

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
COLUMBIA BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Tuesday, August 6, 2024

7:00PM

**Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room & Virtual
323 Route 87, Columbia, CT**

Members Present: Steven M. Everett, First Selectman; Judy Ortiz, Deputy First Selectman; Lisa Napolitano, Selectman; Selectman; Christopher Lent, Selectman.

Members Present Remotely: William O'Brien, Selectman.

Also Present: Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator, Beverly Ciurylo, Finance Director.

CALL TO ORDER: S. Everett Called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 pm.

1. **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR HYBRID VIRTUAL MEETING:** S. Everett read the rules of conduct for a hybrid virtual meeting.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Agenda as presented. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - 4.1 **BOS Regular Meeting Minutes for July 16, 2024.** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes for July 16, 2024. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.
5. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** Millie Ramsey, 100 Hunt Rd. asked for an update on the construction of the boathouse pavilion. She said she would personally request that the board consider installing a blue metal roofing. She said a metal roof was on the original pavilion. She said if we must put on asphalt shingles can we please install blue asphalt shingles. S. Everett thanked Millie for her comments.
6. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 6.1 **Donation of a Weather Station by Henry Beck, Jr. in memory of his father.** Henry Beck said several years ago a donation was made through Lake Management Advisory Committee (LMAC) to install a weather station at the beach pavilion. H. Beck said the current proposal is to install the weather station at the pavilion and he would like the authorization to work with the Facilities Manager on the location on the pavilion. A decorative attachment would be provided to attach the weather station. The readout would be in the Recreation Department and could be read at any one particular time and from there the readout would be posted to the Internet. H. Beck said that Greg Stryker has been working with LMAC and has done the most recent studies on the equipment. H. Beck said he is asking for a general acceptance from the Board of Selectmen because he would like to make a soft announcement about the weather station to a number of

people at his home, September 23rd, to celebrate his family being the lake for 100 years.

Greg Stryker, 3 Sam Hill Rd. said he has been working with Henry and LMAC on the weather systems. S. Everett asked how big the unit is. G. Stryker said the proposed option is the Ambient Weather WS-5000 or Rainwise, KestrelMet 6000. G. Stryker said he uses both. He said he prefers the Ambient Weather and it is much smaller at eight inches as opposed to the Rainwise at twenty-three inches. He said it is much sleeker than the other system. The other reason he likes the Ambient is it uses winds sensors and the rain catch is half the size. It also offers more advantages on what we can monitor, such as water temperature and a lightening detector. There is also an App for your phone. H. Beck said that anyone from town and LMAC can access the data real-time. S. Everett MOVED to Approve the weather station by Henry Beck, Jr. in memory of his father. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

6.2 Update on Town Beach Boathouse/Pavilion. M. Walter said that a meeting is set up for tomorrow with the Builder, Facilities Manager, Building Official, the Architect, Steven Everett, and himself. He said some things have come to light that some of the structural framing needs to be added based on the architectural drawings and the architect is going to point that out with the builder. We are going to come up with a way to fix that, which should solve the Builder's request for extra bracing. M. Walter said the meeting will also include a discussion on handicap access and what options would be best. He said a handicap ramp doesn't seem practical based upon the topography of the area. The ramp would be 60 feet long, so we are looking at a lift. M. Walter said the Building Official didn't originally require a lift because he felt the other gazebo could act as a handicap accessible gazebo. M. Walter said we are requesting the Architect to give us their recommendations and then we would need direction from the Board. M. Walter said his research online for the cost of an outside lift may cost \$15,000, but we have asked the Architect to recommend a lift for commercial use. W. O'Brien asked where do we stand with the insurance company in covering these expenses. M. Walter said once he knows exactly what we will be asking for, he will reach out to the insurance company and get that information to the Board. W. O'Brien asked if they had taken a position yet. M. Walter said no they haven't. M. Walter said that in addition they will be discussing a metal roof versus an asphalt roof. It would be an extra \$15,000 for the metal roof.

L. Napolitano said that an extra \$15,000 for a metal roof doesn't make sense. M. Walter said that \$7,500 is for the material, the lift will have to be brought back to the job site, and the builder estimates one week of time to put on a metal roof.

