

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING FINAL MINUTES
March 5, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, 2014, in the first floor conference room of Independence Hall.

Members Present: First Selectman Michael C. Tetreau, Selectman Kevin P. Kiley,
Selectman Cristin McCarthy Vahey

Others Present: Beverly Balaz, Martha Lord, Soundview, Gerry Speno, Sherri Steeneck, Genny Reilly, Tom Steinke, Stanton Lesser, George Zygmant, Nancy Lyons, Steve Grathwohl, Heather Dean, Cynthia Sammarco, Mike Widmer

1) CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Tetreau called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the First Selectman called for a moment of silence for long-time Fairfield resident Bill Barrett.

3) WEDNESDAY'S PET – presented by Sherri Steeneck

Ms. Steeneck did not have a pet to present but gave a tip to the public on how to get a pet to eat a pill hidden in food. She said two of her business clients are looking for homes for two cats. The public can either call Ms. Steeneck at 395-2737 or Animal Control at 254-4857.

4) MINUTES-To consider and act upon the minutes of: Regular Meeting of February 19, 2014
Selectman Kiley made a motion to approve the minutes. Selectman Cristin McCarthy Vahey seconded the motion which carried 3-0.

5) APPOINTMENTS

To hear, consider and act upon the following appointments:

a. Shellfish Commission George A. Zygmant (U), 76 Oxford Road, term 11/10–11/15 (To fill a vacancy for David Thornton who resigned)

Selectman Kiley made a motion to approve the item. Selectman McCarthy Vahey seconded the motion.

First Selectman Tetreau thanked Mr. Zygmant for serving. Selectmen Kiley and McCarthy Vahey also thanked Mr. Zygmant for his service.

The motion carried 3-0.

b. Affordable Housing Committee

i. Nancy J. Lyons, (R), 252 Village Lane, term 11/13-11/17 (To fill a vacancy for Deborah Owens whose term expired)

Selectman McCarthy Vahey made a motion to approve the item. Selectman Kiley seconded the motion.

First Selectman Tetreau thanked Ms. Lyons and asked why she was interested in this position and why it's meaningful. Ms. Lyons said she's spent her entire career in real estate.

She has worked with municipalities and housing authorities and the ones she worked with in Manhattan have been very successful. She noted people move out of town because some cannot afford to live here. First Selectman Tetreau said Fairfield doesn't have senior-friendly housing. Selectman McCarthy Vahey, who noted she saw Ms. Lyons at the last Affordable Housing Committee meeting, and Selectman Kiley thanked Ms. Lyons for serving.

The motion carried 3-0.

ii. Cynthia K. Sammarco, (R), 106 Village Lane, term 11/13-11/17 (To fill a vacancy for Lisa Winjum whose term expired)

Selectman McCarthy Vahey made a motion to approve the item. Selectman Kiley seconded the motion.

First Selectman Tetreau thanked Ms. Sammarco for serving. Selectman McCarthy Vahey noted she saw Ms. Sammarco attend the last Committee meeting. She noted the Committee chair was present at the Board of Selectmen's meeting. Selectman Kiley thanked Ms. Sammarco for serving and noted how Operation Hope's Executive Director recently spoke affordable housing and all of these efforts are very important. First Selectman Tetreau asked Ms. Sammarco why she is interested in this role. Ms. Sammarco said there is a need in our community for people of all ages to stay in Fairfield.

The motion carried 3-0.

Committee Chair Steve Grathwohl said these are great additions and noted there will be a forum at the BOE building on April 1. First Selectman Tetreau said there is one vacancy left and anyone interested should call his office or the Chair at 258-8147.

6) CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To hear an update from the Chamber of Commerce

Executive Director Beverly Balaz gave the Selectmen a packet filled with Chamber information. As the new executive director, Ms. Balaz said the Board of Directors has been reinvented and expanded by seven members with a variety of skills who represent a cross section. The Chamber has created a one, three and five year strategy plan. There is a new mission with a focus on sustaining and attracting businesses. Ms. Balaz discussed goals, budget and reestablishing the Chamber's relationship with the Town. There is a new website to cross promote businesses. Ms. Balaz discussed rebranding as a new Chamber, creating a new logo and achievements made since she took over.

