



**Town of North Stonington
Board of Selectmen Meeting
North Stonington Education Center & Zoom Meeting
September 28, 2021
6:00 PM**

Public will be able to attend the meeting in person or via Zoom with the following link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81261314017?pwd=SFJjV1FadUdFZkUzRS9pSHlyZjNnUT09>

Or via Zoom App-Enter Meeting ID: 812 6131 4017

Passcode: 642107

Or listen only via telephone by calling 646 558 8656 and enter Meeting ID: 812 6131 4017

MINUTES

1. **Call to order/Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm, First Selectman Urgo, Selectman Carlson, Selectwoman Kincaid, and Administration & Finance Officer Christine Dias in attendance along with Highway Foreman Don Hill.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

3. **Public Comments on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items***

Selectman Urgo proposed addition of agenda Item 10C-Business Development under American Rescue Plan Funds Agenda Item 10. Selectman Carlson made motion to add Agenda Item 10C-Business Development, Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

4. **Keeping North Stonington Affordable sale of 119 Clarks Falls Road and Upcoming Event**

Selectman Urgo reported that the sale went thru. Property will be used for Affordable Housing per the stipulations of the sale which were agreed upon by the town in 2018. If any proceeds are made from sale when KNSA sells it they will be used for educational purposes per the agreement with the attorney general to be in line with the deed intention. Selectman Urgo introduced Betty from KNSA to give an update on the upcoming event for the Affordable Housing project. Betty advised that the event would take place at the Hewitt Farm pavilion and not at the 119 Clarks Falls Road site. The event is a two-hour event where the public, local elected officials and regional people would be invited. There will be displays and refreshments will be available. Betty advised she needs help digging a hole to put in a post where the signage will be to announce event. Betty was initially requesting additional funding from the Town to have this done. After discussing the request no funding was

approved for the event, however both Selectmen agreed to help in the digging of the hole and Selectman Uργο offered to make a donation.

- 5. Additional Appropriation** – Highway Foreman Don Hill was present to participate in the conversation about the installation of speed humps, and also to request an additional appropriation funding to replace Truck #42 (a 2006 Ford F-350 Utility Body truck). When heavy budget cuts were made by Board of Finance last June, the one-time expenditure to replace this truck then was eliminated by The Board of Finance with the idea that these capital expenditures could be requested through the appropriation process this fiscal year if needed. A new problem with the exhaust manifolds rotting was discovered, in addition to all the other pre-existing issues such as that the vehicle has 200,100 miles on it; it is 15 years old; the frame and front end are also rotted as well as the cab, cab mounts and doorstep. Don provided photos as evidence of the poor condition and rot of the existing vehicle and to indicate the need is even greater now. He provided two estimates of the replacement cost. One from Columbia Ford for \$47,207 with an estimated delivery date of January 2022 and the other from Gengras Ford LLC for \$52,934 with an estimated delivery date of October 2021. These would be gas models as opposed to diesel, which would cost more. The existing truck #42 is used by the mechanic to go out and do repairs and for plowing of town properties during the winter. Selectman Carlson asked why a greater effort wasn't made to keep this as part of the budget process. Although he believes that the Town needs a new truck, he suggested that circumventing the budget and then later asking for an appropriation is not a best practice. First Selectman Uργο stated that it was included as part of the Board of Selectmen's budget and was removed by the Board of Finance in their budget cuts. A motion made by Selectman Carlson to send the additional appropriation request of \$53,000 to the Board of Finance, which would then ultimately go to the Town Meeting for a vote. Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd motion. Motion approved 3-0-0.
- 6. Speed Humps Update Discussion/Action** – Selectman Uργο indicated that in the last two weeks someone locally reached out to the State Historic Preservation Officer, Todd Levine, regarding concerns with the impact of aesthetics of speed humps. Selectman Uργο and Highway Foreman Don Hill had discussions with Levine and Don Hill shared emails between himself and Todd Levine on the speed humps aesthetics issue. Different options were made not only by Todd Levine but also the Department of Transportation, but in the end, it was decided that the speed humps

would be most effective way to slow traffic. Selectman Carlson had investigated two other historic areas close by that have speed humps, Masons Island and Noank. He reported that Masons Island is on private property and in Noank, they are very old and not in compliance with present standards. Selectman Carlson made a motion to make an exception and ask for comments from public in attendance on this Agenda Item #6. Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd, Selectman Urgo abstained. Motion approved 2-0-1.

