

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING
TOWN OF WESTBROOK, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 14, 2023
Mulvey Municipal Center
Multi-Media Room and via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Hall called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. In attendance included First Selectman Hall, Selectman Bialicki, Selectman Campbell, Donna Castracane, Director of Finance, Noreen Saunders, PT, Tony Cozza, BOF, Heidi Wallace, Environmental Planner, Wendy Leone, Assessor, John Palermo, Emergency Management Director, Jill Brainerd, Facilities, John Riggio, Public Works Director, Chief Cusson, Carol Hess, Asst. Finance Director, Ken Butterworth, IT, Alicia Jeppesen, Peter Gillespie, Planner, Don Izzo, Fire Department, Elizabeth Carpenter, Director Social Services, Sid Holbrook, WPCA Chairman, Paul Winch, BOF Chairman, Jim Dahl, BOF, Karl Gelotte, BOF, and Georgy Pytlik, BOF. Mr. Hall led the Pledge of Allegiance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bialicki made a motion to go into Executive Session at 5:32 p.m. for the purpose of a Personnel matter (interview OT candidate). Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Invited into the Executive Session: Noreen Saunders, Alicia Jeppesen.

Regular Session resumed at: 5:42 p.m.

Mr. Bialicki made a motion to hire Alicia Jeppesen as an Occupational Therapist (OTR/L), effective Monday, 3/20/23, 25 hours per week at a rate of \$40.00 per hour. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hall made a motion to add to the agenda item #9 (Tax Appeal) and item #10 (Hours in Social Services). Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OPEN SPACE

As previously discussed, the owners of 558 Horse Hill Rd, Lot 2 (approximately 12.7 acres) have expressed an interest in selling the property to the Town. The seller will now accept the "Yellow Book Appraisal" market price as the sale price (note that the Yellow Book appraisal does not typically reflect market value). The property owners have requested that the Town pursue the Yellow Book appraisal and pay for the entire appraisal out of Town funds (estimated cost of appraisal is \$3,600). Pursuing the "Yellow Book" appraisal does not obligate the Town to purchase the property. The property, if acquired by the Town, will allow access to Horse Hill Gorge and a provide space for a parking area.

Ms. Wallace reported that the Conservation Commission sees this property as highly desirable and there may be an opportunity for a matching Federal grant to fund a portion of any potential purchase.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to pursue the Yellow Book Appraisal, in the amount of \$3,600.00, for the 12.7-acre property located on Horse Hill Road. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AWARD BANKING SERVICES CONTRACT

A copy of the Webster Bank Services Contract was included in the BOS packet. The Town currently utilizes Citizen's Bank. Ms. Castracane reported that 3 bids were received (Webster, Liberty and Citizens) as a result of the RFP for banking services. These bids were reviewed by Ms. Bratz and Ms. Castracane and they recommend that the BOS award the contract to Webster Bank. Attorney Herbst has reviewed the contract.

Mr. Bialicki made a motion to award Webster Bank the Banking Services Contract as presented. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TAX INCENTIVE POLICY – will be discussed at a future BOS meeting.

WPCA CAPITAL - \$5,189.00 – Close Project and Appropriate Funds

Ms. Castracane reported that action is necessary to cover the deficits in two WPCA capital projects; one project from 2012 and one project from 2018. Funds to address the deficit are available in the WPCA part-time payroll account. The BOF has taken action on this item.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to appropriate \$5,189.00 from the WPCA Operating Budget to the Wastewater Management Program Capital Projects and to close out the projects. He further moved to forward the request to a Town Meeting for further action. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SET ANNUAL TOWN MEETING DATE

Mr. Campbell made a motion to schedule the Annual Town Meeting on April 5, 2023 @ 7 p.m. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET VOTE – Referendum or Town Meeting

For the past several years, the Town has voted on the Budget via a Town Meeting. Note that a Referendum was held due to the Pandemic. If the Budget is voted on via a Town Meeting, the Citizen’s Guide may be published and sent to taxpayers. This Guide may not be sent to taxpayers if the Town votes on the Budget via a Referendum.

Mr. Bialicki made a motion to vote on the 2023/24 Municipal Budget via a Town Meeting. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SETTLEMENT- ASSESSOR’S OFFICE – Old Kelsey Point Road

Documentation, developed by Attorney Herbst, was distributed relative to a proposed settlement, pending BOS approval, of the O’Brien, Stewart, et al. v. Town of Westbrook tax appeal. Ms. Leone, Assessor, was available to address questions/comments posed by BOS members.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to accept the settlement as presented. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

HOURS IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Carpenter, Social Services Director, is requesting additional hours (7 hours - \$7,276.36) for her staff. This request for an increase in hours is the result of Westbrook Youth and Family’s request that Ms. Carpenter spend time at the Riggio Building to address the needs of non-English speaking residents. Ms. Carpenter provided data that indicates the increased demand for social services over the past several years, particularly since the Pandemic. She reported that many times, non-English speaking individuals are reluctant to come to the Town Hall for services.

Mr. Winch, BOF Chairman, recommended that Ms. Carpenter present her request to the BOF on March 15, 2023 since the BOS has already forwarded the budget to the BOF for review.

The BOS took no action on this request.

APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

Mr. Campbell made a motion to appoint Jan Panella, to the Inland Wetland Commission as an alternate member. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bialicki made a motion to re-appoint the following individuals to 3-year terms on the Harbor Management Commission: John Rie, Andy Calderoni and Ronny Stevenson. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes from the 2/8/23, 2/14/23 and 2/16/23 Board of Selectmen meetings as presented. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FIRST SELECTMAN’S REPORT- None.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m. Mr. Bialicki seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest,

Suzanne Helchowski
Executive Assistant

John Hall, III
First Selectman