First Selectman Tetreau thanked Ms. Balaz for her update and enthusiasm. He noted how much and how well the Chamber works with the Town's economic development director. Selectman McCarthy Vahey thanked Ms. Balaz for all of the Chamber's amazing work performed so far and what it plans to do. She said the fellows program piqued her interest and it's a great way to partner with our high school. Ms. Balaz announced that Shop & Stroll Into Spring, which is co-sponsored by the Town and Chamber, is being held on April 3. Selectman McCarthy Vahey asked if members are mostly from the downtown area or is membership expanding beyond that area. Ms. Balaz said there's a nice representation across the board. Selectman Kiley thanked Ms. Balaz and said it's great to see the direction the Chamber is going in and the programs that are in place.

He asked Ms. Balaz to describe benefits provided to new members and why they are attracted to join and how they get involved. Ms. Balaz said the focus is face-to-face and the website is also a good tool to get new businesses involved. She stressed the many sponsors and volunteer opportunities, and the different kinds of partnerships. Selectman Kiley asked what more the Town can do. Ms. Balaz noted many things already being done with the Town which the Chamber has a very good relationship with. She said there can be bigger speaker series events. Selectman Kiley said the Town is here to help. He asked how people can be assisted in starting a new business. Ms. Balaz said the Chamber can help with business planning and review business plans before businesses open. First Selectman Tetreau noted how Kleban Properties, the Town and Fairfield University partnered to start a business incubator program which is putting Fairfield on the map. Selectman McCarthy Vahey asked if the Chamber is partnering with the Fairfield Library's job series. Ms. Balaz said yes and the library just became a member.

7) PEQUOT LIBRARY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR—To hear an update from the Pequot Library Executive Director Martha Lord referred to a handout given to the Selectmen summarizing the Library which has been existence for 125 years. She discussed its mission and unique history. Pequot Library was the first free public library in Fairfield. In its early days it was envisioned to be a cultural center. Today, it's fully functional and fully integrated into the Town and State's library systems. The Library offers over 350 programs a year. There are forums and children's educational programs and much more. Ms. Lord said Pequot is a library for the 21st century. It's an events-driven library which partners with a number of not-for-profits and has a well-deserved following among many groups. Ms. Lord gave an overview on the Library's unique assets including materials that are nationally recognized and renowned special collections which are the source of many unique exhibitions. Ms. Lord said Yale University, which holds some of Pequot's collections, has published a book on the library's collections. Ms. Lord said people all over the region attend the Library's programs. She discussed fundraisers that are held and explained why funding is critical. She said it's not unusual for a library to be an association and it's unusual for a library to raise so much of its funding. The town has funded this library for 100 years. Ms. Lord expressed disappointment in the \$25,000 proposed reduction from the town. She said operating expenses have been flat since 2008 and staff has not received increased. She then compared the Town's funding to that of peer libraries. She hopes the Town will reconsider funding the full \$350,000.

First Selectman Tetreau thanked Ms. Lord and said the Library is a phenomenal resource. He said he'd like to see more collaborations within the Town. Ms. Lord said the Library is working hard to do that. She noted the Library covers 100% of its capital budget but has ongoing needs. Selectman Kiley thanked Ms. Lord for the information she provided during last year's budget proceedings and for today's update. He said the Library is a resource and asset. Selectman Kiley said the Library is an addition and compliment to the Town's two other libraries. Selectman McCarthy Vahey thanked everyone for their work and appreciates the breadth of Ms. Lord's presentation. She said she likes seeing the complimentary of programs like working with our public schools. She said this is a model she fully supports. She added the Library is a unique resource to our community. Ms. Lord said concerned supporters voiced their support for receiving full funding from the Town.