Several comments were made by the public in attendance. Selectman Urgo indicated that all eight (8) speed humps will be installed along with the signage on both sides of the humps as well as the painting of them. No action is necessary on this item as it was already approved last year. Installation will proceed as planned.

- 7. Updates to Governmental Volume Submitter Money Purchase Plan** – Selectman Urgo indicated that Claire May - Administrator of the Plan was present via Zoom to give a brief overview of the Plan and how it works as opposed to a State Pension Plan. Claire explained that this plan is a flat based percentage of the employee's salary, and it is for non-union and union government employees. It is a money purchase plan and there is a vesting schedule. If an employee leaves prior to a 6-year term, then they only receive a percentage of what they contributed to the plan. Anyone who stays 6 years or more receives 100% of what they contributed. Selectman Carlson spoke on his reasons to not approve the change in the vesting years. However, Selectman Carlson made a motion to approve the language in the 2nd question that excludes part-time employees from the plan. 2nd by Selectman Urgo. Motion approved 2-0-1, Selectwoman Kincaid abstained.

- 8. Sustainable CT Opportunity Climate Planning** – Selectman Urgo advised that North Stonington was selected to participate in climate change discussions with Sustainability people, PDZO and other communities. No motion necessary on this topic.

- 9. Natural Resources Conservation Service – Watershed and Flood Protection Prevention Operations Program Resolution** – This applies only to the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers. Selectman Carlson advised that there is no cost to participate in this discussion as any info gained would be beneficial. Motion made by Selectman Carlson to adopt resolution authorizing the Town of North Stonington to become a member of the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Planning & Development Flood Prevention Operation. Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

10. American Rescue Plan Funds

- a. **Signage** – Selectman Uργο requested additional funds in the amount of \$1092.28 for signage that would replace portable signs that we’ve lost. They cost \$170 each and 6 will be ordered. Motion made by Selectwoman Kincaid, 2nd by Selectman Carlson. Motion approved 3-0-0.
- b. **TVCCA** – Thames Valley Council for Community Action is requesting \$2000 from Town for the Senior Nutrition program. Selectman Uργο spoke with Senior Center Director about her endorsement of TVCCA. She highly recommends them. Selectman Carlson agrees. Motion made by Selectman Carlson to approve \$2,000 funding request, Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.
- c. **Business Development** – EDC Chair presented the North Stonington Works Bonus Program to the Board of Finance, and they tentatively approved it once the Board of Selectmen has all the details of the program. There was a question as to whether the Town would be paying the employees directly or paying the employer. Selectman Carlson advised that it was decided that the Town would pay the employer since the employees would not be employees of the Town. The program cannot be voted on here as there are still unanswered questions such as stipends to cover hiring expenses and are they eligible for ARPA money. Selectman Uργο indicated that clarification was needed from the auditor on items.

11. Code of Ethics Review – Selectman Carlson advised that he, Christine, and Town Labor Attorney met regarding the Code of Ethics developed 6-8 months ago. There was one significant change concerning the creation of a Commission for the Code of Ethics to work. The Commission consists of 5 full-time members and 3 alternate members with 3-year terms. Of the 5 full-time members, 2 would have a 1-year term, 2 would have a 2-year term and 1 would have a 3-year term. This way there is not a complete change of the Commission every three years. How the Commission would work is that if someone felt a person was in violation of the Code of Ethics, that person would get an advisory opinion by submitting a form to the Town Labor Attorney, who in turn would decide if there was a justification to bring the issue to the Commission. The Commission would decide if there was fault and what the penalty would be, if any. This Code of Ethics applies to all elected, appointed and hired town employees. All persons would be given a copy of the Code of Ethics, upon hiring or election, to read and sign off on and return to the Town. The Code of Ethics applies to any financial issues not behavioral issues The document that would

address behavioral conduct would be the Discriminatory Harassment, Workplace Violence & Inappropriate Behavior Policy that Christine will address next agenda item.

