

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the January 22, 2019 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM. Ed Bailey and Dave Burgess were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Ed Bailey made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the agenda, as written, with an addition of item 11.2, Appointments, to add Mark Gribko to the Middlefield Housing Authority. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meetings

A. December 18, 2018 Regular Meeting

It was agreed to table the approval of the minutes until later as Bob Yamartino was at the meeting and Dave Burgess was not.

Middlefield Volunteer Fire Department - Retirement Benefit Tax Abatement

Ed Bailey explained that there was an act extending the tax abatement to retired volunteer firefighters, police officer and EMS technicians that was enacted in 2016. Mr. Bailey explained that the town's Benefits Committee did meet to discuss this and their recommendation was to discuss it with the Board of Selectmen to see if they desire to enact an ordinance. An ordinance will need to be drafted, reviewed and brought to a town meeting. The plan would be to put this in the budget for fiscal year 2020, which starts on July 1, 2019. They would like to put the ordinance on the agenda for the town budget meeting in May.

Chief Peter Tyc reviewed the changes that would need to be made to the tax abatement, including a little tighter control of sign-in sheets for a call. They do quarterly updates on attendance and all of the firefighters know where they are. Chief Tyc reviewed the state statute that grants the tax relief to retirees and mentioned that there is also an option to abate taxes of the surviving spouse of a police officer, firefighter or EMT. They have drafted a policy and have run it by the fire company. They are trying to be fair and not burden the town, but feel that 25 years of service means a lot.

Chief Tyc presented a list of 10 people who would qualify for the retiree abatement program as of today. He wasn't sure that anybody would actually take advantage of the program today. He also explained that there is then a large gap of people with 25 years of service and hopefully this would be an incentive for people to stay. He pointed out that the department is struggling with the number of members.

Regarding benefits for a surviving spouse, this would apply to members who die in the line of duty and suggest half the taxes be abated on their primary residence in town as long as the spouse owns and occupies it. Dave Burgess felt that this was a no-brainer as the Fire Company does a lot for the town and this is something that the town can do for them.

Chief Tyc explained that the firefighters are not there for the money; they do it because they want to do it. Mr. Burgess understood, but also felt that they save the town a lot of money as well and deserve this.

Ed Bailey spoke to the Town Counsel and this information will be put into proper ordinance wording, he will distribute it to everyone and the Board of Selectmen will take it up for approval. Mr. Bailey reiterated that he will include this in his budget that he presents to the Board of Finance.

FY18 Town Audit Review - Al Rusilowicz

Al Rusilowicz summarized that at the end of the year, the General Fund had a surplus of \$277,090 but a deficit had been budgeted. There was a \$2,496,000 fund balance at the end of the year and \$196,000 was committed to this year's budget, leaving \$2,300,000 unassigned or a little over 14 percent of total expenditures, which is exactly where the town wants to be given that the state budget is unreliable.

Dave Burgess asked what created the surplus and Ed Bailey explained that one item was the sale of a fire truck for \$70,000 more than was expected. Al Rusilowicz added that expenses were also lower. Mr. Bailey stated that there had also been a tax sale which produced about \$100,000. Mr. Rusilowicz mentioned that the town had also gotten paid the ECS that was originally anticipated. He felt that the town is in the best shape that they've been in in years, from a fund balance perspective. Mr. Bailey stated that the budget was underspent by \$292,229.

Al Rusilowicz explained that the recommended reserve percentage used to be 5 to 10 percent and has now been increased to about 15 percent. The Board of Finance adopted a policy of 12 to 15 percent. Mr. Bailey felt that this is primarily due to the instability of the state budget.

Mr. Burgess asked if a town meeting was necessary on the audit and Mr. Rusilowicz explained that there were no over-expenditures and a town meeting is not necessary. The audit would, however, be part of the Annual Report. Mr. Bailey also noted that the audit is available on the website for the public.

Mr. Rusilowicz reported that the Governor will propose his budget on February 22nd this year and Ed Bailey's budget will be submitted to the Board of Finance on March 1st. Mr. Bailey hoped that the Connecticut economy gets the lift that the rest of the nation is feeling and stated that the defense industry is doing very well.

