

**Board of Selectmen  
Minutes  
January 26, 2021**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Present** (virtually:) First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Laura Garay, Town Clerk Donna LaPlante, Democratic Registrar of Voters Jill Hermonat; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.

**Notice of Resignation of Selectman David Rosengren:**

The Town Clerk has received a letter of resignation from Board of Selectmen member David Rosengren effective December 31, 2020. First Selectman Jerram and Selectman Kennerson thanked Mr. Rosengren for his service and wished him well. Selectman Kennerson stated that being an elected official can be a thankless job and she thanked Mr. Rosengren for his willingness to step up and serve as a public official. She appreciated the time he spent at meetings while a member of the Board. First Selectman Jerram stated that this resignation creates a vacancy on the Board.

**Appointment of Laura Garay to Board of Selectmen:**

First Selectman Jerram stated he had a letter of recommendation from the Democratic Town Committee endorsing Laura Garay to fill the vacancy.

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to appoint Laura Garay to fill the vacancy on the third seat of the Board of Selectmen until the next regular election; seconded by Jerram.

*Unanimous*

Mr. Jerram noted that Town Clerk Donna LaPlante was present virtually and would be able to swear in Laura as a member of the Board. Mr. Jerram asked Mrs. LaPlante deliver the oath of office to Laura. Mrs. LaPlante swore in Laura Garay as a member of the Board of Selectmen.

**Operations Updates:**

*Cedar Lane Bridge:*

First Selectman stated that COVID has caused a lot of projects that 'were in the hopper' to slow down and Jerram wanted to update the public on where things stand with projects. He mentioned the Cedar Lane Bridge has an abutment that is exposed and Lenard Engineering has been asked to create a design for the repair. The plan has been prepared and there will be a need to appear before the Inland Wetlands Commission.

*Bruning Road Culverts:*

Another project that has been stalled is the Bruning Road culvert project. There are 36" pipes that lie under the ground that carry water from the upper areas of Town Hill and bring the water down to the stream at Bruning Road. The State is asking the town to increase the pipes to 48" pipes and place an earthen layer of material into the bottom of the pipes for fish and creature habitat reasons and the town is asking to be relieved of that requirement because it vastly increases the cost of the project. The town believes that the current size of the pipes is sufficient and is waiting for a response.

*Community Club Parking Lot:*

The Community Club Parking lot is also pending. Jerram stated that the engineering is all done, the plans are complete and things were ready to move forward; but there has been a change in leadership and they would like to negotiate a new agreement with the Selectmen. The new Board has asked the town to consider taking over their electric bill; roughly \$1,000 or so per year.

*Downtown Improvements:*

There are still additional lights to be installed near Dunkin Donuts. The style of the light post has changed a bit since the lights were originally installed; the original posts are no longer being manufactured. Also, the State now requires a type of post on lights that are “break-away style.”

Jerram also noted that there is a decorative clock that he would like to see placed in the center of town.

*Carpenter Road Bridge:*

Carpenter Road Bridge was flooded over a few weeks ago during a heavy rainstorm. Jerram stated that this is the only bridge that overtops and he is of the opinion that there should be a routine inspection performed by the engineers at least once per year to insure that there isn't any scour or any deterioration of the structure. Jerram stated it will cost about \$450.00 per year and he will implement this as a routine service to be performed each year. The most recent inspection was on January 15 and all was ok.

*Beekley Views:*

Jerram has had engineer Kevin Grindle from Anchor Engineering prepare a plan for a new driveway and parking schematic on the Beekley parcel on Town Hill. This will need review by the Wetlands Commission. Jerram stated that this is a small hiking preserve with spectacular views and he sees this parcel as a potential for wedding ceremonies.

*Brodie Park Bathrooms:*

Bathroom improvements at Brodie Park received \$50,000 funding from the Board of Finance last year and Jerram applied for a STEAP Grant to add to this project. A grant was awarded in the amount of \$87,000. Lenard Engineering has been on site to do test pits and a location for a septic system has been chosen.

*Rails to Trails:*

Jerram stated that Rails to Trails will try to have a hybrid meeting within the couple of weeks to be able to view maps. Members of the committee who are willing to meet in person can come to town hall and see the maps while members of the public can participate virtually. The purpose of the meeting is to review two areas of concern on the route 44 corridor– one in the area of Pine Meadow Farms and the other in the area of what is now “Grey Area Tavern.” The consultants will need to try to find solutions to those concerns. There needs to be discussion so things can move forward. Jerram noted that it is very difficult to have virtual meetings when there are maps that need to be reviewed. It is very difficult to see the maps on a computer screen.

*Grant Funding:*

Jerram informed the Selectmen that the town will file for whatever grants are available right now during this COVID pandemic. CARES funding grants go mostly through the schools and there aren't a lot of options available for municipalities in general; but Jerram will continue to watch for anything that might be available.

*Butler Trail kiosk:*

Mr. Jerram informed the Board that the kiosk at the Butler property is currently being developed. Progress on this had been slowed due to not being able to meet. Jerram has hired Maria Watkins, a resident who is a graphic designer, to assist in creating the information board. It will include rules and regulations and some historical information.

*Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Audit:*

The Fiscal Year Audit is almost complete. There are no ‘findings’ in this year’s submittal. The General Fund is at a higher level than average.

*COVID Vaccine:*

Seniors are having difficulty scheduling appointments for vaccines due to a complex online scheduling system. Jerram stated that if there are individuals who are having difficulty, they can contact the Selectman’s office for assistance.

*Miscellaneous:*

The First Selectman assured Selectman Kennerson that her request to review ordinances will occur at a future meeting.

