

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, February 27, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.
Killingworth Town Hall

BOS Members in Attendance: First Selectman, Nancy Gorski, and Selectmen, Jamie Young and Louis Annino, Jr.

BOS Members Absent: None.

Visitors: G. Annino, L. Lefko, E. Blewett, J. Gay, E. Unger, R. Pleiness, J. Waterbury, C. Sawleg, J. Burr, C. Jacob, J. Doe, D. Torre, B. Tobleman, L. Heinous, E. Perley, L. Perley, J. D. Callahan, E. Nunes, E. Merolla, J. Favalora, B. Goetsch, S. Papoosha, J. Duffield, B. Burley and J. Sciascia

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Called to Order: First Selectman Gorski called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Comment:

Eileen Unger read her comments into the record:

“My name is Eileen Unger. I reside here in Killingworth. Most of you know me and of the many community-related things that I have been involved with, from my Covid vaccination efforts to my many donations of time and talent to civic organizations, including events thrown by both political town committees. I believe you would be hard-pressed to state that I have anything but the town's - and by extension, Its residents' - best interests at heart.

That being said, I am very dismayed and more than a bit taken aback by the tone of the last Board of Selectmen meeting, some of which I was present for and the rest of which I was able to view via video. Within the first seven minutes of this meeting we had devolved into shouting and accusations that are unacceptable in polite society. And this is, unfortunately, not the first time.

As you are aware, I am married to Richard Pleines, who previously served as building official for our town. Richard stepped back into this role on top of his full time job in another town when the building official who held an interim position that went against state statute was deemed not acceptable to be appointed in an official capacity for another four years. Richard did this to help the town out on what was supposed to be a temporary basis. Due to the shortage of licensed building officials currently in the state of Connecticut, the part-time

nature of the job and our lack of any providing any incentives outside of salary, the long advertised position was not generating interest from anyone else with the necessary qualifications. I remind you that the position was advertised in the OEDM and even on the bulletin board here in town hall for over a year. I also remind you that the conditions and terms of Richard's temporary employment were discussed at every board of selectmen meeting for the past few months. Claims by the selectmen that you were unaware that this 180-day term was up is either patently false or shows a distinct lack of attention being paid to what is actually discussed at these meetings.

Let me tell you a little bit about Rich. He went back to school for the first time since his late teens at age 55, working a 40 hour week and attending classes two to three days a week with homework every night- and not only did he succeed but succeeded with very high scores on his tests, becoming licensed first as an assistant building official, followed quickly by licensure as a building official. This, in itself, is something to be admired. He was hired by our town and worked constantly through the pandemic, risking his health and in turn mine, In order to serve the residents of our town. Upon taking a full-time job with the town of Clinton, he continued to serve Killingworth on a part-time basis until his replacement could be named and brought up to speed. When, a year-plus later, that replacement was no longer adequately serving the town in his role, Richard once again stepped up to the plate - much to my dismay and against my wishes - to serve the residents of a town that he is so proud to call home.

Richard and I have given up our time together, our summer and fall afternoon and weekend plans with our friends and family, Rich's coveted time on his sailboat, and many lucrative construction projects, so that he could step in when the town needed him to fill a position that is not only a state mandated position, but one where the life/safety of the buildings and residents of our town is paramount. And he - and we did so without complaint. Richard does nothing halfway and he is committed to the residents of this town, often going above and far beyond the duties and hours of employment to make sure that everyone gets timely inspections, responses, etc. It is not unusual for him to run out to an inspection at 7:00 am before a full day of work and an evening of local inspections, or to go out on a Saturday or Sunday so that a resident can get their wood stove operable and legal before a cold spell. If there is a fire, the firemen know they can call Rich and he will drop everything and be there to insure that the homeowner or business owner is safe to reenter and remain in their homes. Ask town hall employees, residents and local contractors their impressions of Richard - I guarantee every one of them will give him a rousing endorsement. Understand that this is not about reversing your decision - Richard is not looking for that. However, the very least you owe Richard at this point is a thank you for his service. The right thing to do would be a very public apology for your utter disrespect.

Killingworth is a small town with a population of approximately 6,000 people, our friends

and neighbors, who have elected you to represent their best interests, everyone's best interests, not just the interests of those whom you have aligning political or social views. Your salaries, regardless of size, are paid with tax-payer dollars, tax-payer dollars from every resident. Killingworth functions well and is a wonderful place to live, raise children or operate a small business and much of this is due to the hard work and efforts of its residents whether they hold elected positions, volunteer their time to serve on numerous committees or commit their time, money and talent to the many different organizations/groups that operate here in town.

