January 14, 2015

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington High School at 6:00 p.m. Present were First Selectman George Crouse, Selectman Rob Simmons and Selectman Michael Spellman. Also present were members of the public and press.

(1) Call to Order

Mr. Crouse called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

(2) Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the December 16, 2014 Board of Selectmen special meeting minutes.

(3) Comments from the Public

Ms. Ashley Gillece asked the Selectmen to do one of two things, to either hold off on items not requiring immediate action or for Selectmen Spellman to abstain from the vote. She stated that as the Board knows, she has filed a complaint against them regarding Mr. Spellman's appointment due to his changing his party the day of his appointment to the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Gillece stated that in the eyes of the Secretary of State as well as the law, he is currently still viewed as a republican for three months after that filing. She also stated that he filed to become an unaffiliated on December 16th and was still an active member up until that date with the republican party as well as having voted in the republican party back in August. Ms. Gillece further stated that she is also hoping moving forward that the Selectmen will stop using the term tri-partisanship because of this. She stated that she thinks it is important for the public to be aware of the current standing and believe moving forward the citizens should know the truth regarding the town leaders.

(4) Correspondence

- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Superintendent Van Riley regarding CIP safety items.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Elizabeth Leamon expressing her interest in serving on the Stonington Housing Authority.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from MaryEllen Mateleska expressing her interest in serving on the Climate Change Task Force.

(5) Proclamation

The Selectmen presented a Shine A Light on Heroin Proclamation to Susan Eldridge and Alisha Choquette.

- Ms. Eldridge thanked the Selectmen on behalf of the executive board of Shine a Light on Heroin and the town of Stonington for proclaiming January 17, 2015 as Shine a Light on Heroin Day. She stated that having the support of all of you means so much to all involved in this cause and gives them much hope in helping those in need for the future.
- Ms. Choquette stated that she is lucky enough to be in recovery. She stated that she is lucky to be in recovery because unfortunately most individuals who are addicted to drugs do not get the chance to experience this new way of life. Ms. Choquette also stated Addiction is a disease that effects so many the Shine the Light on Heroin organization has really started to bring to light the intensity of the drug epidemic in both Westerly and Stonington. She stated that drug abuse and addiction is a serious problem in our area. She also stated that we have lost way too many. Ms. Choquette stated that Shine the Light on Heroin links individual with resources to seek help with their problems. She

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further stated that most large cities have ample recovery resources ad being that we are such a small individual are either afraid to speak up about their addiction or simply do not know where to turn for help.

- Mr. Spellman stated that Alisha's courage tonight in coming forward and seeking to help others is greatly motiviational. He stated that Ms. Eldrige's family sacrifice is well known on both sides of the river as well in service to our country and our community. Dr. DeFanti is now involved locally. Mr. Spellman further stated that it's nice to know that old time Stonington residents are coming home and are serving others and the results immediately speak for themselves.

(6) Appointment

Retirement Board

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to appoint Tim O'Brien to the Retirement Board.

(7) New Business

Discussion – Climate Change Task Force

- Mr. Rick Newton stated that they have met 3 times. The prior First Selectman didn't come to our first meeting so we really don't have a charge. Mr. Newton stated that they are trying to figure out what the town wants us to do and how to get it done. He stated that they have had three meetings. Mr. Newton stated that they had an ad hoc member from the Town of Old Saybrook who is also from the U.S. Navy that came and spoke to them about what the Navy is doing and what the Old Saybrook Committee is doing. Mr. Newton stated they are making some progress but they really need to know what it is that the Selectmen are looking for.
- Mr. Crouse stated first is what impact will happen, second is what the town government can basically urge the people to do and third is the protection one down the road what things do we have to worry about, what things do we have to start developing. He stated the final one is the worst impact or the least impact.
- Mr. Simmons stated he was not on the Board of Selectmen when the Task Force was created so he doesn't know what the debate was at the time. Climate change, which is an international debate that began as global warming, has advocates and opponents on both sides of the issue as we know. He stated that these are things that are being discussed at an international level with the U.N., at a national level with various departments and agencies and I don't think the Town of Stonington is in a position to effect the outcome of that debate. Mr. Simmons also stated that he thinks the First Selectman has described what his concern would be, what Jeff's concerns might be since he lives in a flood zone He stated that if you speak with Bob Ballard, 14,000 years ago the shoreline was 400 feet below what it is today and Fishers Island Sound and Long Island Sound was a big lake. Mr. Simmons stated that we know that over relatively short periods of time there can be traumatic changes. He stated that the concern we might have is the frequency of storms with high tides and how this effects the shoreline community here in the State of Connecticut which is what are we are here in the Town of Stonington. He asked what impact is this going to have on breakwaters, piers, abutments, erosion, St. Mary's cemetery is losing ground. Mr. Simmons asked what are the potential impacts and whatever the outcome of the debate is we have to be mindful of the situation along our shorelines.

