

MIDDLEFIELD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
405 Main Street
Middlefield, Connecticut 06455

Minutes of the June 16, 2020 Regular Meeting

Call to Order

Ed Bailey, Carol Bufithis, and Bob Yamartino were present. Due to a power interruption, audio for the beginning portion of the meeting was not available and some portions were muffled.

Approval of Agenda

Change item 4.b to read June 1st.

Add item 6.a – Resolution for Affordable Housing Plan – Planning Grant

Add item 6.b - Appointments

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Jennifer Fontanella was present. Jim Irish was also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes of the Board of Selectmen

- a. May 19, 2020 – Regular Meeting
- b. June 1, 2020 – Regular Meeting

Carol Bufithis made a motion, second by Bob Yamartino, to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried.

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried

COVID-19 Update

Ed reported that Middlesex County currently has 8 hospitalizations, down one from June 15th. The county had been up near 40 hospitalizations at one point so this decline is reassuring. Deaths, which reached a peak in Mid-April, have declined considerably. Middlefield currently has 18 cases, a slight increase from the 15 that was previously reported. No deaths have been reported for Middlefield.

Park facilities have reopened with the exception of booking pavilion rentals. Some sports teams have been using the fields to hold practice.

Lake Beseck Beach is fully open and lifeguards will begin reporting for duty June 27th. Ed said that he has noticed an increase in beach traffic and usage as compared to previous years. The Park & Rec Commission has decided to sell beach passes both at the beach and online. Pass checkers have been on site daily from 11-4 and will continue to be present until the lifeguards begin reporting to the beach.

The next phase of business reopening is set to begin on June 17th. The Health District has been working closely with local businesses to assist in reopening safely.

Ed also stated that he has begun the claim filing process with FEMA for COVID related expenses. FEMA is expected to reimburse 75% of related costs and it is anticipated that the State will cover the remaining 25%.

Set Date and Time for a Town Meeting to fill expiring terms for the Board of Education, Board of Education Finance Committee and, DMIAAB as per the Governor's Executive Order 700.

In order to comply with the Governor's Executive Order a date, time, and place needs to be determined for the Town Meeting. Ed consulted with the Director of the Health Department and found that it was acceptable to hold an outdoor meeting. Ed suggested that the Town Meeting take place at Peckham Park on Monday June 29th at 7:00 PM.

Bob Yamartino made motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve a Special Town Meeting as per attached. Motion Carried.

Resolution for Affordable Housing Plan – Planning Grant

Ed explained that the State requires towns to have an Affordable Housing Plan and they have made available grant funds to create this plan. The state looks favorably on Regional Affordable Housing Plans so Ed has partnered with Laura Francis to apply for the grant in the hope that they would be more apt to receive the funding. Our shared Town Planner will assist in the grant process. Ed then read the resolution into record.

Discussion continued around definitions and requirements for the plan as well as the application and approval process.

Carol Bufithis made motion, second by Bob Yamartino, to approve attached Resolution regarding a Grant Application for an Affordable Housing Plan – Planning Grant. Motion Carried.

Appointments

Planning & Zoning Commission:

- i. William Warner – Term 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2022 – Fill Vacant Term (Howard)
- ii. Paul Pizzo (Alt) – Term 1/1/2020 to 12/31/2022 – Fill Vacant Term (Boyle)

Bob Yamartino made a motion, second by Carol Bufithis, to approve the appointments to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Motion carried

RSD-13 Update

Bob reported that at a recent meeting of the Board of Education preliminary discussions were had about restrictions that would be in place should schools open back up this fall. The main topic was transportation. Guidelines from the state are such that a 50-person bus would only allow for 12 passengers. This would require about three times the number of bus trips and drivers. The guidelines would require that every bus have a monitor to check the temperatures of passengers and enforce social distancing on the bus. Transportation is one of the highest cost items and these restrictions could triple the expense if not more.

Ed added that the state has received nearly \$1.2 Billion from the Federal Government of which a portion is allocated for COVID related educational expenses so, there is the possibility that the state could help cover some of these expenses. Discussion continued around transportation for students and associated costs based on these new state mandates.

First Selectman's Report

Ed reported that he has been distributing surgical style masks and thermometers to businesses, non-profits, churches, and religious institutions as part of a program implemented by the state. Further, the town is participating in the States Municipal Coronavirus Relief Fund which is meant to reimburse us with COVID related expense including expenses incurred by the Levi Coe Library and DMIAAB.

A peace and unity Vigil had been held on our town green on June 4th which was put together by town resident Anne Koba in response to the killing of George Floyd. Ed worked together with Laura Francis and the School District to distribute a letter to the community in regards to this tragic incident as well. Ed, Laura, and the School District have attended workshops and working to address the issue of equity in our schools and community. The letter details the commitment to support the students, staff and community by implementing a Strategic Plan of actions. Discussion continued around what types of efforts can be made to educate and engage our community in an effort to end systemic racism.

Ed continued by explaining that a Regional Transit Study is being conducted with 9-Town Transit. The study is moving forward regarding a bus route from the shoreline through Durham and Middlefield and on to the Train Station in Meriden. Ed feels that Public Transportation would be quite beneficial to the town and that the newly formed transit district is supporting Micro Transit.

Adjournment

Ed Bailey made a motion, second by Bob Yamartino, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tonya Hogan

Tonya Hogan
Assistant Town Clerk

Minutes Approved _____

Confirmed by _____