Why on earth would anyone choose to volunteer their time and talent, paid or unpaid, only to subject themselves to a screaming and condescending selectman? Why would any choose to volunteer their time and talent to potentially be accused of 'holding the town hostage'? This unacceptable behavior will be the true downfall of volunteerism in this small town.

Ms. Young, you are an attorney, as you take every opportunity to remind us during these meetings, and as such you are fully aware of the import of the rule of law and the importance of state statute. To openly suggest that the town do something that is clearly against state statute and to encourage an Individual who holds an official license issued from that state, and who has sworn an oath to uphold those laws as pertains to his job - much like your oath to the bar- to also go against statute is reprehensible. To use the previous administration's bad behavior to excuse continued bad behavior is simply outrageous. Mr. Annino, you too know better and I am extremely disappointed that you chose to go along with this.”

Eileen Blweett spoke of her concerns with how the BOS at their last meeting chose to put a plan in place which went against State Statutes. This potential plan could have, if Mr. Pleines accepted the position, jeopardized his Building Official License.

Jen Favalora, Interim Executive Director at Haddam Killingworth Youth and Family Services, spoke about the coalition meetings currently taking place. Their Mission is about the youth, their families and their communities both to Haddam and Killingworth working with prevention and mental health services. There are currently two members of Killingworth on the Y&FS Board and they are seeking more assistance. Jen met with First Selectman Gorski about the Opioid Distribution Settlement Funds that have benefited Killingworth. Jen advised that the State Advisory Board was just formed, and not meeting until March 15th, and she spoke about how there are always mandates that they have to follow and appreciates the work to have all stakeholders involved. Jen wanted to mention this before the Opioid Settlement funds money are spent and/or donated, that consideration is given to the fact that there will be requirements that happen first. She suggested the Town create a comprehensive plan in stages that might be in the best interest for the Town of Killingworth.

Bill Burley stated how he is in agreement with what Eileen Unges commented on and also had his own concerns with the BOS going against State Statutes when Mr. Pleines was willing to fill the Building Official position.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion #1 - Selectman Young *Moved* and Selectman Annino *Seconded* a motion to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Monday, February 13, 2023 as amended:

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Corrections are as follows:

1. *Under Item E. - KAA/ARPA Request - In the second sentence from the bottom, delete the word “arpha” and replace it with “ARPA”*
2. *In Page 2, Motion #4, Under Discussion in the last sentence delete “would be able to hire” and replace it with “could be supported by” and delete “the same” and replace it with “full time”. It should now read: “Selectman Annino inquired whether or not the Town could be supported by a Building Official who works a full time position in a neighboring town.”*

Discussion took place regarding Page 3 of the Minutes, Under Appointments - Selectman Young clarified with First Selectman Gorski that Thomas Hogarty held a position on the RiverCog Regional Housing Committee prior to stepping down since at the last meeting it was stated that he was never sworn in. First Selectman Gorski confirmed that he did hold a position. Selectman Young also clarified that the name of the Committee is, in fact, the RiverCog Regional Housing Committee to which Gorski confirmed that it was. First Selectman Gorski will provide more information under the report for Appointments.

Motion #2 - First Selectman Gorski *Moved* to approve the Minutes from the Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen that was held on February 22, 2023 as presented.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Refunds and Abatements:

Motion #3- First Selectman Gorski *Moved* and First Selectman Annino *Seconded* a motion to approve the following Refunds and Abatements, all for overpayment, and allow them to follow their normal course as presented below:

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1. Chery Dickson or	16 Cedar Drive	\$239.40	Overpaid COC#10789M

Erik Toman
2. USB Leasing LT 1850 Osborn Ave \$402.73 Overpaid COC#10788M

Appointments:

Committee on Aging - First Selectman Gorski stated that she received appointments from the KDTC but would like to **Table** this item until the next BOS meeting so she can receive additional appointments from the KRTC as well so the BOS can appoint everyone at the same time.