8) LAND ACQUISITION COMMISSION (requires RTM approval)

To hear, consider and act upon the following resolution as recommended by the Land Acquisition Commission:

“RESOLVED, that the Town of Fairfield accept as a donation from Lillian E. Fazekas property known as 224 Riverview Circle comprising approximately .12 acres, said property to be donated subject to existing real property taxes.”

Selectman Kiley made a motion to approve the item. Selectman McCarthy Vahey seconded the motion.

First Selectman Tetreau noted the Fazekas family is donating the property to the Town. Conservation Director Tom Steinke gave the Selectmen a handout, photos and showed them a large diagram of the property. He said if the RTM accepts the property it should be designated as passive open space. It's part of the neighborhood and not a destination place. Conservation will perform cleanup of the property.

Selectman Kiley asked if the property is passive but protective of the nearby river. Mr. Steinke said that is correct. The property will protect the water quality in the river and maintain the plant and animal habitats. Selectman McCarthy Vahey asked if the lot is undesignated would the Town Plan and Zoning Commission be unresolved in its report to the RTM. Mr. Steinke said he is looking into this question trying to resolve how the lots were once a subdivision but turned into today's independent lots. First Selectman Tetreau asked if this is big enough to build on. Mr. Steinke said it is not big enough. Selectman McCarthy Vahey asked if Mr. Steinke as part of Land Acquisition Commission's discussions on acquiring other properties. Mr. Steinke said he was not. LAC Chair Mike Widmer said LAC found Riverview Circle the most valuable property and couldn't find the other two that were supposed to be part of a subdivision. Tax is still levied on the parcels. LAC only voted on the Riverview Circle parcel to be accepted as open space. Selectman McCarthy Vahey asked if LAC asks for outside expertise. Mr. Widmer said Conservation has tremendous expertise. Mr. Steinke said there is no contamination on the site; it is clean. Selectman Kiley asked if there are any legal loopholes. Attorney Stanton Lesser said there are none and a title search was performed. He asked the BOS to refer this item to TPZ to give a report to the RTM. He said the Fazekas family will then have no obligation to pay back taxes.

The motion carried 3-0.

9) BOARD OF EDUCATION (requires RTM approval)

To hear, consider and act upon the following request from the Superintendent of Schools:

“RESOLVED, that the Town of Fairfield (1) establish the Mill Hill Roof Building Committee; (2) authorize the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications for this project; and (3) authorize the Board of Education to file an application for a school building grant.”

Selectman Kiley made a motion to approve the item. Selectman McCarthy Vahey seconded the motion.

First Selectman Tetreau said as part of the non-recurring capital approvals of the renovation of roofs, this item was part of that process. Today's approval is administrative because Central Office has to apply to the state. The Selectmen will approve a charge and a building committee that may be part of an existing one at a future meeting.

The motion carried 3-0.

10) TAX COLLECTOR

To consider and act upon tax refunds as recommended by the Tax Collector in the amount recommended.

Selectman McCarthy Vahey made a motion to approve the item. Selectman Kiley seconded the motion.

Selectman McCarthy Vahey made an amendment to remove the period, add a comma and \$5,236.31. Selectman Kiley seconded the amendment which carried 3-0.

The main motion, as amended, carried 3-0.

11) To hear, consider and act upon any communications.

First Selectman Tetreau read highlight of a letter from UI for the public about attachments to electric distribution poles.

12) To hear, consider and act upon any other business which shall properly come before this meeting.

First Selectman Tetreau said a security oversite committee may be set up. There will be a more detailed discussion at the next BOS meeting. He sees an ongoing conversation on security and some issues to be discussed on town facilities. He welcomes thoughts and suggestions from the Board to help with this discussion. First Selectman Tetreau said he will have a discussion outline for a future Board meeting.

13) ADJOURN

Selectman Kiley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 pm. Selectman McCarthy Vahey seconded the motion which carried 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer S. Carpenter
Recording Secretary

