

Board of Selectmen  
Town Office Annex  
February 7, 2007  
Regular Meeting Minutes

Selectmen present: Brad Parker, Randy Dill, and Peter Govert.  
Also present: Craig Mansfield, Shirley Judge, and Sharon Wheeler.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by First Selectman Parker and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of Agenda: Motion made Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the agenda as written. Unanimous aye
3. Approval of Minutes:

Special Meeting of December 20, 2006: Motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of December 20, 2006 as written. Unanimous aye.

Special Meeting of December 26, 2006: Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Parker, to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of December 26, 2006 as written. Mr. Govert abstained from the vote. Motion passed with a majority of aye votes.

Special Meeting of January 3, 2007: Mr. Dill noted that there was a typo on page 2 in the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence; the word “build” should be changed to “built”. Motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of January 3, 2007 as amended. Unanimous aye.

Regular Meeting of January 17, 2007: Mr. Dill noted that under item # 4, “Correspondence”, Mr. Parker had stated he would ascertain Mr. Dill’s availability for the February 12<sup>th</sup> Charter Study Committee Meeting. Mr. Dill confirmed that he would not be available on that date and Mr. Parker stated he had notified the committee of same and they advised they would invite Mr. Dill to a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Dill also inquired as to whether or not Mr. Parker had been able to verify the validity of the \$2198.64 tax refund to Dawn Lynn Stix. Mr. Parker advised that he had researched the issue and learned that a barn on Ms. Stix’s property had been incorrectly assessed as a loft/living space. The error was uncovered when Ms. Stix’s real estate agent researched the tax records when the property was listed for sale. He noted that the law only allowed a three-year look back on tax refunds and so that was the amount that was refunded to Ms. Stix. He also confirmed that Ms. Zdanys had visited the property when the error was brought to her attention and she confirmed that there was no living space in the barn.

Motion made by Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Parker to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting of January 17, 2007 as written. Mr. Dill abstained from the vote. Motion passed with a majority of aye votes.

4. Correspondence: Mr. Parker reviewed a letter he had received from the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, dated February 1, 2007. He stated the letter was to advise the town of road work scheduled to be done on Route 82 during 2007. He noted that the state had re-paved the referenced section of Route 82 last season and the letter indicated the 2007 road work “...may include the replacement of obsolete protective fences with metal guide rails, sign replacement, and the application of epoxy safety markings”.

5. First Selectman’s Report:

Mr. Parker advised that he had invited Craig Mansfield to this meeting to provide a report on the activities of the East Haddam Emergency Management Committee. He noted that there has been a significant increase in the responsibilities of Emergency Management directors due to Homeland Security Department requirements and he commended Mr. Mansfield on his work. In response to a request from Mr. Govert, Mr. Mansfield advised that he has been the town’s Emergency Management Director for the last year and the position was a volunteer role that qualifies for the \$1,000.00 property tax abatement. He noted that he spent an average of 8-10 hours per week on the job. Mr. Parker advised that the Regional Emergency Management Director had informed him that the federal government would pay for one-half of the salary for a paid position.

Mr. Mansfield distributed a copy of his report and provided the following list of accomplishments:

- The major project the Committee has worked on since he took over the director’s position was to improve communications among all of the town’s Emergency Services and Departments. He noted that all department heads and service directors now met at least once every other month.
- The main Emergency Management risk to the town was a natural disaster, therefore, the Committee partnered with the Red Cross to train 35 town residents on shelter management. He noted the High School was the town’s designated shelter.
- Regions within the state’s Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) were recently realigned and, originally, East Haddam was assigned to a region that was not logistically appropriate. The Committee sought and received approval of a change of region assignment allowing East Haddam to be combined with the rest of the towns in the Chatham Health District.
- The Committee meets monthly with the other Chatham Health District Emergency Management groups.
- Agreements were established with the schools, bus company, and local businesses for emergency use of property and equipment. The Committee has also started work on compiling a list of all of the heavy equipment available in town.
- The East Haddam Industrial Park has been designated as the drop-off location for receiving and distributing emergency supplies. DEMHS requires a fork-lift be available at the designated drop-off site and R.A. Parady & Sons volunteered use of theirs during an emergency. Shagbark’s fork-lift would also be available as a back-up
- The town’s radio frequency licenses were brought into compliance with State and Federal requirements. Such compliance was a requirement for continued grant funding.
- Mr. Mansfield noted that the Valley Shore EMD group has a number of seasoned members and he has joined the group and has benefited from their knowledge and experience.

