

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the February 19, 2019 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:42 PM. Ed Bailey, Dave Burgess and Bob Yamartino were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Ed Bailey asked to move item 8 after item 4.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Acceptance of new town road "Ross Farms Drive"

Paul, an employee of Lovley Development, was present at the meeting. Ed Bailey explained that the developer has met all of the requirements for transferring a road to the town. Mylars have been filed as has a deed transferring the right-of-way to the town. The Town Engineer and Highway Foreman have inspected the property and all odds and ends have been taken care of. The Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the property. Paul explained that they have worked on the project for three-and-a-half years and there are 11 houses in the development.

Ed Bailey explained that the town hasn't accepted a new road in quite some time and he believes the last one may have been back in the 90s. Mr. Bailey reviewed the process for a road to become a town road. Ultimately, it is the builder's choice if they would like a private road or a public road.

Mr. Bailey also noted that they had installed Cape Cod curbing in this development and the Highway Foreman saw that and they purchased the die and used that curbing in the Industrial Park. Bob Yamartino mentioned the release of the surety bond, but Mr. Bailey assured him that Planning and Zoning took care of that.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to adopt a resolution to accept Ross Farms Drive as a town-owned road. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Meetings

A. January 22, 2019 Regular Meeting

Minutes are not yet available for this meeting.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, seconded by Dave Burgess, to table the approval of the minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

FY20 Preliminary Budget Review

Ed Bailey reported that he went to the presentation of the school budget last week and they are proposing a .06 percent increase. Enrollment is also shifting to Durham. Bob Yamartino asked if that budget included the capital and Mr. Bailey thought that it did. Mr. Yamartino was not able to attend the last Board of Education meeting, but he will look at their budget.

Mr. Bailey also explained that the town participates in the Connecticut Municipal Employee Retirement System (CT MERS or MERS) and they have changed their actuarial presumptions on returns from 8 percent to 7 percent, resulting in an increase from about 11 percent to nearly 22 percent. That impact will be in the neighborhood of \$15,000 this year. By state statute, the employee contribution is set at 2.25 percent. Mr. Bailey has spoken to the legislators about this and CCM and COST have provided a lot of information. Middlefield only has seven employees that participate in the plan as you have to be a full-time employee to participate. Mr. Bailey does not expect to see any change on this, due to the make-up of the legislature. He also noted that the town's labor contracts have been revised to not specifically include the 2.25 percent.

Ed Bailey also mentioned that there is a law that allows a municipality to give employees the option of not participating in Social Security. Windsor Locks has done this and has saved a lot of money and it also benefits the employee. Al Rusilowicz did an analysis and it could save the town about \$30,000 a year if everyone participated. Mr. Burgess had the article about this with him and will give copies to Mr. Bailey and Mr. Yamartino.

Mr. Bailey also mentioned that the insurance renewals this year are very favorable at 0 percent and a reduction in workers' comp. The budget is still being formulated and Mr. Bailey worked

on capital today. He has decided to do the asset management plan for the Town Hall and the Community Center himself.

Ed Bailey also reported that the favorable legal ruling that the town received has been appealed and the insurance company will be handling the appeal and there is no cost to the town. The same individual has also filed a new lawsuit against Ed Bailey personally. He also mentioned that there is also a lawsuit with the former IT provider. Mr. Bailey reviewed that the former IT provider had shut off the town's email service and it turned out that the domain name was not registered in the town's name. They have since secured the domain names under the name of the Town of Middlefield.

Bob Yamartino noted that the financial statements show a favorable impact on the reserve fund which will then be more than 15 percent. Ed Bailey felt that it would actually be more like 14.5 percent as of June 30, 2018 but will probably be above 14.5 percent on June 30, 2019. Mr. Yamartino stated that he still likes the 12 percent number. He knows that there will be upcoming capital for the school system and would like to establish a line item in the budget to cover Regional District 13 excess capital requirements and/or enrollment shifts. Mr. Yamartino's thought would be to reduce the undesignated fund to about 12 percent, with the extra money going into those line items. He is also afraid that some of the State funds are based on how much is in the town's undesignated fund.

Ed Bailey stated that the working group at COST is meeting next week and they are putting forward a five-year plan to smooth the allocation for student enrollment. He also mentioned that the debt service costs to the school district will stay flat with the proposed bonding package. Bob Yamartino explained that the school's current debt service does have bonds rolling off at different times over the next several years. One of the proposals was to bond an amount that would keep the debt service flat, but Mr. Yamartino is not in favor of that because they really need to bond somewhere between \$12 to \$15 million, not \$6.5 million. Mr. Bailey will look further into that issue.

Mr. Burgess didn't think that the State would be looking at Middlefield's formula, but he also wasn't sure what the current governor is thinking. Discussion followed about the past governor's policies and requests. Mr. Bailey added that he has heard that the legislature is considering changing the ECS formula again. Mr. Burgess also felt that there will be a lot of blow-back on the proposed regionalization. Mr. Bailey agreed and also mentioned regionalized health districts which could cost the town significantly. He felt that the gist of the regionalization proposals is income redistribution and help out the larger municipalities. Dave Burgess felt that it was just some people with some bad ideas.

There was then a discussion about tolls and the gas tax. Mr. Yamartino is 100 percent in favor of tolls on the interstates because of the number of people going through the state. He also feels that nobody buys gas in Connecticut due to the prices.

Ed Bailey again reported that he has been appointed to the MIRA board of directors and there will be a \$9.65 per ton increase in the tipping fees effective April 1st with \$1.35 more effective July 1st which is a 15 percent increase. He also noted that there will be a meeting with DMIAAB and the Boards of Finance on Thursday, March 14th at 6:00 PM. Mr. Bailey did not have any concerns with the DMIAAB budget, but Durham still seems to have some issues with it.

Regional School District 13 Update

Bob Yamartino had nothing more to report.

Giving Garden Update

Ed Bailey reported that conduit has been installed going out to the garden area for water and electric courtesy of Winterberry Gardens in Southington and other sponsorships are coming in as well. A shed has also been ordered from Kloter Farms. This is being run by an ad hoc committee with members from both towns and Mr. Bailey felt that Jen Huddleston is taking the lead on this. Ed Bailey also explained that they printed the brochures right at the Town Hall.

Tax Refunds

Ed Bailey didn't have the information available tonight, so this will be dealt with at the next meeting.

Selectman's Report

Ed Bailey reported that he was in Washington, DC last week at the National Water Association meeting and also met with staff of Connecticut's Congressional delegation to promote the interests of small water and wastewater systems.

Mr. Bailey has also been attending meetings at River COG, CCM and COST looking after the interests of small towns. He gave an update on the MIRA facility in Hartford as well. Dave Burgess also mentioned solar power and Ed Bailey stated that that has been brought up at the River COG and he will also mention it to the governor, if he can. Mr. Burgess felt that Buddy Altobello wasn't too interested in it and Mary Abrams seemed more receptive to it. Bob Yamartino felt that Buddy Altobello has been listening to the utilities.

Mr. Burgess asked about the highway clearing that is being done and Mr. Bailey explained that the State is clearing the trees because of icing conditions. Eversource has cleared some trees for line maintenance. Dave Burgess stated that his point behind promoting solar is to improve the environment and keep that industry alive.

There was then discussion about politicians in both Connecticut and Washington.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 PM.
Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First

Minutes Approved _____

Confirmed by _____