- Mr. Callahan stated it would be nice to have something in writing to know where our starting point is.
- Mr. Simmons stated that one of the best things they can do is connect with the DEEP and state level and federal level organizations that have jurisdiction for our shorelines and essentially get on their mailing to see what the impacts might be.
- Mr. Spellman stated that any information they can give so they can make proactive decisions to protect the town over the long term would be greatly appreciated.
- Mr. Newton stated that typically a task force is very narrow and very short-lived. Mr. Newton asked if they have a budget. He stated that are a lot of conferences and there are fees and if they don't have to pay for them out of their own pocket they could probably go to more of them. Mr. Newton further stated that many of the Towns that have taken a more serious tact to this have hired a consultant to help them write the final report.

Memorandum of Agreement Between the Town of Stonington and Riverwalk Condominium Association of Stonington

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the Memorandum of Agreement. Discussion: Mr. Spellman complimented Chief Stewart on his actions here and stated that it is a definite step in the right direction and necessary. The vote was 3-0 in favor of approving the MOA.

Acceptance of Tactical K-9 Ballistic Vest

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Crouse to approve the anonymous donation. Discussion: Mr. Simmons stated that he thinks it's great that a citizen has seen fit to donate $2,200.00 anonymously for the K-9 personnel. Mr. Simmons asked if all other members of the police force have this kind of quality equipment or is this an exceptional vest. Chief Stewart stated that they have a new K-9 that just came on board after the retirement of Fritz. Chief Stewart stated that the community reached out 7 years ago and they were able to get a vest through community support for Fritz. He stated that with the new K-9 and handler, a gentleman came forward who has assisted other community needs as well. Mr. Spellman gave his compliments to the Chief. The vote was 3-0 in favor of approving the donation.

Stonington Prevention Council Use of Donahue Park

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Crouse and voted unanimously to approve the request for the use of Donahue Park.

Master Municipal Agreement for Rights of Way Projects Resolution

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Crouse to adopt the resolution. Discussion: Mr. Simmons stated that the resolution authorizes Mr. Crouse to sign a Master Municipal Agreement for Rights of Way Projects which is a document produced by the Department of Transportation for the State of Connecticut which we have come to expect runs almost 50 pages which is designed to streamline the process of reaching agreement between the State DOT and the Town on any highway projects that involve rights of way. Mr. Simmons stated that they say that the advantage of this document is that if you sign it you don't have to do multiple on multiple projects. Mr. Simmons also stated that if the town of Stonington is encountering a series of projects this makes some sense. He stated that if we don't anticipate a series of projects over the next year or so we might wish to consider as some towns have such as the Town of North Branford not to sign it at this time. He further stated that the reason for not signing it at this time if those conditions prevail there is a lot of language in here involving the DOT's sole discretion. Mr. Simmons stated that if the

municipality fails to keep certain records, the DOT in its sole discretion can take an action against us. He stated the municipality may request a termination of the agreement and the project but the DOT in its sole discretion will determine whether we can do that or not. Mr. Simmons stated that he recommends that they give him the authority to sign it in his discretion. The vote was 3-0 in favor of adopting the Resolution.

(8) Comments from the Public

Sue Jones asked if the athletic field fees that were tabled at the public hearing will be coming around again.

(9) Comments from the Selectmen

Mr. Simmons stated that the Amtrak crossing issue involving Walker's Dock and Freeman's Island Crossing are ground level crossings with single gates not quad gates and Amtrak and other trains blast their whistles at those two stops even though the two stops are located between Mystic and Pawcatuck which is supposed to be a quiet zone. Mr. Simmons stated that citizens have approached the Board of Selectmen over the last two years to bring some resolution to whistle soundings within a quiet zone. He also stated that he has met with citizens twice at the request of this board and has arranged to meet with the Federal Rail Administrator Region 1 Administrator in Boston on the 29th in the afternoon to discuss this matter at a policy level and to present them with a notebook of information and our concerns. Mr. Simmons stated that he believes that there should be some way that we can resolve this issue without a lot of cost and with no loss of public safety. He stated that we are moving forward on that matter. Mr. Simmons stated that they also discussed the issue of business development in the town of Stonington. He stated that we obviously are looking at some very serious expenditures in the school system that is under consideration. Mr. Simmons further stated to develop substantial numbers to support the renovations of our schools we need to have a healthy grand list which means we need to have a healthy business community and a healthy economic climate here in the Town of Stonington. Mr. Crouse stated that he has asked Mr. Simmons to head the economic development for the portfolio for the Town of Stonington and he has taken the charge and has gone ahead and started doing things. Mr. Simmons stated that he thinks it is truly important and some of the feedback that he has been getting is the issue of a town planner somebody who can galvanize the various agencies in town to come up with a POCD that is favorable to development and not just conservation and someone who can work successfully and productively with our various zoning boards and agencies so that businessmen and women who come here with plans for development feel that they can get a reasonable response to some of the projects that they present. Mr. Simmons stated that he has been meeting with business leaders the Mystic Chamber and business owners and others in the community and will continue to do so for the next few weeks as we pull together our plans at which point I will be happy to present them to the Board of Selectmen.

(10)Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Bell
Recording Secretary