

**MINUTES: REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, September 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Via GoToMeeting**

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In attendance: C. Iino, L. Annino, Jr., E. Blewett

Visitors: W. Linsley, N. Gorski, J. Gay, T. Hajek, R. Pleines, R. Regolo, W. Adametz, A. Stirna,
D. Mooney, M. Nuhn, J. Comerford, J. Young, R. Rimmer

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. Public comment
Eileen Blewett read a letter from L. Lefko regarding a comment from the September 13, 2021 meeting. (attached) Iino's response was reserved for later in the meeting. (see Items 4, 10F)

Annie Stirna, speaking from her experience on boards and commissions in town, commented that until this last year, people have been nominated for their qualifications more than their party affiliation and that boards and commissions have traditionally operated in a bipartisan manner.

3. Department reports: none
4. Approval of minutes
Iino moved to approve the minutes of September 13, 2021. The motion was seconded by Annino. Discussion:

Blewett asked for the following changes to Item 8 A. *Old Business/ Charter Revision Commission*:

- **Change "Chairman Rimmer stated that now that 5 of the 7 members have been defined as public officials, ..." to "Chairman Rimmer stated that it is his understanding that as 5 of the 7 members are public officials, ..."**
- **Replace last sentence of first paragraph with: No current members have volunteered to step down. Blewett asked Rimmer about the possibility of expanding the commission. Rimmer does not endorse expanding the board to accommodate new members.**
- Blewett asked that it be noted that she did not officially receive the letter being referenced, or the earlier legal opinion, and added that she thought it was not relevant to proceedings. She felt the letter should not have been spoken about without having been posted with the meeting materials. Iino disagreed about the relevance of the letter.

Changes/comments to Item 6. Appointments: Blewett wanted it noted that, despite her request for information, she never received the resume of Mr. Francheschi-Hoffman. Iino apologized for the omission, and noted that the resume had been distributed to both town committee chairs.

She also asked for the following change to Item 6 [referencing a comment referred to in Public Comment above]

- **Add the following sentence at the end of Item 6: Iino remarked that she hoped that, as in the past, committee members would serve in a non-partisan manner.**

The motion to approve the minutes with the above amendments passed unanimously.

Blewett added that the minutes from the August 9th meeting said that the letter from town counsel had been distributed when it was not. lino said that it was her recollection that said letter from the town attorney was distributed at the August 9 in-person meeting.

5. Refunds and abatements

Annino moved to approve the following 5 applications for refunds and allow them to follow their normal course for reimbursement.

- **Jeffrey O'Connor/Amanda Mark** 185 Burr Hill Rd **\$114.36 Overpaid COC#09895R**
- **Glenn D. Reyer** 15 Colonial Drive **\$121.76 Overpaid COC#10162M**
- **Peter Stankovics** 257 Route 80 Apt 4D **\$90.26 Overpaid COC#10015M**
- **VCFS Auto Leasing** PO Box 91300 **\$513.83 Overpaid COC#10130M**
- **Michael L. Bray** 27 Kelseytown Rd **\$10.40 Overpaid COC#10168M**

The motion, seconded by Blewett, passed unanimously.

6. Appointments

lino moved to appoint Heather J. Greenaway (D) Open Space Committee for a term ending 12/31/2021. The motion, seconded by Annino, passed unanimously.

lino moved to appoint Brian F. Walsh as Emergency Management Director for a term ending 12/31/2021.

Discussion: Mr. Walsh stepped up in response to lino's appeal in the Krier. He has been a member of the KVFC since 2002, has been trained in FEMA's Emergency Management Institution and comes highly recommended by the KVFC and the Fire Commission.

The motion, seconded by Blewett, passed unanimously.

7. New Business

A. Estuary Transit District Merger

Joe Comerford, Executive Director of the Estuary Transit District, briefed the board on the potential of combining the Middletown Transit District and the Estuary Transit District, and sought the board's support. The board offered appreciation for the efforts of Mr. Comerford and of town ETD representative Joan Gay. Annino asked about funding sources, and Comerford spoke at length about past and future funding commitments. There was unanimous support of the services provided by the current ETD and for merger.

lino moved the following resolution:

The Board of Selectmen of the town of Killingworth supports the combination of the Middletown Transit District and the Estuary Transit District into an expanded Estuary Transit District on the condition that the necessary funding commitment is provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

The motion, seconded by Annino, passed unanimously.

B. Labor attorney

lino presented for consideration a draft of a letter of engagement for the legal services of Robinson + Cole to possibly represent the town to provide advice regarding the town pension plans, the first responder service recognition plan and the town employee manual.

There was brief discussion about rates. Blewett was reluctant to act without competitive rate comparison. Annino thought more research, and possibly the development of a formal Request for Qualifications was in order. No action was taken.

C. State and regional ARPA funds

lino explained that there may be opportunities for the town to benefit from state ARPA funds to be distributed through the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. With the help of the Council of Governments structure, DEMHS will possibly manage funding for economic programs targeting tourism, regional economic planning, planning specific to corridors, sectors of business, innovation hubs, business-friendly infrastructure improvements etc. lino will report back after further briefings.

lino mentioned as examples of possible projects for which we could seek funding expansion of a recent Route 81 corridor study north to Killingworth, and plans to manage town-owned properties like Parmelee Farm through independent non-profit management groups.

8. Old Business

A. Employee Manual Revisions

After brief discussion, this item was postponed.

9. First Selectwoman's comments

A. The Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan has been approved by DEMHS and FEMA. The town is therefore eligible to apply for various kinds of funds.

B. Planning and Zoning Enforcement Officer/Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Officer has announced her retirement, effective October 31, 2021. lino is in close communication with the Planning and Zoning Commission about next steps regarding the ZEO position. The IWWC officer position is appointed by the Board of Selectmen. There was brief discussion.

