

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING FINAL MINUTES

Monday, June 21, 2021

4:00 pm

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, June 21, 2021 via Webex in Fairfield, Connecticut.

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick, Selectman Tom Flynn, Selectwoman Nancy Lefkowitz

OTHERS PRESENT: Peter Willner, Paula Coccozza, Fairfield Forestry Committee Chair and SFTF Member Mary Hogue, Human Services Commission (HSC) Chair Laura Incerto, Human and Social Services Director Julie DeMarco, HSC Member Loretta Jay, Purchasing Director Gerald Foley, Tax Collector David Kluczowski, Interim DPW Director John Marsilio, Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn, Assistant Chief Erik Kalapir, Racial Equity and Justice Task Force members Karen Lynch, Inni Dhingra and Doug Bunnell, Town Attorney Jim Baldwin

1) CALL TO ORDER – First Selectwoman Kupchick called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – First Selectwoman Brenda Kupchick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) MINUTES

To consider and act upon the minutes of May 17, 2021.

Selectman Flynn made a motion to approve the minutes of May 17, 2021, as written. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion carried unanimously.

4) APPOINTMENTS

To hear, consider and act upon the following appointments:

a) Board of Library Trustees

Peter T. Willner (D) 391 Old Farm Lane, term 7/21-7/27

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to approve the appointment of Peter Willner to the Board of Library Trustees. Selectman Flynn seconded the motion.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz thanked Mr. Willner for taking on this incredible work. She said the libraries are excellent resources. Both Selectman Flynn and First Selectwoman Kupchick thanked him also.

The motion carried unanimously.

b) FairTV Commission (*requires unanimous BOS approval and RTM approval*)

Paula J. Coccozza (D), 251 Inwood Road, term 7/21-7/24

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to approve the appointment of Paula Coccozza to the FairTV Commission. Selectman Flynn seconded the motion.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz said Ms. Cocozza brings great skills to the table. Selectman Flynn thanked her and wished her well on the Commission. First Selectwoman Kupchick thanked Ms. Cocozza and commented on her impressive resume and knowledge.

The motion carried unanimously.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to waive the reading of Item 5. Selectman Flynn seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- 5) FAIRFIELD FORESTRY COMMITTEE/SUSTAINABLE FAIRFIELD TASK FORCE
To hear, consider and act upon the following Sense of the Body resolution as recommended by Marcy Spolyar, District 4 and Jill Vergara, District 7: “WHEREAS, pollinators are in decline due to destruction and fragmentation of habitat from development, a lack of native plants due to an increase of invasive species, inappropriate and excessive use of pesticides, and a lawn culture that promotes turf grass monoculture which offers no benefits to pollinators and other wildlife; and WHEREAS, pollinator species such as bees, birds, butterflies and other pollinating insects are vital to maintaining healthy and diverse ecosystems; and WHEREAS, native plants support pollinators and all wildlife in Fairfield and beyond by providing food and shelter; they also help prevent erosion, keep our waterways clean, restore soil health and improve the air we breathe; and WHEREAS, pollination is responsible for most of the food we eat; and WHEREAS, five native bee species are threatened, endangered or of special concern in Connecticut and a downward trend is seen in species diversity of bees, butterflies, birds, and many other animals; and WHEREAS, the Town of Fairfield is cognizant of the need for safe and healthy landscapes for its residents and habitat for important pollinators; and WHEREAS, recent scientific research supports the benefits of restoring and reconnecting isolated patches of habitat; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT does hereby recognize and support the tenets of the Pollinator Pathway Northeast which are to encourage all residents to: (1) Reduce lawn size, provide predominantly native and pollinator-supporting plants and assure a sequence of blooms from early spring through fall (see www.pollinator-pathway.org for helpful lists); (2) Protect and enrich soil by using organic yard-care practices and avoiding application of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and treated mulch, and leave some areas of bare ground for ground-nesting bees; (3) Follow best practices for garden clean up: clean up in the spring, allow plant heads to remain through winter to provide food for wildlife, keep plant stalks standing and leave snags of dead wood for native bees to nest, ‘leave the leaves’ on flower beds through fall and winter to provide habitat, soil nourishment and protection for overwintering pollinators; and (4) Have a water feature, e.g., bird bath, fountain or natural water source.”

Selectman Flynn made a motion to approve Item 5. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said the BOS received many emails from the community in support of the Pollinator Pathway.

Mary Hogue had a Power Point presentation which she couldn’t share on the screen, but went through each item with the BOS. She said the Pollinator Pathway is in two countries and nine states. She said it allows places to connect big open spaces with our yards. Ms. Hogue said it brings a community together as well as microbes and plants. She said the Town needs 20 points toward sustainable CT certification and information needs to be submitted by August 24th.

