

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the April 6, 2020 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Ed Bailey called the video conference meeting to order. Ed, Bob and Carol were all present.

Approval of Agenda

Bob asked that item number 6 be moved to after Public Comment as he has a Board of Education Meeting that he will need to leave early for and wanted to be present for any needed vote.

Carol Bufithis made a motion, second by Bob Yamartino, to approve the agenda with noted change. Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Resolution regarding Modification of the Calendar for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 General Fund and Capital Non-Recurring Fund as Authorized by the Governors Executive Order 2020-7B, 7C and 71

Ed reviewed the Governors executive orders which include several topics such as allowing electronic meetings as well as adjusting the adoption date for the Town Budget which allows the date to be pushed out by 30 days, in this case June 8th.

Ed explained that Town Meetings have been suspended by the Executive Order and now authorizes the entity responsible for presenting the budget for Town Meeting to be the entity that adopts the Town Budget which in this case is the Board of Finance. Ed explained that our Town Charter states that the "Board of Finance shall be obligated to adopt a Budget within 14 days and said adopted budget shall become the towns operating budget for the next fiscal year". If the Board of Finance cannot approve a budget by June 8th, they will then have 14 days to come to an agreement.

Carol Bufithis made a motion, second by Bob Yamartino, to approve the attached Resolution. Motion carried.

COVID-19 Update

- a. Update from the Plainville Southington Health District
- b. Emergency Rules Issued by the Park & Recreation Commission

Ed reported the following official numbers (as of the time of this meeting):

6900+ Confirmed Cases Statewide; 206 Deaths
135 Confirmed Cases in Middlesex County; 22 currently Hospitalized; 7 Deaths
2 Confirmed Cases in the Town of Middlefield

Ed stated that he attended his regular conference call with the Plainville-Southington Health District during which they discussed postponing the opening of the town beach as well as the summer camp until at least June 26th. Ed said that he is going to contact our town's churches regarding Easter Services with recommendations from the Health Director, Shane Lockwood. There was some discussion of churches having parishioners gather at church in their vehicles and live stream the sermon via internet or to listen via loudspeaker however, this practice has been discouraged. Churches have also agreed that they would not be handing out Palms for Palm Sunday.

The Parks and Recreation Committee has passed an Emergency Rule which will be in effect for 60 days. The rule closes the playscape, skate park and basketball courts. In the event there is a violation a fine of \$90.00 can be imposed to encourage compliance.

Ed stated that there have been reports of issues with proper social distancing at the Transfer Station. Signage and hand sanitizer have been put in place and Ed said that he hoped that Shane Lockwood would have an opportunity to meet with the employees on site. Ed said that some towns are limiting what can be brought into their facilities but has not put any limitation in place at this time. If social distancing issues continue and employees are put in harms way limits could be implemented. Carol noted that employees at the Transfer Station didn't have gloves on hand and offered to provide some from the Lion's Club booth at the fairgrounds.

Ed explained the order is still in place for schools to resume on April 20th but it appears this will very likely be pushed back. He said that he joined a conference call with Congressman Courtney which covered the availability of resources for business owners in our state.

Ed also said there has been a lot of discussion over concerns that golf courses remain open in Middlefield. He did speak with Lyman's and they have put strict rules in place and have closed the 9-hole learning center course.

Walking trails and parks continue to pose a challenge for social distancing. While people do need to have a place to walk and exercise, people not maintaining proper distance could force areas to be closed.

Ed said there is still a need for donations in our Food Pantry but noted that he continues to consult Shane Lockwood on whether donations should be limited to cash only. He also mentioned that there was a good turn out for Senior Lunch and that Marigold the Cow was present to make folks smile during this difficult time.

Review of various Executive Orders Issued by the Governor the affect Municipalities

Ed discussed one particular Executive Order "7S" which covers Municipal Property Relief. A decision will need to be made prior to April 25th to choose one or both of the programs set forth by the order regarding Real Property, Personal Property, Motor Vehicle, and Municipal Water and Sewer.

- 1) Tax deferment which would postpone payment due date from July 1st, to October 1st.
- 2) Reduce the Interest penalty, currently at 18%, to 3% for the same 90-day period.

Finance Director, Al Rusilowicz, has been working on what effects these programs could have on cash flow for the town.

LED Streetlight Conversion Update

Streetlights have been almost completely installed. Ed and Carol agree that they look great.

RSD-13 Update

Ed reiterated that the Governor's Executive orders do not allow for Town Meetings or Referendums so the same rule will apply to the Board of Education School Budget as the Town Budget. In this case the Board of Education is the entity that presents the budget and will have the authority to adopt and approve the budget.

Ed said that he has met with Laura Francis, First Selectwoman of Durham, the Boards of Finance and Finance Directors from both towns, Superintendent of Schools, and the Chairman of the Board of Education to be sure that a fair budget will be approved.

First Selectman's Report

Mr. Bailey reported that he has obtained surgical style masks for Town Staff from the Health District.

He said that Budget Workshops are ongoing to finalize and make changes to different line items in the budget. One item Ed said that he plans to increase is Emergency Response Funding to be better prepared with Personal Protective Equipment supplies in the future. He continued by saying the MIL Rate could potentially be lower than originally projected and he hopes that with all of the government funding being offered to individuals, families, and businesses that people will be able to meet their obligations.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

- a. March 17, 2020 – Regular Meeting

Carol Bufithis made a motion, second by Ed Bailey, to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Carol Bufithis made a motion, second by Ed Bailey, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya Hogan

Tonya Hogan
Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes Approved _____

Confirmed by _____