Annino, personally and as a selectmen, said he would like to wish Jefferson well and thank her for her many, many years of excellent service to the town. Blewett and lino also expressed their appreciation for Jefferson's work.

C. The remnants of Hurricane Ida caused more damage in town than Hurricane Henri. The county total may reach the threshold for disaster relief funding, which could be applied to storm damage to Green Hill Road and other expenses. Annino was critical of the lack of full-scale engineering for the 2018 repairs to the site. There was discussion about the engineer supervising emergency repairs vs. a fully engineered solution at this site. There was consensus that repairs need to be made with longevity in mind, and that long-range plans will need to account for more frequent, serious weather events.

10. Selectmen's comments

A. Blewett suggested that the town consider hiring a professional to take minutes at meetings of the Board of Selectmen, instead of the current practice of using the administrative assistant, who is a salaried town employee. lino agreed that the subject should be discussed, but in the context of next year's budget. Annino informed Blewett that a stipend formerly paid for the work was rolled into the salary years ago. lino noted that Disbrow could be more effective

supporting the first selectmen with regard to the business of the meetings without this task. lino agreed to provide rates for this service.

B. Blewett referred to invoices for bottled water and suggested that investing in water treatment would be more cost effective. lino has learned that it is more difficult to treat for excess sodium than it is for PFAS, and that necessary remediation would require expensive septic work. She is looking to DEEP for further guidance.

C. Blewett asked Regolo about invoices for refilling first aid kits, which seem excessively high. Regolo responded.

D. Blewett inquired about the needs assessment that was done for the Fire Company, and was told that there has been no further activity concerning the three designs contained in the report.

E. Blewett sought to respond to public reaction to a social media post stating that the dissolution of the Charter Revision Commission was "... based on a question by Eileen Blewett." She wanted the record to reflect that there were two votes to dissolve, and that hers was based on the commission's inability to function, given that they were unable to change the composition to make it compliant with state statutes. She noted that it was the decision of the Commission chair not to expand the commission to 15 members, and based on that it appeared that the committee could not move forward.

Annino said that the investigation into the compliance was brought about by Blewett. Blewett agreed, but said that was not the basis for her vote.

lino said that social media posts should not be addressed in BOS meetings, and also noted that expanding the commission to 15 members was not the only option available to achieve compliance.

F. lino responded to the letter from RTC chair Laura Lefko referenced during public comment:

- Statutes do not require that vacancies be filled by the party.
- Town committees are to be consulted, but they do not have any appointing authority.
- There was nothing irregular about lino's sending the resume of the unaffiliated potential nominee to both town committees, as they are always consulted for recommendations. [Blewett later noted that she agreed with this practice, and that she wished she had been included in that distribution.]
- By Charter, a vacancy *should* be filled by a member of the same party as the exiting member, which is what the BOS did in this case.
- lino explained that the reason for her expressing her wish that the appointee act in a non-partisan manner was because it seemed to her that the KRTC was prioritizing party over qualifications. lino wanted to reinforce that it is one of the towns greatest strengths that the committees always act in a non-partisan manner. Issues don't traditionally break down by party line.

11. Adjournment

Blewett moved adjournment 8:59 p.m. The motion, seconded by passed unanimously.

Attachment: letter from KRTC chair

Respectfully submitted on 10/4/2021 by Elizabeth Doyle Disbrow. Notice of votes filed 9/27/2021. Recording available.

Laura Lefko
Killingworth Republican Town Committee
PO Box 837
Killingworth, CT 06419
(561)346-9179

September 22, 2021

Catherine Iino
First Selectman
Town of Killingworth
Route 81
Killingworth, CT 06419

Dear Cathy:

I would like to express my disappointment at your comments during the Board of Selectmen's meeting on September 13th regarding the KRTC's nomination of Dave Cutillo to the Inland Wetlands Commission. Having been involved in the process of nominating individuals to fill vacancies for a little over a year now and having never heard you make comments of this sort at a BOS meeting regarding nominations made by either the KRTC or the KDTC, your comments regarding this nominee were very surprising to me and to others.

Additionally, the nomination by the KDTC and your promotion of that candidate to myself and Karen Vecchitto via email was quite irregular. The vacancy on the Inland Wetlands Commission occurred due to the resignation of a Republican member and per state statute and the statute regarding minority party representation, that vacancy had to be filled by a registered Republican resident of Killingworth or if the KRTC so decided, it could nominate an unaffiliated voter. As a side note, I did notice that of the 7 member commission, 4 of the members are unaffiliated voters, two are Democrats and the member who resigned was the only Republican voter on the commission. It would be helpful to know how the other nominations to this commission were made. Also, the KRTC has not ever, to my knowledge, attempted to nominate a Republican to fill a vacancy that had occurred due to the resignation of a Democrat member.

You mentioned the fact that Mr. Cutillo was a Republican no less than 3 times after Selectman Anino and Selectman Blewett had made and seconded a motion to appoint Mr. Cutillo and you expressed that you hoped that Mr. Cutillo would see his role on the commission as a "nonpartisan" exercise. I am curious as to why you felt the need to mention this; in fact, Selectman Blewett asked you that question, but your answer was simply to reiterate what you had already stated.

I was embarrassed for our nominee and am grateful that he was not on the call to hear your comments. In the future it would be my hope that when these nominations are made, they are

made strictly in accordance with state statute and our charter to avoid the partisan feelings that were evident at the Board of Selectmen's meeting of September 13th. I also request that this letter be read into the record at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Respectfully,

Laura Lefko
Vice Chairman, KRTC
Chairman, Nominating Committee

Cc:
Eileen Blewett
Lou Annino
Karen Vecchitto
Dave Cutillo