

August 26, 2015

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on this date at the Stonington High School at 7:00 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 7:00 p.m.

(2) Comments from the Public

None

(3) Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to approve the August 12, 2015 Board of Selectmen regular meeting minutes.

(4) Correspondence

- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from the Economic Development Commission regarding hiring the next Director of Planning.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Thomas Norris regarding the August 14, 2015 Westerly Sun article entitled "Attorney: Stonington not liable for insurance losses."
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Penny Newbury regarding the town's grant writing position.
- Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Virginia Abernathy expressing her interest in serving on either the Economic Development Commission or the Conservation Commission.

(5) Appointments/Resignation

Stonington Water Pollution Control Authority

Mr. Crouse took in correspondence from Jim Sisk stating that he was resigning from the Water Pollution Control Authority after nearly twenty years of service.

Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons and seconded by Mr. Spellman to appoint or reappoint Michael Schefers, Stuart Schwartzstein, William Lyman and Ward Smith to the Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Committee. Discussion: Mr. Simmons stated that they are all qualified people. He stated that it is very important to have people like this on the oversight committee. The vote was 3-0 in favor of the appointments or reappointments.

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to appoint Dennis Unites to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission.

(6) New Business

Athletic Field Maintenance Discussion with Dr. Jason Henderson

- Mrs. Barbara McKrell, Director of Public Works, made a power point presentation outlining how the Public Works Department maintains the various fields in town. (See Exhibit A).
- Ms. Carlene Donnarummo, Mr. Tom Norris, Mr. Bill Sternberg, Mr. Mike Crowley, Mr. Joe Ciriello, Mr. Jim Sisk, Mr. Sandy Grimes and Mrs. Cynthia DiCesare all spoke with

Mrs. McKrell, Dr. Jason Henderson and Mr. Ed Ball and asked questions about the condition of the fields, the maintenance, who was responsible for the maintenance and the application of pesticides.

Stonington Borough Request for Building Permit Application Fee Waiver

A motion was made by Mr. Simmons, seconded by Mr. Spellman and voted unanimously to waive the building permit application fee in the amount of \$386.00 for the replacement of the boiler in the Borough Fire House.

Small Cities Grant Resolution

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to adopt the Small Cities Grant Resolution.

Board of Education Request for Building Permit Application Fee Waiver

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to waive the building permit application fee in the amount of \$802.00 for the installation of four portable classrooms on the West Vine Street School site.

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

A motion was made by Mr. Spellman, seconded by Mr. Simmons and voted unanimously to approve the License Agreement.

(7) Comments from the Public

- Mr. Tom Norris asked for a status update on the FEMA flood insurance.
- Mrs. Cynthia DiCesare asked if we fix the 8 will the town still be at 5%.
- Mr. Sandy Grimes thanked Mrs. McKrell for her presentation.
- Mr. Blunt White from the Economic Development Commission spoke about the of the Director of Planning search.

(8) Comments from the Selectmen

- Mr. Crouse asked if the Selectmen want to at the next meeting discuss ways to help people conform to FEMA.
- Mr. Simmons stated yes. He stated the town attorney's position is that while the town is not legally responsible for the loss, the town has an ethical and moral obligation to do what is right. Mr. Simmons stated that he understands that there are 1,305 policy owners that are affected by this. He stated that he doesn't think there's much value in pointing fingers but he thinks there is value in trying to resolve this as quickly as possible, determine what some of the costs and then reach some decision as to how we can make these folks whole.
- Mr. Crouse stated that he agrees but anything they do has to be approved by the Board of Finance. He stated that the things going on in the town with all the different events and the different viewpoints of what is right and wrong he thinks himself and he thinks the other two gentlemen think we should have some kind of board, commission, committee or ombudsman who is an independent person above the political viewpoint that will look at situations. Mr. Crouse stated that they will look at the findings and give us recommendations. He stated that it's a confidential investigation type of process and in the end they will make recommendations to the board.
- Mr. Simmons stated that he has stated repeatedly that the Town of Stonington has an Ethics Commission on the books but the Ethics Commission is not functioning. He stated that we have had people submit letters to serve on the Ethics Commission but it

continues to be a commission that exists in name only. Mr. Simmons stated that we have letters from various attorneys suggesting to prior Boards of Selectmen that this commission should be populated. He stated he agrees with that. Mr. Simmons stated that when we read in the Harford Courant an allegation of harassment and an allegation of discrimination which under the law would be considered illegal perhaps maybe a commission like the Ethics Commission could take an impartial look at those allegations and conduct an investigation and provide us with a report.

- Mr. Spellman stated that when he read the story in the Hartford Courant, he went out to speak with the people involved. He stated that he wanted to hear it from them directly. Mr. Spellman stated that he invited them to come to the meeting but they did not come which is unfortunate. He stated that he supports the ombudsman concept. Mr. Spellman stated that we have town employees who are doing their job and they deserve to have an impartial investigation and have their names cleared. He stated that if there is wrong doing this board will fix it but if it's not wrong doing than those people deserve to have their names cleared. Mr. Spellman stated that he would offer to write an op-ed to the Hartford Courant defending the Town of Stonington and the people who live here.
- Mr. Crouse stated that

(9) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.



Kristine Bell
Recording Secretary