- The 2004 grant money was allocated, per federal guidelines and recommendation of the committee, to purchase rescue tools/chainsaws, upgrades to emergency technology and radio equipment, night vision binoculars, an ID system, and cones for use by a number of town service and emergency departments.
- The CT Hazard Assessment was completed. Mr. Mansfield noted that the four schools in town, and the Leesville dam meet the requirements for “high hazard” designations. He noted that although the swing bridge did not meet the volume-of-traffic requirements for a “high hazard” designation, the Committee added it to the list because of the impact it would have on access to and from town if it was damaged or put out of commission. Mr. Dill inquired if the airport was on the “high hazard” list and Mr. Mansfield advised that it was not due to its relatively low level of traffic. Mr. Govert asked about the nuclear fuel rods stored in Haddam and Mr. Mansfield stated those would be included on that town’s list.
- Mr. Mansfield described the process that would be used if the town was required to manage an all-residents screening and dispensing of medications/inoculations. A successful point-of-dispensing exercise was held and the town’s medical supplies are now stored at the Fire Department. He noted that the East Hampton High School was currently the central location for dispensing medications/inoculations for all of the towns in the Chatham Health District, however, the main clinic may be moved to Portland with RHAM as a back-up. He advised that the goal was to have two clinics for the District. Mr. Mansfield advised that the Committee planned to have a full training session and drill this spring. Mr. Govert suggested including the high school students in the drill.
- Approximately \$1,500.00 of grant funds was used to fix and update meteorology equipment for the town. The equipment was installed at the fire house approximately six months ago and the town now has local weather on-line. He noted that the equipment would be critical in a HAZMAT emergency that required the town to track wind speed and direction.
- Emergency plans were drawn up for crisis management at the town’s schools. The School Emergency Plans, including maps and floor plans, were distributed to all Emergency Management personnel and copies were now carried in each town and Resident State Trooper police car.
- A Special Needs Assessment form for emergency situations was drafted and would be distributed to all town residents in the next newsletter.
- Committee members have attended numerous training classes for a wide range of emergencies, however, most of the training was held during the day and not conducive to volunteers.

Mr. Govert inquired about preparations for the threat of bird flu. Mr. Parker advised that the state has set out a list of requirements and responsibilities and was in the process of updating its existing plan. He noted that the Chatham Health District would take the lead in coordinating the state’s plan for the towns in its district.

Mr. Mansfield distributed an updated list of Emergency Management personnel and phone numbers. He also reported that the town’s Emergency Management Committee was continuing to work on the following additional projects:

- Allocate the 2005 and 2006 grant money: The Committee was researching purchasing several small generators with 2005 grant funds and using money from the 2006 grant to meet the state’s EOC recommendations/requirements.
- Update and sign-off on the Emergency Operations Plan.

- Create a town-wide ID program with graduating levels of security clearance.
- Complete National Incident Management System training by all of the required areas. Mr. Mansfield advised this was a federal requirement and stated the Selectmen could do their training on-line; he would send them the web address. He noted, however, that the town procurement manager and service heads would have to complete 24-hours and 16-hours of in-class training respectively. Mr. Mansfield stated that he was looking into whether or not the town could use some of the grant money to hire a trainer to do the class training over several weekends.

Mr. Dill noted that one of the Police Study Committee recommendations was to improve communication technology between the town's various emergency and service departments. Mr. Mansfield stated that the Emergency Management Committee had made some progress on this issue but agreed that the town needed to implement a town-wide communication system.

The Selectmen thanked Mr. Mansfield for his good work and for meeting with them and providing them with an update on the Emergency Management Committee's projects.