Jerram reminded all that Town Hall is open to the public; appointments are recommended but if someone comes to the door without an appointment, just call the office they wish to visit and they will be accommodated.

**Retirement of Town Clerk Donna LaPlante:**

Mr. Jerram congratulated Town Clerk Donna LaPlante on her upcoming retirement. He thanked her for her many years of service and wished her well. Selectman Kennerson added her thanks and stated her appreciation for her years of service. Selectman Garay stated that Donna was always helpful and always did her best to keep relationships with all residents positive. All Selectmen noted that she will be missed. Jerram termed it an “end of an era.”

Town Hall staff will be holding a luncheon in her honor this week. Jerram stated that COVID has interfered with holding a larger celebration of thanks for Donna, but one will be scheduled when the time is right and public gatherings are allowed once again.

**Discussion and possible action regarding appointment to fill Town Clerk Vacancy:**

First Selectman Jerram stated that he has been consulting with Assistant Town Clerk Debbie Ventre and has offered her the position of Town Clerk. He noted that there are a few details to complete, but he is fairly confident that an agreement can be reached. He stated that there will be need to hold a special meeting next week and the formal appointment to the position could occur at that meeting. He has also talked to Debbie regarding changing the position from an elected official to an appointed position. Mr. Jerram noted that moving from elected to appointed has worked well with the Tax Collector and making a change to the Town Clerk position is a conversation for a future Selectman’s meeting. Jerram said that the stability of a qualified individual serving as Town Clerk is a good reason for moving toward appointment. Kennerson agreed, saying that the time is right now to consider this change. Garay also agreed. Selectman Garay stated that her research has shown that there are several towns in the area including Bristol, Burlington, Canton, Hartland and Simsbury that have moved from an elected to an appointed Town Clerk. Consultation with the Town Attorney will occur regarding this issue and it will be up for consideration and discussion soon.

**Discussion of Special Town Meeting Date and Referendum Date for potential asset sale:**

First Selectman Jerram stated that Registrar Jill Hermonat was present (virtually) to discuss options for a referendum date and time. The Registrars recommended Saturday, March 6, 2021 from 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM for the referendum. Mrs. Hermonat stated that the Registrars had checked with their poll workers and they were available to work that day.

Laura Garay stated that she was surprised to find out that voting could occur on a Saturday but felt that as long as it is allowed, she did not have any problem with holding it on a Saturday. Mrs. Hermonat confirmed that for local referenda, a Saturday vote is permissible. The Selectmen discussed holding a Special Meeting on February 2 to set the official call for the meeting and set the Referendum.

**Appointments to Boards and Commissions (RRDD#1)**

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to appoint Bill Marchand to continue to serve as a member on the Board of Regional Refuse Disposal # 1; seconded by Garay

*Unanimous*

**Opportunity for Public Comment:**

No comments

**Correspondence:**

First Selectman Jerram noted that David Zitzkat of 414 Steele Road had sent correspondence related to a drainage ditch and his mailbox. He welcomed Mr. Zitzkat to the meeting and asked him to express his concerns to the Board. Mr. Zitzkat thanked Mr. Jerram for the opportunity and stated that there is overflow of water from a ditch that occurs in the area of his mailbox and this has caused the roadway to be undermined in that area. Mr. Zitzkat stated that he is seeking to install a new mailbox but would like it to be placed farther back from the road. He feels that the box is too close to the road and is in the middle of this drainage ditch. Zitzkat noted that the mailbox has been hit by a vehicle in the past. The drainage ditch is very deep in some places and needs to be leveled off. Mr. Zitzkat would like to have a pipe installed in the ditch, have some gravel placed over the pipe and then pave the area. This would allow him to put the mailbox farther back and not in the ditch.

First Selectman Jerram acknowledged that he had not been able to meet with Mr. Zitzkat prior to this meeting but responded that he would be happy to meet on site with Mr. Zitzkat to review the situation and report back to the Board.

**Requests for Tax Refunds:**

First Selectman Jerram stated that Tax Collector Karen Wieduwilt has presented several requests for refunds for the Board to consider. There is a lengthy list of smaller refunds. There are 40 total for a total of a little over \$2,000 in total. (list attached)

**MOTION:** by Garay to approve the requests for refunds as presented by the Tax Collector, seconded by Kennerson.

*Unanimous.*

**Approval of Minutes:**

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve the minutes of the Board of Selectmen meeting on August 25, 2020, seconded by Jerram.

*AYE: Kennerson, Jerram*

*Abstain: Garay*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve the minutes of the Board of Selectmen meeting on October 8, 2020; seconded by Jerram.

*AYE: Kennerson, Jerram*

*Abstain: Garay*

**MOTION:** by Kennerson to approve the minutes of the Board of Selectmen meeting on December 8, 2020; seconded by Jerram.

*AYE: Kennerson, Jerram*

*Abstain: Garay*

Kennerson informed the Board that she had come across an interesting way to support area restaurants by offering drawings for gift cards to be used at local restaurants. Patrons who submit receipts to town hall to show that they have supported a local restaurant get entered into a drawing for gift cards to be used for a future visit to a restaurant. She mentioned that Naugatuck had recently done such a promotion. The Selectmen decided to discuss this further at a future meeting.

**MOTION:** by Garay to adjourn at 9:11 PM, seconded by Kennerson.

*Unanimous.*

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant*

***Attachments:***

*Correspondence from W. David Zizkat dated December 27, 2020*

*List of Tax Refunds dated October 26, 2020; October 19, 2020; December 23, 2020*

*Please note that attachments are filed with the Town Clerk and are available upon request*