Al Rusilowicz also noted that the town has a three-year agreement with Seward and Monde, with one year left.

Giving Garden Update

Bob Yamartino had attended the Giving Garden meeting but was not yet present at the meeting, so this item was tabled.

Regional School District 13 Update

Ed Bailey tabled this item as well as Bob Yamartino was not present.

Budget Process

Mr. Bailey reviewed that he will present his proposed budget to the Board of Selectmen in March.

Tax Refunds

Ed Bailey read the tax refunds into the record, per the attached sheet.

Ed Bailey made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the tax refunds as presented by the Middlefield Tax Collector, as attached. Motion carried unanimously.

Appointments

1. Middlefield Housing Authority
 - a. Mark Gribko - Term 10/01/2018 to 09/30/2023

Ed Bailey explained that Mark Gribko has served one term on the Housing Authority already and this will be his second term.

Ed Bailey made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the appointment of Mark Gribko to the Middlefield Housing Authority, for the term of 10/01/2018 to 09/30/2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Selectman's Report

Ed Bailey reported on the recent storm and stated that about 38 percent (750 homes) of the town was without power at some point on Sunday. He felt that Eversource was very responsive and had the outages to about 20 by 9:00 PM and down to less than five by Monday evening. If the outages had continued, they would have opened the Community Center as a warming center and then possibly open the shelter at Memorial School. All things considered, the town did okay with the storm but the salt was not effective because it was so cold so they switched to sand. Mr. Bailey toured the town on Sunday and Monday and felt that the roads were in pretty good shape. He did mention that a pole came down on Route 66, but was open by the next morning. Because the storm was not widespread across the state, Eversource was able to send all of their resources to the area.

Mr. Bailey also explained that the town has switched their phone service to VOIP, except for two land lines so that they can still make an old-fashioned phone call.

Ed Bailey also reported that he will attend a legislative meeting of the River COG tomorrow. Dave Burgess suggested he bring up solar power when he attends the meeting. Mr. Bailey also reiterated that he has been appointed by the Speaker of the House to the Material Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) board of directors. Mr. Burgess stated that he would contact local legislators about solar power. Mr. Bailey stated that he and Laura Francis are working on getting solar power installed at the transfer station and on the buildings here in town. The town has applied for the SREC credits from the state and has received approval. They are in the process of evaluating the buildings and hope to get proposals soon.

Adjournment

Dave Burgess made a motion, seconded by Ed Bailey, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried unanimously.

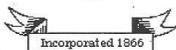
The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First

Town of Middlefield, Connecticut



TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE: Telephone (860) 349-7117; Fax (860) 349-7115
393 Jackson Hill Rd, P O Box 179, Middlefield, CT 06455

REQUEST FOR REFUNDS TO BE APPROVED BY BOARD OF SELECTMAN

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BILL #</u>	<u>REASON</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>CURRENT YEAR 01-01-4004</u>			
ARI Fleet Lt LTD	17-03-50182	Sold 12-16	1,367.18
Corelogic	17-01-579	Ck too much	4,207.78
Deane David A	17-03-51112	Ck too much	362.33
Hurta Robert P	17-03-52043	Sold 7-17	625.30
Hurta Robert P	17-03-52044	Sold 6-17	38.18
Micale Jeffrey	17-03-52916	Traded in 12-17	101.92
Sidorsky Credit Union	17-01-536	Ck too much	44.93
Toyota Lease Trust	17-03-54578	Sold 12-17	202.80
Toyota Lease Trust	17-03-54596	Sold 12-17	393.94
Toyota Lease Trust	17-03-54572	Sold 12-17	180.21
Youngquist Marcia B & Marc J	17-03-55073	Sold 7-18	12.97
Youngquist Marcia B & Marc J	17-03-55069	Sold 4-18	26.04

PRIOR YEAR 01-01-4005

Deko Bryan S	16-03-51140	Sold 7-17	22.27
Toyota Lease Trust	16-03-54536	Sold 4-17	244.45

Anne L. Olszewski
Middlefield Certified Tax Collector

“This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider.”