S. Everett said that we didn't have handicap accessibility on the boathouse previously, so if the insurance company were to cover in-kind we would have a tough time getting them to pay for the cost. W. O'Brien said he is not sure about that. He thinks that if we are required by law to have a certain standard that they should meet that standard rather than just saying that you have to stick with what you had before as far as the value and this issue should be pushed a bit with the insurance company.

J. Ortiz asked what is the life of metal roof. M. Walter said a metal roof is fifty years and depending on the quality of the asphalt shingles it should be twenty to thirty years.

C. Lent asked what do we have for ARPA funds left. M. Walter said we will have to wait and see what is left in ARPA funding. M. Walter explained that we are having issues with the HVAC system at the Senior Center.

M. Ramsey said the builder is doing a lovely job, but she feels \$15,000 for a metal roof seems excessive. She asked if there is an option to complete the other parts and find someone else to put on the metal roof.

Mary Roickle, 34 Erdoni Rd. said there are environmental ways to collect water off the roof with rain barrels if we decide to use asphalt shingles.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

7.1 Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects - Columbia. M.

Walter said every 10 years we sign a Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects (MMAC). The current agreement will be expiring in August 2024. The MMAC includes standard terms, conditions, and contracting “boiler plate” language that should generally govern all municipal construction projects involving the CTDOT, which are undertaken throughout the ten-year term. C. Lent asked is this beneficial to us. M. Walter said we have three state highways and they intersect with several of the Town roads and he said it would not be advisable to not sign it. He said we have a pedestrian crossing on Route 87 near the Airline Trail and this project was a joint project between the Town and ConnDOT and without the MMAC the project probably would not have gone forward. J. Ortiz MOVED to Approve Steven Everett to sign the Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.1 with C. Lent Abstaining.

7.2 Certificate of Adoption Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan

(HMCAP) Update. M. Walter said in order to qualify for the possibility of ever needing a FEMA grants due to major weather events the Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan needed updating. M. Walter said he has been working on this for three years with the Emergency Management Director, Town Planner, and DPW Director. We documented our biggest concerns in Columbia, such the Pine Street Culvert, which we are in the process of repairing. S. Everett MOVED to Formally Adopt the Capital Region Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (HMCAP) Update, 2024-2029. MOTION CARRIED 4.0.1 with C. Lent Abstaining.

8. COLUMBIA LAKE / DAM / BEACH: None.

9. APPOINTMENTS / RESIGNATIONS:

9.1 Appointment of Marie Ramm to the Board of Education. S. Everett MOVED to Appoint Marie Ramm to the Board of Education. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

9.2 Appointment of Todd Marsh, Highway Maintainer. S. Everett MOVED to Appoint Todd Marsh as the Highway Maintainer. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 10. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:** M. Walter explained that on September 16th, 17th and 18th the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) working with CTDEEP Trails division, and Trust for Public Land will be presenting their findings and recommendations between 4:30 and 7:00 on September 18th at the Heartstone Winery. The IMBA Trail Solutions is conducting a collaborative process for trail assessment, planning, and design for Mono Pond State Park Reserve culminating in a Trails Master Plan. This project is a partnership between IMBA Trail Solutions, Trust for Public Lands, Connecticut State Parks and Forests, the Town of Columbia, and Friends of Mono Pond. Community engagement is essential to this process. Multiple engagement opportunities will be available throughout this project to better understand the communities vision and goals for recreational trails at Mono Pond State Park Reserve.
- 10.1 State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP).** M. Walter explained that we are applying for a State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP). The grant is to cover 90% of the upgrades to our cybersecurity. The cost of the cybersecurity upgrade is \$13,000. These are required cybersecurity upgrades to keep us safe from being hacked or taken over by cyber criminals.
- 10.2 Eastern Highlands Health District Programs and Services.** M. Walter shared EHHD program and services document that highlights their goals and essential health services to enhance the quality of life in its communities through the prevention of illness, promotion of wellness and protection of the human environment.
- 10.3 CRCOG Strategic Playbook.** M. Walter shared the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Strategic Playbook and it's goal to create a forum for substantive policy discussion related to key issues, challenges, and opportunities facing our members and the region.
- 10.4 The Community Investment Act.** M. Walter shared The Community Investment Act two-page brochure. The legislation helps further the goals of protecting and preserving the beauty and unique character of Connecticut for future generations. Funding will be increased for Open space, protection of farmland, preservation of historic sites, creation of additional affordable housing programs, and important municipal improvement projects.
- 10.5 National League of Cities SCOTUS rulings and implications for local governments.** M. Walter said that a new verdict concerns the enforcement of ordinances banning public camping and homelessness on town property. He said this has become a hot button nationwide and they ruled that the towns do have a say in where people can camp on town property.
- 10.6 CCM – Important Trial Outcomes.** CCM was involved in a couple of rulings that will affect taxation and assessment. He said a lot of hospitals were buying up local medical practices and then once they went under their non-profit status the towns were losing the taxing revenue on equipment, which is generally very expensive. The other important trial outcome considered how a newspaper qualifies as one having “substantial circulation in a municipality” for purpose of providing notice of the municipalities zoning regulations. A group of homeowners in the Borough of Fenwick, which is located in Old Saybrook, sued the Town that no one gets the Town Press in Old Saybrook and they were not aware of the legal notice. The Court adopted a more reasonable and practical test for determining whether a municipality has satisfied the statutory notice requirement by publication in a particular newspaper. But to further modernize these statutes and