Mr. Parker advised that the town was moving into budget review and approval time and meetings with Ms. Tatro and the town's department heads would be scheduled during the weeks of February 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. He invited the Selectmen to attend any of the meetings and stated that he hoped they would be available to attend the meetings with the Commissions for which they were the liaison. To that end, he asked the Selectmen to let him know the times they would not be available. Mr. Dill provided him with his dates and Mr. Govert agreed to check his calendar and get back to him.

Mr. Parker reported that the town's building official had resigned and that an extensive search had been done for a replacement. He noted that an offer had been made and accepted, however, the individual withdrew his acceptance the following day. Another appropriate candidate had subsequently been identified and he would start work on February 20<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, John Collins has been helping out on a part-time basis.

Mr. Parker stated that he had met with Mr. Ventres to discuss the road name changes and potential road changes to recreations trails that the Board of Selectmen had discussed earlier. Mr. Dill advised that he had attended a recent Planning and Zoning Commission meeting where the transportation section of the town's Plan of Conservation and Development was discussed. He stated that there appears to be a shift in how the town was ranking its roads and highways and stated that he hoped the Board of Selectmen could review the plan before the updates were finalized. Mr. Parker provided the Selectmen with a copy of a CT Rural Development Council brochure outlining community assessment programs it offered. He noted that the Council would talk with the Board and do assessments on the current state of various aspects of the towns and make recommendations. In response to a question from Mr. Dill, Mr. Parker advised that there was no charge for the service. He asked Mr. Govert and Mr. Dill to review the brochure for future discussion.

6. Citizen's Concerns: There were no citizen's concerns to discuss at this meeting.

7. Old Business:

A. 4 - 8 Middle School Discussion: Mr. Parker advised that the Building Committee recently met with the Board of Finance and good progress was being made. He stated that Committee would provide the Board of Finance with additional information for the bonding issue at their next meeting. He also noted that a representative from Newfield Construction had a pre-construction meeting with Mr. Ventres and they were close to securing a building permit for the plans.

Mr. Dill noted that the town's previous building official, Dan Loos, had indicated that the construction of the school would take up a lot of the inspector's time. Mr. Parker advised that the initial review of the building plans was hired out and has been completed. He also stated that consultants would also do a number of special inspections and two officials from neighboring towns have volunteered their help. He noted that all of this should lighten the burden on the town's official.

Mr. Govert asked for feedback on an email he had circulated concerning documenting reporting procedures between the School Building Committee and the town. Mr. Dill advised that he had not had a chance to review the email and Mr. Govert agreed to resend it to him. The intent of the email was to start the dialogue to develop formal reporting procedures between the Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

B. Police Study Committee: Mr. Dill noted that he had previously distributed the Committee's report and Mr. Parker stated the Selectmen would review it before their next meeting. Mr. Parker suggested inviting the Committee to a Board of Selectmen meeting so that they could thank them for their work. Mr. Dill agreed that was a good idea but suggested they wait to extend the invitation until the Selectmen have had a chance to discuss the report.

C. Goodspeed Update: Mr. Parker reported that the Goodspeed had received their appraiser's report but that it did not contain an appraisal for an easement. He noted that the appraisal had come within \$20,000.00 of the town's appraisal and the Goodspeed has asked their appraiser to provide them with a value for the easement component. Further, in 2-3 weeks time the Goodspeed expects to have a report from Mr. Pinnell to share with the town regarding the use of its existing properties. Mr. Parker stated he would set-up a meeting with the Goodspeed to review the report. There was a general discussion about a recent Hartford Courant article concerning the State's reallocation of a \$3M grant to the Goodspeed for housing, expansion of the Stillman Production Center, and construction of a warehouse building to store costumes and other items. Mr. Dill noted that Mr. Price was quoted as stating that the new theatre plans were "dead".

D. Ethics Policy: Mr. Parker reported that the draft Ethics Policy was about three-quarters complete and he would share it with the other Selectmen after it has been typed up.