Motion #4 - First Selectman Gorski **Moved** and Selectman Annino **Seconded** a motion to appoint John F. Mancini (Republican) to the Open Space Committee.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Motion #5 - First Selectman Gorski **Moved** and Selectman Annino **Seconded** a motion to appoint David J. Cutillo (Republican) to the Open Space Committee.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

First Selectman Gorski spoke about how RiverCog coordinates several Regional Plans and Committees. RiverCog Bylaws state each municipality can appoint one representative and an alternate. Majority representation doesn't apply here. First Selectman Gorski gave an example of such and stated Tom Hogarty was serving in that capacity on the Alternative Housing Plan. RiverCog inquired whether or not Mr. Hogarty was going to re-up this year to which he respectively declined.

Motion #6 - First Selectman Gorski **Moved** and Selectman Annino **Seconded** a motion to appoint Richard Pleines to the RiverCog Regional Housing Plan Committee.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Department Reports:

Budget Report:

First Selectman Gorski stated how they are in the midst of Budget Season. There were no questions from the BOS regarding the Budget Report.

New Business:

A. Town Hall Emergency Repairs

First Selectman Gorski spoke about repairs that need to be addressed, specifically, the leaks and water damage in numerous locations of the Town Office Building estimated costs of repairs of approximately \$75,000. Gorski recommended following the normal process, with going out to RFP. She also needs to go to the Board of Finance to address where the allocation of funds will come from and then this will go to Town meeting for approval. Selectman Annino noted that the BOS needs to do a more comprehensive job and find a different approach to maintaining the assets of the Town and addressing items that are broken as soon as possible, while they are at an affordable stage versus waiting down the road.

B. Stakeholders - Opioid Issue Plan Development

First Selectman Gorski spoke about receiving an email from Journey Home Recovery Living looking to meet to develop an intervention prevention plan. Their goal is to develop an engaging program of outreach services that meet expectations once the initial development and implementation is executed that gives sustainable and measurable results. They are looking for suggestions from key stakeholders in this process. Board of Education Representative Kathy Zandi recommended Jeffrey Wihbey and First Selectman Gorski recommended Jen Favalora. Gorski is seeking Stakeholder recommendations from Selectmen Young and Annino and then will make arrangements to hold a special meeting.

New Business:

C. Through-town event: Pedal for Pies:

Motion #7 - Selectman Young *Moved* and Selectman Annino *Seconded* a motion to approve the Pedal for Pies through-town event scheduled on Saturday, May 13, 2023.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Old Business:

A. KVFC List of Full Active Members in Good Standing

First Selectman Gorski received the executed letter from the KVFC along with the KVFC list of requirements that allows a full active member in good standing.

The below motion was *Tabled* at the February 13, 2023 BOS meeting and First Selectman Gorski picked the motion up from the Table for a vote:

First Selectman Gorski *Moved* and Selectman Annino *Seconded* a motion to approve the Killingworth Ambulance Association List of Full Active Members in Good Standing as of December 31, 2022.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Eric Auer Park:

Jim Duffield, from Park and Rec, gave an update on Eric Auer Park. He reviewed the number of fields and number of user groups that utilize the fields in Haddam and Killingworth and noted that building a full size baseball field would not be beneficial to the town since very few teams would utilize it going forward. Further discussion regarding field usage took place in length.

Selectman Annino stated that this is not about a specific sport; rather it is about following the process, and is concerned that there was an initial plan put forward circa 2016, where the Jack Ahearn Field was taken out of Sheldon Park with the condition that the next stage of plan would be to replace that field. It was memorialized in the grant application that went into the Capital Plan that goes before the taxpayers

to vote on, presenting a baseball field to be built at the park. Selectman Annino stated if we don't have the funds to move forward on that specific plan then it's the obligation of the BOS to go back to the taxpayers and advise that a different path is being considered.

Selectman Young inquired about how they would present this information to the Taxpayers at the Town Meeting. Gorski agreed that the process needed to be addressed first. Selectman Young suggested itemizing extra costs so the Baseball Community could know how much needs to be raised by fundraising etc.

Chris Smalley, Member of the Park and Rec Commission, spoke about the Building Fields process and what it would take to build this full sized baseball field (going out to bid for a design, relocation of stone walls, blasting, underdrains, moving of material, looking into the well). He stated that the original budget for this grant was put together 10 years ago and circumstances have greatly changed. Chris recommended sending the original conceptual plan out to a design group and they can come up with a bid package, receive the actual bids, and see what the costs are. He noted that the Park and Rec concerns are losing the \$500k grant money.

