

Town of Greenwich

Board of Selectmen

Meeting April 27, 2017

10:00 A.M.

Town Hall Meeting Room

APPROVED MINUTES

1. The meeting opened at 10:07 A.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

- a. Attendance:
 - I. First Selectman Peter J. Tesei - Present
 - II. Selectman John Toner - Present
 - III. Selectman Drew Marzullo – Present

The First Selectman greeted and welcomed attendees commenting that it was a Public Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, not a public hearing, and that the Board reserves the right to call on people to ask questions and make comments. Mr. Tesei also explained that signs are not permitted to be displayed during a public meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes of the Regular Board of Selectmen meeting held on 4-6-2017 were moved for approval as amended by Mr. Toner, seconded by Mr. Marzullo. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on 4-13-17 were moved for approval by Mr. Toner and seconded by Mr. Marzullo. The motion passed unanimously.

3. First Selectman's Updates

- a. Mr. Tesei said that Greenwich has lost several community icons this month. Among them was our Representative Town Meeting Moderator Pro Tempore Joan Caldwell. He said he was honored to have known her for more than 30 years and to have worked with her for the betterment of Greenwich. Many of us paid their final respects at her funeral on April 8.
- b. The vision to bring the Greenwich Historical Society into the 21st century with a treasure trove of modern day elements that illustrate all of the yesterdays upon which Greenwich moved a step forward on April 9. Mr. Tesei said there was the groundbreaking for the expanded campus that will include more educational and exhibition space, as well as improved handicapped accessibility and parking at the society's Vanderbilt Education Center. The handicapped accessibility is being funded by a Community Development Block Grant administered by the Town.
- c. The Historical Society also held its annual awards ceremony in which the Town's Ambassador-at-Large Bea Crumbine was honored as Volunteer of the Year and Ana Heavey as Student volunteer of the year. Bea has done remarkable work in fostering the continued sister relationships with Rosa and Mora di Sanctis in Italy.
- d. Audubon Connecticut held its Connecticut Environmental Leadership Awards Dinner at the Indian Harbor Yacht Club. Mr. Tesei said there were plenty of local ties to these awards – award-winning wildlife photographer Melissa Groo, who was raised in town, and Old Greenwich residents Lesley and Bill King of Back 40 Farm Group.

- e. The Greenwich Veterans Council met recently. Members and their respective organizations are working on a series of Memorial Day programs as well as events for our veterans to be held in coming months. For more information about the Council, contact the First Selectman's office.
- f. Mr. Tesei said he had the pleasure of attending a lecture with historian and journalist Walter Isaacson. At a Greenwich Historical Society program, Mr. Isaacson discussed the digital revolution and how it impacts our society today.
- g. Mr. Tesei said that on April 23rd, he attended 35th Yom Hashoah Commemoration organized by the UJA Greenwich. The speaker was Holocaust survivor Dr. Moshe Avital. Dr. Avital was riveting in his discussion on the Holocaust and how nearly his entire family was killed at Nazi camps. He himself spent several years at Auschwitz and other camps before he was liberated from Buchenwald in 1945.
- h. Mr. Tesei noted that the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Aquaculture sent a letter acknowledging the work, expertise and assistance provided by members of the Department of Public Works as well as the Shellfish and Conservation commissions during the recent dye testing that was conducted from the Grass Island Water Pollution Control Facility. The tests will help to prove that we in Greenwich are doing many things right when it comes to pollution control. Our clean waters and the ability to harvest shellfish from the coastal beds are proof of the great work being done by the staff at the facility.
- i. He also provided an update on the Eversource transformer replacement work being done on River Road Extension. Because of the weather, the work has been extended through today/Thursday/April 27.
- j. Mr. Tesei said that Eversource is continuing discussion on building a new substation in central Greenwich. The Town with DPW, Planning and Zoning, Parks and Trees and with an outside consultant have designed a solution to meet the utility needs of the Town. Mr. Tesei said that Eversource is continuing to push its hybrid solution which involves installing 195-foot tall poles along the Metro-North Railroad and directly threaten the Town's force main sewer system which is located in a railroad right-of-way. Eversource's plan involves installing the pole structures atop of the sewer line. Mr. Tesei added that DPW Commissioner Amy Siebert is engaging the federal Department of Justice because the Town is under federal guidelines/orders to maintain proper operations of the sewer mains.
- k. Mr. Tesei said that at the request of the Board of Estimate and Taxation, the Town's third party risk analyst was asked to evaluate the current status of general liability exposures of the Steamboat Road Landing/Pier/Dock. The review took place in late March 2017 and the final report was recently received by the Department of Public Works (DPW). The report found that the current condition of the pier "represents a serious loss potential to the general public." A major concern was no perimeter railing/barrier "to prevent someone from falling off the edge." Mr. Tesei added, that given the concerns expressed in the report as well as its recommendations to address public safety, DPW is moving ahead to install a fence to close access to the pier. The work is planned for April 28 or early in the week of April 30. It will remain closed until further notice. The parking and sidewalk area will remain open to the public.
- l. Concerning water restrictions and conservation, the Aquarion Water Co. held a meeting with Town officials from Greenwich, Stamford, Darien and New Canaan on April 26 to provide an update on reservoir levels and forecasts, irrigation restrictions, temporary infrastructure, water supply monitoring and permanent water supply improvements. Greenwich reservoirs are 98.0% full, Stamford