## 8. New Business:

A. Revised Bid Award – Renovations to Co #2 Firehouse: Mr. Parker reported that the bid for the work on the Firehouse came in significantly higher than expected. Consequently, the scale of the project to be contracted out was reduced and the balance of work would be done in-house. In response to a question by Mr. Dill, Mr. Parker advised that the original budget was \$20-30,000.00. He advised that the town awarded the project to the lowest bidder of the full

project and that contractor broke out the details of his bid to arrive at the cost for the scaled down project. The contractor would install an external iron stairway and cut in and hang a door at the top of the stairs. Mr. Dill inquired if the stairway was covered and Mr. Parker advised that it was not and the town had gotten a waiver from the State Building Department.

Motion made by Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to award the revised bid for Renovations to Co #2 Firehouse to M. A. & M. Inc., dba Aresco Construction Company in the amount of \$27,000.00. Unanimous aye.

B. Call for Town Meeting: Mr. Parker reviewed the call for a Town Meeting scheduled for February 22<sup>nd</sup> and noted that the topics had been reviewed at the previous Board of Finance meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to approve the following call for Town Meeting:

The Electors and citizens of the Town of East Haddam, Connecticut qualified to vote in Town Meeting are hereby warned and notified that a Special Town Meeting will be held in the Nathan Hale-Ray High School Cafeteria on School Drive in the said Town of East Haddam, at 8:00 p.m., Thursday, February 22, 2007 for the following purposes, to wit:

**Item 1:** To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to accept a grant in the amount of \$7,000.00 from the State of Connecticut, State Library, for the purpose of historic document preservation; and to appropriate said grant to the Historic Document Preservation Fund.

**Item 2:** To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to accept a grant in the amount of \$30,000.00 from the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, entitled "Hazardous Moving Violation Enforcement Program".

**Item 3:** To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to accept a grant from the AT&T Foundation, entitled "AT&T Excelerator Grant Program", in the amount of \$5,000.00; and to appropriate to line #765 Aging and Elderly.

**Item 4:** To consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve and appropriate the expenditure of \$325,000.00 from the Capital Reserve Non-recurring Expenditure Fund to line #841 Fire Department for the purchase of a Fire Department apparatus. Unanimous aye.

C. Commission Appointment (WPCA): Mr. Parker read a letter from Andrew Lord, Chairman of the WPCA, requesting the Selectmen expedite the recommended appointment.

Motion made by Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to appoint John Koskovich as an alternate member on the Water Pollution Control Authority to fill a vacant term to expire June 30, 2007. Unanimous aye.

D. Board Reappointments (ZBA): Mr. Parker read a memo submitted by Stuart Wood recommending two reappointments to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Motion made by Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Dill, to reappoint Dan Schies as a regular member and Richard Fiala as an alternate member for five-year terms to expire January 2012 on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Unanimous aye.

E. Tax Refunds: Mr. Parker called the Selectmen's attention to one tax refund.

Motion made by Mr. Govert, seconded by Mr. Parker, to award a tax refund in the amount of \$79.73 to Ritchie or Jane Waggoner. Unanimous aye.

9. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

10. Selectmen's Discussion:

Mr. Dill discussed the following issues:

- The bids to do the open space survey on the Shugrue property were significantly more than anticipated, and ranged from \$18,000.00 to \$200,000.00.
- He asked for an update on the property boundary dispute between the Sportsmen's Club and the adjoining property owner. Mr. Parker advised that the two parties could not come to an agreement and the Sportsmen's Club was taking the town's Zoning Board to court over the its approval of the property owner's building plans. He noted that the town has received notice of the legal action but there was nothing further to report at this time.
- He has received several complaints from town residents regarding the interpersonal skills of one of the employees of the Health District and noted that he wanted Mr. Parker, the Chairman of the Chatham Health District, to be aware of the situation. Mr. Parker stated that he has received positive feedback on that person from several individuals but noted Mr. Dill's report.
- He recently signed off on a check for flowers for a board member and noted the expenditure had been authorized, however, he did not feel it was appropriate for the town to be paying for such purchases. Mr. Parker agreed and stated he would draft a memo to the town employees advising them of the guidelines for town expenditures and send a copy to the Selectmen.
- He had also signed off on a rent check for office space for the revaluation consultants and asked if there wasn't any town-owned space that could have been used. He mentioned the Grange basement and Mr. Parker advised that there was no phone-line into the Grange and it was not a secure space in that it was regularly used by many different people. He also noted that the consultants needed to be in relatively close proximity to the Town Office since they have to frequently access the files. He advised that he had done a thorough search of potential space in the Village and the other available spaces were either more expensive or not suitable. He noted that even though the town had to pay rent for the consultants, he expected the cost of the re-valuation project to come in \$40-