A motion was made by Selectman Carlson to send Code of Ethics as presented to the Town Meeting for approval. Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

12. Discriminatory Harassment, Workplace Violence, and Inappropriate Behavior

Policy Review – Christine advised this policy applies to the same people as the Code of Ethics: all elected and appointed officials as well as hired town employees. The Policy is to ensure that not only the workplace, but public meeting environments are appropriate, and everyone is comfortable. It covers all different behaviors and actions that could be considered harassment or inappropriate. The Town can do more to dictate the behavior of their hired employees as opposed to elected or appointed officials, but it is important that everyone hired is clear on what is expected of them. It is easier for those expectations to be met when they are presented with a document outlining those expectations. The policy also lays out complaint process and how it is handled for any of the applicable situations. There are two designated people to act as a grievance officer and employment officer. Selectman Urgo asked if the Policy addresses social media and Christine pointed out that social media is addressed in the second paragraph of the policy. Selectman Urgo wanted to know if the use of inaccurate information is also addressed and Christine directed him to page 4, section IV, where it does.

This policy can be voted on to approve the Policy as it is a policy as to the Code of Ethics being an ordinance, whereas it needs the Town's approval as well.

Motion made by Selectman Carlson to approve the Discriminatory Harassment, Workplace Violence & Inappropriate Behavior Policy. Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

13. Selectman 5 Yr Capital Plan – Selectman Urgo received an email today from the Animal Control Officer who was requesting that her vehicle be replaced as it is having major issues. Selectman Urgo asked if the Board wants to budget for a new vehicle or defer to Capital Improvement Work Group. Christine advised that they need an estimated cost to replace with new vehicle. It was agreed to defer to Capital Improvement Work Group to discuss.

14. 298 Norwich-Westerly Road Update – Selectman Urgo advised that he did meet with the President and Executive Director of the Library to discuss the possibility of combining efforts regarding a request for funding. It was decided that they will take

the idea back to their Board for discussion. Selectman Uργο also advised that he received an estimate for having renderings done so public can “see” possibilities for property. The proposal for cost of renderings will go to Town Meeting within the next couple of months. Selectman Carlson said he is in favor of renderings being done but would like to hear what the library would like to do first. Selectman Uργο will check with architect to see if they can adjust their schedule for two weeks. It was agreed to wait for more feedback from the library as well as an open discussion at next BOS meeting.

15. Call for Town Meeting – Selectman Uργο read the call for the October 5, 2021, Town Meeting and items listed for approval (see attachment). Motion made by Selectman Carlson to send items for approval, 2nd by Selectwoman Kincaid. Motion approved 3-0-0.

16. Appointments – Selectman Uργο received an email from William Ricker requesting approval for re-appointments of Steven Colgan, Doug Farrand (Steve’s term expired October 1, 2020, and Doug’s October 28, 2020) and Jason Mancini (Jason’s term expires October 15, 2021) for 5-year terms. Motion made by Selectman Carlson to approve re-appointments as requested, Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

17. Selectman’s Expenses – nothing to report.

18. Minutes of September 14, 2021 Special Meeting – Motion made by Selectman Carlson to approve September 14, 2021 Special Meeting minutes as presented by Christine Dias, Selectwoman Kincaid 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

19. Public Comments on Agenda Items*

20. Adjournment – Selectman Carlson made motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:05 pm, Selectman Uργο 2nd. Motion approved 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mike Uργο

*The Board of Selectmen respectfully requests that public comments do not exceed two (2) minutes per person in respect for everyone’s time.