Ms. Hogue said the Pollinator Pathway is 40 points. She said the Fairfield Forestry Committee will be planting trees in the fall. She said the Tucker Fund is also raising money for the Pollinator Pathway and many other organizations are also involved. She said everyone is working together as a community. First Selectwoman Kupchick thanked Ms. Hogue for all the work she has done.

The motion carried unanimously.

6) HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

To hear, consider and act upon a charge for the Fairfield Commission on *disAbilities* Human and Social Services Director Julie DeMarco presented this item. She said there is a true need for this Commission on disAbilities to be a permanent one in Fairfield. HSC Chair Laura Incerto said this has been an item on the HSC agenda for the last five years. She said there are great needs in Town for children with disabilities. She said the Town needs to be proactive and not reactive and create a more positive experiences for children with disabilities at an early age. Selectman Flynn said he would like the new Commision to have a few meetings and then come back to present to the BOS.

Selectman Flynn made an amendment to remove the second sentence under the “Meeting Rules” section: “Regular meetings shall be held monthly, or more frequently as needed. Special meetings may be called by the Chair with required posting and agenda notice” and replace it with the following language: “Regular meetings shall be held every other month and as needed.” Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the amendment which carried unanimously.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to waive the reading of Items 7 and 8. Selectman Flynn seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

7) PURCHASING AUTHORITY

To hear, consider and authorize the Purchasing Authority to enter into the proposed two (2) year contract with TaxServ Capital Services, LLC for Collection Agency Services regarding the collection of Delinquent Taxes for Office of the Tax Collector, [per RFP #2021-29].

With the initial contract being effective 08/01/2021 through 07/31/2023, with three (3) one-year optional renewal periods, effective 08/01/2024 thru 07/31/2026. Funding for this contract is available in account 010-20130 [Operating Budget Account – Collection Agency Fees Payable]

Selectman Flynn made a motion to approve Item 7. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion.

Purchasing Director Gerald Foley presented this item. He said a RFP went out for collection services. He said the firms were interviewed and the contract was awarded to TaxServ. He said there is a two-year initial reward with 2–3-year options. Mr. Foley said the company can charge up to 15%, but it will charge 10% for the first six months and then go to 12%. He said the company will go to a 15% charge in a year. Tax Collector David Kluczowski said the collection agency will collect motor vehicle taxes that are three years delinquent. He said many people move out of State and do not pay taxes that were due. He said the Tax Collector’s office does not have the resources to locate the taxpayer, but the collection agency does. Mr. Foley noticed an incorrect year in the written part of Item 7.

First Selectwoman Kupchick made an amendment to the optional renewal to read, “08/01/2023 thru 07/31/2026”. Selectman Flynn seconded the amendment which carried unanimously. Town Attorney Jim Baldwin said he read the contract and made slight modifications and is satisfied with the contract.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

8) PURCHASING AUTHORITY

To hear, consider and authorize the Purchasing Authority to enter into the proposed contract with United Roofing and Sheet Metal, Inc. to provide all labor, equipment and all else necessary to replace the roof at the Town’s Transfer Station facility, [per Bid #2021-103], for a total amount not to exceed \$122,375.00 with additional authority to execute change orders to said contract in an amount not to exceed \$12,237.50; for a combined grand total amount not to exceed \$134,612.50. Funding for this contract is available in account #22809010-57000-021T1. [Capital – Nonrecurring account]

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to approve Item 8. Selectman Flynn seconded the motion.

Purchasing Director Gerald Foley presented this item. He said the Town is looking to enter into a contract with United Roofing and Sheet Metal to replace the roof at the Transfer Station. He said the company would like to start the project in early July and finish before the winter weather sets in. He said work will take approximately 120 days and the roof will last 20 to 30 years. Interim DPW Director John Marsilio stated there are two roofs - one is flat and has solar panels; the second roof is a standard roof that is leaking and could leak into the compactors if not fixed soon.

The motion carried unanimously.

9) FIRE CHIEF (*requires BOF and RTM approval*)

To hear, consider and act upon a request from the Fire Department to purchase and install Fire Station Alerting Systems in the amount of \$196,192 to process voice and data for fire station notification of emergencies and dispatch.

Selectwoman Lefkowitz made a motion to approve Item 9. Selectman Flynn seconded the motion.

Fire Chief Denis McCarthy presented this item. He said this project was originally part of the radio infrastructure upgrade. He said the ECC budget is being split 50/50 with Westport. He said this request will fund the installation of the backbone of the alert system. Chief McCarthy said other towns will purchase their own equipment. He said the systems runs 24/7 so it cannot fail. He said this equipment is needed for the new ECC as the old system is antiquated. Selectman Flynn said he wants to know the proposed funding mechanism before approving this item.