45,000.00 under budget. In response to a question from Mr. Dill, Mr. Parker advised that the consultants would need the space for approximately one year. Mr. Dill opined that this appeared to be an unnecessary expense, considering the potential use of other town owned properties.

- On January 30<sup>th</sup> the Planning and Zoning Commission held a meeting to go over the new building regulations with contractors and developers. Mr. Dill expressed concern that a member of the Commission, who was also a contractor, participated as a member of the audience and voiced dissatisfaction with the new regulations. At the close of the meeting the Commissioners indicated they might reexamine the revised regulations and make some changes. Mr. Dill stated he was concerned about conflict of interest issues.
- Mr. Parker advised that Mr. Ventres had provided him with some feedback after that meeting and, as a result, he stated he planned to look more deeply into the issue. He noted that if there was an issue that called for a vote and there was a conflict of interest concern, the person should recuse him or herself from the vote. A perception of an ongoing conflict of interest, however, should be avoided.
- Mr. Dill requested that the Selectmen meet to discuss this year's budget strategy prior to attending any meetings with the town's Boards and Commissions. The other Selectmen agreed and Mr. Parker stated that he had advised everyone submitting budget requests that this was a "lean" year.
- Mr. Dill advised that it took three calls to get a response to a fire at a horse barn on the previous Martin Luther King holiday. He noted that no one was on-duty at the fire house that day. In response to Mr. Dill's question, Mr. Parker advised that coverage of paid staff was not mandated on scheduled holidays. Mr. Dill stated he would raise his concerns at the Fire Department's budget meeting.
- In response to Mr. Dill's inquiry, Mr. Parker advised that it was scrap material that had been delivered to a private entity and not topsoil. He stated that the town vehicles were properly used to deliver the scrap material because the town wanted to dispose of the material. He noted that there was one instance when topsoil was bartered for services rendered at the Senior Center and that the exchange had been properly authorized and documented. Mr. Parker agreed to provide Mr. Dill with copies of the documentation.

Mr. Govert raised the following discussion items:

- There was a general concern about the impact of increasing property taxes on the citizens of our town and he noted that there are two ways to address the problem: (1) cut services, or (2) bolster tax revenues. Mr. Govert stated the Economic Development Commission was in favor of encouraging appropriate business growth to augment the tax base and, therefore, planned to submit a proposal during the budget process that the town approve a part-time Economic Development Coordinator position. He provided a brief description of the

position and noted that EDC's initial expectations were that the person would work approximately +/- 10 hours per week.

- The Local Prevention Council in conjunction with Youth and Family Services was holding a community conversation on Sunday, February 11, to discuss how town residents can make a positive and lasting impact on the community and the lives of the youth in town. The first session would be about role models and the second would speak to using our young people as resources. He noted that invitations were mailed to town residents at random and that approximately 50 people had responded. He added that the event was an open meeting and encouraged the Selectmen to attend and/or spread the word. Mr. Govert added that the Selectmen would be invited to a discussion with the Board of Education in April. The superintendent has invited various town stakeholders to informally discuss substance abuse in town.

11. Executive Session – Property Negotiations: Motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Govert, to enter into executive session for reason of property negotiation at 9:40pm. Unanimous aye.

Selectmen returned to regular session at 10:10 p.m. No motions or decisions were made.

12. Adjournment: Motion made by Mr. Dill, seconded by Mr. Govert, to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m. Unanimous aye.

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Respectfully submitted,

Peter T. Govert, Secretary