reservoirs are at 88.4% full. Precipitation is 14% below normal for the past 12 months but is trending toward normal. JS Seasonal Drought outlook from NOAA Climate Prediction Center show Connecticut with drought remaining but improving to removal of conditions likely. Forecasts still indicate a 10% chance of hitting a drought trigger in 2017 with normal demands. However, forecasts show less than a 10% chance of hitting a drought trigger in 2017 with a 2 day per week irrigation restrictions. Aquarion is going to end use of temporary infrastructure, end CT Department of Health Water Bureau emergency order, change from an irrigation ban to a 2-day per week irrigation restriction, monitor reservoir forecasts and increase water supply for Southwest Fairfield County. Mr. Tesei said that Conservation Director Denise Savageau will provide further details later in the meeting and that changing behavior on water consumption is key to preserving the viability of this natural resource.

- m. Mr. Tesei said that letters had been sent on behalf of the Community Development Block Grant program, many from the nonprofit organizations in Town that benefit from the CDBG program, to the Federal government which is threatening to cut funding to the program. The Town has been receiving CDBG money for 40 years.
- n. The Budget Overview Committee (BOC) of the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) met on Tuesday. Mr. Tesei said it was a fair and balanced presentation and for the first time he sensed there was a synchronization of issues. There will be a series of RTM committee meetings next week, culminating with the May 8 budget vote.
- o. Mr. Tesei read a letter from David Ormsby, former president of The Nathaniel Witherell board, in which he reviewed the accomplishments of Project Renew at the town-owned nursing home and rehabilitation facility.
- p. He also reported that the First Selectman's Economic Advisory Committee met and received a presentation from the Lou Hammond Group on a proposed public relations campaign. The Lou Hammond Group has performed similar work for a number of cities including New Haven, Charleston, SC and in Virginia, bringing a coordinated message via the digital age. The Town is seeking \$30,000 in funding for a public-private partnership with members of the town's business community. The underlying premise, Mr. Tesei said, is that the Town cannot rest on its laurels.
- q. Regarding the Parking Services Department, Mr. Tesei read a statement outlining the circumstances that lead to the arrest of employee Michael Gordon, who is accused of being responsible for thousands of dollars of fraudulent transactions and hundreds of instances of false accounting entries in municipal records. His arrest follows a Greenwich Police Department criminal investigation. Mr. Tesei described it as a sad set of circumstances and that it was important to communicate to all Town employees that this was an anomaly, not the standard of Town employees. He thanked the Board of Estimate and Taxation, the Police Department and the Parking Services staff for enduring the investigation.
- r. Mr. Toner reported that the Commission on Aging is continuing its work with Columbia University on the Age-Friendly initiative as well as making the Town more dementia-friendly. A plan is being developed and should be completed and presented by December 2018.
- s. Mr. Tesei reported that he has received a report from the Department of Public Works regarding traffic safety and possible measures to improve traffic safety and conditions, as a result of impassioned pleas made by residents. Ultimately, any changes will need to be approved by the state Traffic Authority. Mr. Toner said that traffic safety is a Town-wide problem and cited other problematic roads –

4. Old Business

a. Proposed Charter revision changes to the Board of Education election process.

Resident Sandy Litvak questioned why First Selectman Tesei said that signs were not permitted to be displayed during the meeting. Mr. Tesei explained that under Roberts Rules of Order, the board is conducting a public meeting not a public hearing.

Mr. Tesei said the Board of Selectmen had the Selectmen's Board of Education Charter Revision Committee report and that the Town Attorney has been requested to review the wording on how to change the methodology on how the Board of Education is constituted. There was a subsequent question submitted by the current Board of Ed chair on whether any changes should be put up for a public referendum. Mr. Tesei said there were two courses of action: 1) the Selectmen can forward changes to the RTM where a vote of at least 116 votes would be needed for approval; 2) or amend Section 66 of the Town Charter so that the RTM can determine whether voters should decide a referendum. The Board also could decide whether to retain the current committee to continue the work or appoint a new committee, Mr. Tesei said.

Town Attorney Wayne Fox said the Board could vote on the proposal before it now. With a new concept on whether to amend Section 61 of the Charter, it would impact the actions of the RTM, Mr. Fox said. The proposal would affect local elections in 2019. Mr. Tesei said that any changes to the Board of Education should be put to a referendum.