Selectman Annino suggested updating the application with a narrative reflecting it will be a baseball field, with an initial phased approach to utilize grant money and then raise additional funds to proceed with the finishing pieces of the baseball field. This would meet with the spirit of what was presented to the Town and then reserving the possibility of the Baseball field in the future. Further, Annino suggested having the baseball field designed, bid on and get the costs of what it will take to fund the full project.

First Selectman Gorski stated that Elizabeth Disbrow has been in touch with the State to advise them that they are actively pursuing the grant and are in the process of getting their paperwork. There is no deadline for submission as of right now.

C. APPA Policy Update:

First Selectman Gorski reviewed with Finance Director Regolo the Motion that was brought forth by Selectmen Annino and Young at their last BOS meeting regarding the APRA Policy. They went through the process and noted that they might need to tweak a form or two as they move forward.

The below motion was **Tabled** at the February 13, 2023 BOS meeting and First Selectman Gorski picked the motion up from the Table for a vote:

Selectman Annino **Moved** and Selectman Young **Seconded** a motion that effective 2/14/2023, The Town of Killingworth by action of the Board of Selectman establishes the following practice for approval, distribution, and reporting of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The Board of Selectmen shall

consider uses for such funding consistent with its current capital and operating budget practices. This shall include input from the various town operating departments and organizations as well as input from the community. Recommendations made to the Board of Selectmen shall include a written narrative and detailed rationale for the approval. This rationale shall be based on the eligible ARPA uses and key objectives or other criteria used for the recommendation. Those needs meeting the criteria of the ARPA shall be evaluated by the Board of Selectman for approval based on a priority assessment of overall town needs while considering the town's economic, social, facilities/infrastructure, and health needs. Also, while we are not bound to the designated uses of the ARPA funds, the Board of Selectmen may consider the overall spirit of the act and consider projects that fall outside of "general governmental services" subject to the following: Eligible uses: Responding to the public health emergency and the negative economic impacts of COVID-19; Replacement of loss revenue; Premium pay; Water and sewer infrastructure; and Broadband infrastructure. Treasury's key objectives: Fight the pandemic and support families and businesses struggling with its public health and economic impacts; Maintain vital public services, even amid declines in revenue resulting from the crisis; Build a strong, resilient, and equitable recovery by making investments that support long-term growth and opportunity. Support general government services. Recommendations for approved spending of ARPA funding shall be submitted by the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Finance consistent with and at the same time as the annual budgeting process. ARPA funds will be reflected in such submission as a "funding source" within the budget and spending will be accounted and tracked against the same partitioned funding source by the Town's Finance Director. The Board of Finance presents final recommendations at town meeting as part of the overall annual budget submission. As with all budgeted items, the town will consider ARPA projects as part of the town budget approval. Following approval at town meeting, the Finance Director shall, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen and the Town Treasurer, disburse the funds. The submission of appropriate supporting invoices and/or other documentation ensuring that funds are used in the intended manner will be required by the receiving organization prior to fund distribution. (These records are required to meet federal audit criteria). In addition to the above, the following shall also be required: Town bidding regulations will be followed as warranted. Finance Director shall provide to Boards of Selectmen and Finance, a monthly report of fund balance, approved projects, encumbered funds, transfers and interest earned. This can be part of an overall monthly budget report of town spending. Finance Director shall disclose this information as part of the town's annual report, Finance Director shall make the required annual reporting to the US Treasury of the disbursement of these funds.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

PFAS Update:

First Selectman Gorski spoke about how the Town's insurance carrier no longer covers environmental claims. Finance Director Regolo and First Selectman Gorski will be speaking with Joshua Kline, who is an insurance coverage specialist, and will update the BOS once this happens.

The PFAS Public Hearing was well attended and successful in communicating information to the public. First Selectman Gorski will be speaking with DPH on an investigation into whether the salt shed is

leaking into a residential well. She stated there is possibility of another opportunity for a drinking water State revolving fund and will submit an application for sodium remediation.

Selectman Annino asked for clarification on the history of the Town's Insurance claims, specifically, that there are insurance policies put in place for the Town and Fire Department for these types of reasons and stated that if the insurance companies don't want to pay for these types of claims that we need stand united and start advocating to the State representatives in order to get more resources in place other than from tax dollars.

Motion #8 - Selectman Young *Moved* and Selectman Annino *Seconded* a motion to add a second Public Comment onto the Agenda.

