION: by Kennerson to adjourn at 10:04 PM; seconded by Claman.

Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

Attachments:

Ordinance 59-1

Ordinance 02-04

Letter to Dan Jerram from MDC dated January 30, 2019