allow municipalities to more economically and effectively provide notice by publishing to their own publicly accessible websites.

- 10.7 **Zoning Regulations Revisions Effective 8/1/24.** M. Walter explained that the zoning regulation revisions were adopted concerning accessory dwellings and multi-family dwellings. The two major changes include a resident can have two dwelling units on their property as a right and multi-family dwellings previously were only allowed in the commercial district. A single set of multi-family regulations have been created all under special permit through Planning and Zoning making it allowable anywhere in town except the lake area. There is a square footage cap on a single building, but an accessory unit has a 950 ft. cap.

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

- 11.1 **CT State Trooper – Troop K report for July 2024.**
- 11.2 **Registrar of Voters Letter Regarding August 13, 2024 Republican Primary.**
- 11.3 **No Freeze Project Thank You Letter for support.**
- 11.4 **SACCEC Thank You Letter for contribution.**
- 11.5 **The Willimantic Chronicle Articles**
 - **Jim Blair concert at Town Beach.**
 - **Men with machetes chase family at Rec Park in Columbia.**
 - **Frightening Ordeal**
 - **Hop River Bridge under construction.**
 - **Columbia woman charges with enticing minor to engage in sexual activity.**
 - **Secret’s Out: Columbia BBQ set**
 - **Woman wasn’t wearing helmet in motorcycle accident.**
 - **Moor’s Charity School open house.**

12. BUDGET:

- 12.1 **Transfers:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve Transfers totaling \$529.00. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

TRANSFER #	AMOUNT	FROM ACCOUNT #	DESCRIPTION	TO ACCOUNT #	DESCRIPTION
2024-055	33.00	10-4117-120	Telephone	10-4115-120	Telephone
2024-056	159.00	10-4410-240	Fuel	10-4410-610	Repairs/Maintenance-Grounds
2024-057	337.00	10-4530-300	General Supplies	10-4530-500	Professional/Tech

- 12.2 **Refunds:** None.

- 13. **APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS:** S. Everett MOVED to Approve the Payment of Bills Totaling \$295,416.05, consisting of 2023-2024 Emergency, 2024-2025 Emergency, 2023-2024 Regular, 2024-2025 Regular, 23/24 Unemployment, SBL Grant #1 of 4, Credit Card, and Paychex. MOTION CARRIED 5.0.

- 14. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS:** M. Ramm asked about the update on bacteria in Columbia Lake. M. Walter said that it has dissipated with the rain. He said Eastern Highland Health District Director came down to the lake to look at the algae and

said that the density was nowhere near enough to be a health concern. M. Ramsey encouraged the people who will be making decisions on the construction of the boathouse to go out on the lake with Marine Patrol and see what people see from the lake.

15. **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** None.

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Real estate per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(D); Pending Litigation per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(B); Personnel per State Statutes Section 1-200(6)(A).** S. Everett MOVED to Suspend the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 7:57 pm and move into Executive Session and invite Mark Walter, Town Administrator to join. MOTION CARRIED 5.0. Executive Session ended at 8:52 pm with no action taken.
 - 16.1 **Legal:** No Action Taken.
 - 16.2 **Personnel:** No Action Taken.
 - 16.3 **Real Estate:** No Action Taken.

17. **ADJOURNMENT:** S. Everett MOVED to ADJOURN at 8:53 pm. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted by Jennifer C. LaVoie