Motion unanimously passed [3-0-0].

Public Comment:

Lauren Perley, who represents the Baseball Community in Town, spoke of their support in building a full sized Baseball Field since that is what the grant money is being funded for.

Jascon Waterbury, President of the Haddam Little League, spoke about the importance of being included in the discussion about the Baseball Field. His recommendation would be to design the Baseball Field, and go out to bid to see the actual cost of the build and research other grants the Little League International could come up with, if more money is needed.

Laura Lelfko spoke about the Minutes of August 2019 when this grant was awarded when former First Selectman Iino received it, citing that the funds are no longer sufficient. She noted that if this goes to Town Meeting there is a possibility of the taxpayers voting it down. Laura further spoke about how we are expecting a large Budget increase of the RSD17 Board of Education and close to a 5% increase from the Town so there will be a good sized tax increase. Her position is that you do what you can do now and prepare for the future, build later.

Ed Merola recommended going out to bid to get actual numbers to build a Baseball Field. He appreciates the Park and Rec for what they do and also letting the kids in the Community use the fields. He suggested working together and getting better communication between everyone.

Brian Blair, Park and Rec Commission, spoke about how he feels the baseball field topic of discussion should go to Town Meeting for a vote since Jim Duffield has the number of the User Groups, and accurate information pointing in the direction of building a Multi Purpose Field versus a Baseball Field.

J.D. Callahan spoke on following the process of what the grant was designed for, working together and not changing the design without taxpayer approval.

Chris Smalley, Park and Rec Commission, spoke about designing something that fits in the budget since the Grant was written 10 years ago and it doesn't seem likely that it would work well today. He recommended getting the Grant signed, money funded and getting a design for the field.

First Selectman Gorski concluded Public Comment with a Summary noting a two phased project approach, and also noting the extensive amount of passion that has been put forth from the Park and Rec and Baseball Community. The taxpayers need to be aware of the possible changes to have their input and design work needs to be done accompanied by numbers. The BOS will decide what the order of process is. All Community members are encouraged to come to the Park and Rec meetings to voice their concerns about the Multi Purpose Field/Baseball Field.

Selectmen's Comments:

Selectman Young Commented on:

- Suggested if the Fields were hard to maintain from a budgetary prescriptive to bring forward the items to the BOS for consideration since they are in budget season now. She appreciates the coaches and managers volunteering their time to make sure we have fields to play on for the kids.
- Thanked Mr. Pleines for his service and for all his hard work.
- Thanked First Selectman Gorski for organizing and putting together all the material related to PFAS hearing which was very well attended.

Selectman Annino commented on:

- Baseball Field - He stated how we are in a position and have an approved plan and need to proceed in the direction of the Baseball Field and continue to evaluate what the right thing to do is. He stressed the importance of figuring out what the baseball field will cost, and getting all that information including field maintenance costs and then making the decisions based on that.
- He commended First Selectman Gorski for all her hard work on PFAS. He emphasized to reach out to State Representatives to make your voices heard as a person who lives in Killingworth and as a taxpayer.
- He echoed Selectman Young's comments and thanked Richard Pleines for his fantastic work in Town.

First Selectman's Comments:

- She gave her sincere condolences to the Clifton Family on the loss of Mark who was a pillar in the Community. Mark volunteered his time as a Firefighter, and was also an EMT.
- She thanked Richard Pleines for all his hard work and stated the Town is lucky to have him.
- Mike Bekech's appointment is ending on March 31, 2023.

- Jen Favalora is looking to meet regarding the Budget and will be put on the schedule once the BOS has their Budget dates confirmed. She is also looking to meet regarding HKY&FS on a quarterly basis moving forward.
- Richard McManus, who is the Building Official in Durham, and is looking to retire and is interested in the Building Official position in Town. A meeting is set up on March 16th with him in the evening.
- She attended the first of many meetings to develop a RSD17 District Master Plan. They are requesting a Town representative to attend their meetings and stated if either Selectman Young or Annino is interested to please let her know. The next meeting is scheduled on March 16th at 5:30 p.m.

The Board of Selectmen went into Executive Session at 8:24 p.m.

A. Executive Session: Real Estate

The Board of Selectmen discussed a Real Estate Matter.

The Board of Selectmen came out of Executive Session at 8:39 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Sciascia
Clerk