Mr. Marzullo read a statement that after more than a year of discussion, he has yet to hear that any changes to the Board of Education election process would have a positive impact on student test scores. He also said that any changes would empower the two political parties even more and diminish the quality of candidates seeking election to the Board of Education. Mr. Marzullo added that Greenwich has a balanced Board of Education system that forces dialog and compromise. He also said that as a Democrat he is not against Charter change and that his objective is to preserve the system. He also suggested that the League of Women Voters review on whether the issue should go to a referendum.

Mr. Tesei responded that while the Board has worked with the League of Women Voters on bipartisanship, he was not confident because of some recent programs he has seen organized by the group. He said that he preferred that a proscribed process be followed and that voters decide the issue.

Mr. Marzullo questioned the timing of when a referendum could be put before the voters.

Mr. Fox explained that it could be placed on this November's ballot or a special election could be held. He said it was his opinion that could be a community debate, a public hearing, a vote by the Board of Selectmen that would then pass the issue on to the Representative Town Meeting for approval. He also said that the RTM could not decide to take up the issue on its own.

Mr. Toner said that he was in favor of tabling the issue for the time being.

Mr. Fox advised that the Board not take any action under Old Business. He advised that the Board have a committee review the issue but not take as long or as a complicated approach as the initial Selectmen's committee.

Mr. Toner made a motion to table the item indefinitely. Mr. Marzullo seconded the motion.

Mr. Fox said that under Roberts Rules, a motion to table indefinitely effectively kills the item.

Mr. Toner then withdrew his motion to table indefinitely.

Mr. Toner made a motion to take no action at this time on the proposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tesei. It was approved by a 2-1-0 vote, with Mr. Marzullo voting against.

Mr. Marzullo then made a motion to table the proposal indefinitely. There wasn't any second to the motion.

5. New Business

- a. Housing Authority of the Town of Greenwich (HATG) – Capital improvement projects update.

HATG Executive Director Tony Johnson and Board Chair Sam Romeo presented a detailed overview on recently completed capital improvements to the various facilities it operates. Looking to future projects, Mr. Johnson said that 18 townhouses are being planned at Armstrong Court which would be modular construction. He said Quarry Knoll needs to be redeveloped and that there is consideration of expanding McKinney Terrace would accommodate the approximately 50 families who would need to be relocated during the Quarry Knoll work.

Mr. Romeo said the HATG also is looking at public/private partnerships for its projects. He also said that the HATG will be reimbursing the Community Development Block Grant program for money involved with the settlement of a lawsuit. Mr. Romeo stated that he was hopeful that the HATG would be able to receive the money in the form of a new grant.

- b. There was a motion by Mr. Toner, seconded by Mr. Marzullo to take up the Steamboat Road closure request out of order. The motion was unanimously approved.
Mr. David Foster, General Manager of the Indian Harbor Yacht Club, presented a request for a temporary road closure to install a new flag pole on the property on May 4.

Mr. Tesei made a motion to approve the closure. Following a second by Mr. Marzullo, the motion was unanimously approved.

- c. Tax Assessment revaluation 2020 – Tax Assessor Lauren Elliott explained that in an attempt to save money, her staff will begin inspecting each of the 15,000 single- and multi-family homes in town this summer. She said that in 2001, the Tax Assessor’s office spent about \$4 million to hire outside staff to conduct the inspections. Ms. Elliott explained that her staff will be measuring/inspecting approximately 3,000 properties in each of the next three years in order to complete the revaluation.
- d. Water restrictions update – Conservation Director Denise Savageau explained that the year-to-year rain deficit is expected to drop to 9-10 inches by May 8. She explained that in order to maintain reservoir levels and to minimize water usage, a restriction limiting lawn irrigation to two days per week is needed. She said that summer water consumption jumps from 6 million gallons per day (MGD) to 22 MGD, a level that is not sustainable. She said also is working with backcountry residents who rely upon groundwater wells to educate them on conservation. Aquarion Water Co. will conduct enforcement of the water restrictions. Ms. Savageau also said that the state of Connecticut also will be encouraging the 2-day per week watering restrictions. She said that operators of local golf courses and athletic fields will be working with Aquarion on obtaining irrigation variances.
- e. Speed Limit Request for Old Stone Bridge Road – Traffic Operations Coordinator Melissa Evans presented the plan to impose a 25 mph speed limit on Old Stone Bridge Road. There also is a work request submitted to the DPW to install school bus stops at each end of the road to alert drivers.

Mr. Tesei made a motion to approve the speed limit. After a second by Mr. Toner, the motion was passed unanimously.

6. Appointments and Nominations

Mr. Tesei said there is a vacancy on the Alarms Appeals Board member because of the resignation of James Daine.

Mr. Tesei nominated Joseh Havranek, to complete Mr. Daine’s term, expiring March 31, 2018. The appointment was unanimously approved following a second by Mr. Marzullo.

7. Executive Session

There wasn’t any business for Executive Session.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Toner motioned to adjourn at 12:22 P.M.; seconded by Mr. Marzullo, the Board voted 3-0 in favor.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for May 11, 2017.

Peter J. Tesei First Selectman

Prepared by Barbara A. Heins
Recording Secretary