Selectman Flynn made a motion to move this item to a date certain of the next BOS Meeting on July 12, 2021. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

10) Update on Racial Equity and Justice Task Force

Task Force member Karen Lynch presented this item. She said Task Force members have had a lot of activity since its formation. She said the Task Force kicked off its work with research, reviewed the Town Charter and historical documents and conducted listening interviews with people around the community such as the Chamber of Commerce for example.

Ms. Lynch said a lot of people in our community are coming forth to share stories with the Task Force. She said some residents are talking about living a different experience in our Town than other residents do. Ms. Lynch said these discussions included racial incidents and implicit bias. She said the Task Force has had guest speakers and noted that members joined other town board meetings and other town boards joined Task Force meetings such as the Chair of the Strategic Plan Committee. Ms. Lynch said the Task Force has a solid draft of a Racial Equity Plan to present to the BOS. She said on Thursday, June 24, 2021, the Task Force is holding an online community roundtable and there are 60 people already registered. She said the goal of the roundtable is to share work to date and to get feedback before the Task Force submits its plan to the BOS. Ms. Lynch said some members of our community want the Task Force to give responses when racial incidents occur in Town.

Selectwoman and Task Force Co-Chair Nancy Lefkowitz said the Task Force is working with Police Chief Kalamaras and said he has been involved every step of the way.

Ms. Lynch said the agenda for the roundtable is posted on the Town website and the meeting will be recorded. First Selectwoman Kupchick asked how people register for the roundtable. Ms. Lynch said the agenda lists her email for people to register and get the link. She described the agenda for this meeting.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said if the Task Force wants to perform a professional survey or needs other resources she is offering the Town's assistance with that. Selectwoman Lefkowitz said a permanent body should take over the Task Force's work and it should be a group of professionals.

Selectman Flynn asked where the Task Force is in the data/collection phase that he said will support the Task Force's recommendations. Selectwoman Lefkowitz said there are reports the Task Force refers to, but there is also anecdotal information. Selectman Flynn said there should be combination of both to which Selectwoman Lefkowitz said the BOS will see both.

Mr. Baldwin said he was concerned that because participants were asked to register to get the link, it would not be accessible to the general public at the time of the meeting. Ms. Lynch said she spoke with the FOIA office and was told the meeting would be following FOIA. Mr. Baldwin said he will confirm that it is in fact FOIA compliant and let both Ms. Lynch and Selectwoman Lefkowitz know.

Selectman Flynn thanked the Task Force for all their hard work.

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

- To hear an update on COVID-19

First Selectwoman Kupchick gave out the following information:

- ✓ Percent of Population Ages 15 - 44 Who Have at Least One Dose of COVID-19 Vaccination: Fairfield is 67%
- ✓ Percent of Population Ages 45 - 64 Who Have at Least One Dose of COVID-19 Vaccination: Fairfield is 87%
- ✓ Percent of Population Ages 65+ Who Have at Least One Dose of COVID-19 Vaccination: Fairfield is 95%

- ✓ Percent of Population All Ages Who Have at Least One Dose of COVID-19 Vaccination: Fairfield is 66%
- To hear an update on any other town matters

First Selectwoman Kupchick said that she is proud to announce that the Town of Fairfield was recently awarded with the AAA rating from each of the nation's top three rating agencies. She said she is looking forward to Wednesday's bond sale when the Town will award the bond issues to the bidder who provides the lowest interest rate. She said this enables the Town to borrow money at a low rate, saving taxpayer dollars.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said her newsletter will come out bi-weekly during the summer. She said residents asked if the Town could keep the American flags along the Post Road up permanently. First Selectwoman Kupchick said UI only grants usage of its utility poles on a temporary basis for safety purposes. She said next year, she will request additional flags be flown in more areas throughout our Town, including Black Rock Turnpike.

Earlier today, First Selectwoman Kupchick said she joined residents at a Pride Flag raising. She said each color on the flag has its own meaning that she shared - red is symbolic of life, orange is symbolic of spirit, yellow is sunshine, green is nature, blue represents harmony and purple is spirit. She said this is the third year the Town has flown the pride flag in front of Old Town Hall to serve as a reminder that our community will stand against discrimination of any kind.

First Selectwoman Kupchick said she had so much fun attending both high school graduations last week and enjoyed watching our seniors' excitement for their future and their parents beaming with pride. She said this has been a very challenging and unique year for our students, their families and school staff. First Selectwoman Kupchick thanked Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese and his staff as well as the Fairfield Police and Fire Departments, and our school administration for planning a memorable night for our graduates. She passed on her congratulations to the Class of 2021!

12) TOWN ATTORNEY

Executive Session - Personnel Matters - Town Department Heads Salaries

Selectman Flynn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 5:59 pm. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Selectman Flynn made a motion to end Executive Session at 6:26 pm. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The BOS took no action.

13) ADJOURN

Selectman Flynn made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 pm. Selectwoman Lefkowitz seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary