



**Members Present:** First Selectman Kevin Cwikla, Selectmen Robin Chesmer, Kathleen Smith, Mark DeCaprio, and Betsy Petrie-McComber

**Others Present:** Jay Schall (Fire Chief), Sarah Hill (Administrative Assistant), Hayley Wagner (Finance Director), Dean Hunniford (Director of Public Works), Kelly Lawer (Tax Collector), Jim Russo, Phillip Chester (Town Planner), Marc Lang, Alan Olenick, Honor Lawler, Marie Reynolds, Sellete Jemison, John Hankins

**1.0 Call to Order**

K. Cwikla called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

**2.0 Public Forum**

- Marie Renolds, on behalf of the Lebanon Garden Club, requested that signage be added for the Heritage and Pollinator Gardens located at the Jonathan Trumbull Jr. House. Signage would be placed on the directional posts on Town Green. The Selectmen will review this request and work with the Garden Club and the Historical Society on this project.
- Clayton and Carol Hodgkins, 43 Smith Road, requested to be added to the agenda for the April 2<sup>nd</sup> Board of Selectman Meeting with their land surveyor.

*B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to amend the agenda to take up item 6.1 and then return to the regular agenda. M. DeCaprio SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.*

**6.1 Sellete from Edward Jones, discuss CD Maturing on March 3<sup>rd</sup> reinvest options.**

Sellete provided information about a \$15,000 mature corporate bond which had a 4% interest rate. Sellete provided two options for reinvestment including J.P. Morgan Chase and Bank of America. The J.P. Morgan bond matures in 2034 with a coupon of 5.35% with a minimum yield of 5%. Bank of America matures in 2036 with a coupon of 5.65%. Both bonds are “callable” which means the Town can cash in the bond early if desired.

B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to select the Bank of America 12 year at 5.65% bond. K. Smith SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

**6.1A B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to amend the agenda to discuss and act upon moving two cents into the Franklin Government Security Fund. M. DeCaprio SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.**

K. Smith MOVED to roll the two cents into the Franklin Government Security Fund. B. Petrie-McComber SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

**3.0 Correspondence**

**3.1 Lebanon Town Hall has been removed undesignated from the passport acceptance program. Residents are directed to the surrounding town and the postal service for their passport needs.**

**3.2 Request for garden signage on the Town Green from the Garden Club.**

**3.3 Planning and Zoning Commissioners who were in office as of January 1, 2023, completed their mandatory hours of use education by January 1, 2024, as required by State Statute.**



#### **4.0 Department Reports**

##### **4.1 Troop K Report**

The Selectmen reviewed the monthly Troop K report.

##### **4.2 Finance Department**

The Selectmen reviewed the Board of Finance Monthly Expenditure Report. H. Wagner shared that the town's finances are on target for yearly expenses. The Town should receive a draft of the audit in a few weeks. The audit must be completed by March 31, 2024. The Board of Finance's budget meetings are going well and will continue over the next few weeks.

##### **4.3 Fire Department**

J. Schall (Fire Chief) reported approximately 70+ calls in February. Recently the Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) did an ambulance certification inspection, and everything came back positive. They reviewed the procedure for the second ambulance and inquired about the time frame for receiving the ambulance. We are still on track for the 2–3-year time frame. The Radio Project is moving along, the schools plan to put them into place during the April vacation. This increases reception in previous low reception areas.

In the last week, the Fire Department responded to two major calls including a structure fire and a rollover crash. The structure fire was from lithium batteries that started smoking and popping after the power outage. No one was injured and the fire department will be attending training on how to combat electric vehicle and lithium battery fires.

PSA from the Fire Chief: If your house is on fire, close the door behind you when exiting.

This will decrease the air flow and decrease the overall damage.

During the rollover crash the Fire Department was able to utilize the eDraulic battery operated rescue tool (jaws of life) and were able to help the individual out of the crash within eight minutes. This piece of equipment was in last year's capital expenses and J. Schall is thankful to the Board of Selectman for the equipment an assistance with saving a life.

##### **4.4 Public Works Department**

D. Hunniford reported that DPW is continuing to fix storm damage. Last week Truck 5 (2011, Plow truck) unexpectedly broke down. A new motor will be needed. This truck had previous issues with the motor. A new truck is on the planned expenses in about three years. The selectman discussed the idea of junking it or keeping it as a spare. There is a backorder on vehicles. D. Hunniford explained the town will still have a full crew with no spares. Two vehicles are currently on order. This information will be shared at the budget meeting with the Board of Finance this Saturday.

Tree removal is currently at a standstill. So far 28 miles of Lebanon roads have had tree cutting. They are about 2/3 completed out of their goal. Eversource does not have any funds to contribute yet. D. Hunniford and the First Selectman visited some areas with runoff issues and erosion with the town engineer on Hoxie Road and Barker Road. Plans will be created to increase the size of the culvert on Hoxie Road and a remedial plan for Barker Road. DPW checks the catch basins prior to storms to make sure they are clear and will not overflow.

The Selectmen discussed the town's drainage situation and the issue of 100-year storms which is nearly impossible to plan for without a major investment. The First Selectman will talk with the Town Engineer about the possibility of a drainage study for the town or at least for some of areas that tend to be impacted by heavy storms.



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B. Petrie-McComber explained that Barker Road was a cow path that became a town road. She added that the town should be thoughtful about roads that are frequently not traveled and that may have houses built in the future in combination with the increased rainstorms. This will have an impact on the drainage that could lead to damage in the future.

### **5.0 Consent Agenda**

B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to approve the consent agenda as presented with the remove of 5.3 and 5.4 (moved to new business). K. Smith SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

#### **5.1 Approve Tax refunds.**

2021-01-0000004	395 Realty LLC	\$17.82
2022-01-0000005	395 Realty LLC	\$10.00
2022-01-0001560	Holt, Mary A.	\$30.00
2022-04-0080521	Hyundai Lease Titling	\$100.43
2022-03-0056878	Ramsey, Jacqueline	\$378.77
2022-03-0056879	Ramsey, Jacqueline	\$121.80
2022-01-0002989	Russo, Roland & Marion	\$200.00
2022-04-0081153	Toyota Lease Trust	\$1,077.06
Total		\$1,935.88

**5.2** Reappointment of Alton Blodgett, Jim Jahoda, Marc Lang, and Keith LaPorte to the Conservation and Agriculture Commission for three-year terms to expire April 1, 2027.

**5.3** Review contract for the abatement and disposal of the AFFF product.

**5.4** Process payment to Vase Management LLC, to power wash and paint the entire exterior of the Community Center. Interior walls make any small repairs to sheetrock or trim before painting. Payment through ARPA funding approved for this project at 8-8-2023 BOS Meeting.

**5.5** Process payment to Park Ro Way for the replacement of 2 exterior doors at the Community Center. Payment through ARPA funding approved for this project at 10/12/2023 BOS Meeting.

**5.6** Process payment for carpentry to the Community Center.

**5.7** Process payment for project management services for services rendered at the Community Center in February 2024.

**5.8** Correct the term expiration date for Jessica Caines on the WPCA. Her term is set to expire on May 1, 2026.

### **6 New Business**

**Discuss and act upon:**

#### **6.2 Proclamation for Eagle Scout Timothy Breault**

The Board of Selectman reviewed the Proclamation for Timothy Breault and shared their congratulations for Timothy for earning the rank of Eagle Scout.

**6.3 Discuss and act upon the recommendation by Conservation and Agricultural Commission that \$200,000 be allocated from the town's Open Space Account for the preservation of former Girl Scout Camp Laurel on Clubhouse Road.**



Honor Lawler from the Trust for Public Land, in partnership with the Conservation and Agricultural Commission, is exploring the preservation of the Girl Scout Camp on Clubhouse Road. This has been going on for a few years. The State of CT is not interested in owning the property due to their staffing levels and the property infrastructure. The Trust for Public Land connected with the Avalonia Land Conservancy as a potential partner to accept the property. Avalonia Land Conservancy works with other towns across New London County. H. Lawler shared the funding strategy and a bill proposed by Cathy Osten for approximately one million state dollars toward the acquisition of the property. They also plan to apply for the open space grant in September/October to cover 65% of the purchase price and are looking for the town to help contribute to the purchase.

If the bond and the open space grant were successful, it will provide the ability to do assessments on the dam which is currently not in compliance with state standards. The Trust for Public Land helps towns organize their open space.

Questions and Comments:

M. DeCaprio – Did DEEP give the dam a classification? What is the condition of the dam?

A. Yes, it is classified as a low hazard, which means that no one's life or property is at risk. The last inspection was done around 2014/2015 and needed about a half a million dollars in repairs. The dam serves the purpose of impounding the water to create Stiles Pond. There is a high likelihood that Avalonia will not be interested in the dam. If there is a lesser cost alternative, that will be explored by the engineers.

K. Smith – Speaking in support of the preservation of the girl scout camp, there is a lot of space for trails and horses. Residents have spoken out about having an open space to ride their horses.

K. Cwikla – If the bond and the grants are not successful, what would happen to the allocation of \$200,000?

A. The funding from the town is putting a place holder on the funds. The funds will need to be voted on during the Town Meeting by the residents. Right now, there is about \$270,000 remaining in the account towards preserving farmland and open space.

B. Petrie-McComber – The town is familiar with the issues and cost of the dam. Unless the town creates a parks and recreation department and if the state works with DEEP to manage parks and open space across our state, it is unclear what the responsibilities of the town will be. As we move towards Avalonia owning and managing the property, there are ideas for future long-term projects but is the town prepared to take on those additional recreational activities and how will that affect the agencies who are supporting these activities? What are the long-term plans for the buildings? Want to ensure that the town is entering into this agreement with eyes open. If Avalonia is unable to come to an agreement, do we foresee the state or DEEP changing their mind and wanting to acquire the property? If so, are we able to revisit the conversation at that point or would the terms change?

A. We are unable to predict the future in that regard. It would be up to the Selectmen to recommend that this proposal goes to the Town Meeting.

K. Smith MOVED to allocate \$200,000 from the town's Open Space Account for the preservation of former Girl Scout Camp Laurel on Clubhouse Road and be brought to the Town Meeting. R. Chesmer SECONDED Motion carried 4:1 M. DeCaprio ABSTAINED.



**6.4 Discuss and act on recommendation by Conservation and Agriculture Commission to allocate \$5,000 from the town's Open Space Account to conduct an appraisal of 186.46 acres for land preservation purposes on Fowler and Waterman Roads, Assessors Map 266, Lot 20 and Map 273, Lots 26 and 28.**

P. Chester explained that a long-time resident approached the Conservation and Agriculture Commission about the possibility of conserving his father's property if the town were able to do an appraisal of the land. This is a priority area for the Conservation and Agriculture Commission because it is in the center of the most concentrated forest land in the town. Joshua's Trust is interested in preserving the land.

John Hankins, the President of Joshua's Trust, joined the meeting and explained the grants he plans to apply for which would pay for the purchase price assuming the property owner will sell for the appraised price. One grant is from the Federal government the NRCS – Community Conservation Partnership Program and the balance would come from DEEP funding, the Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Fund. Both grants are due in October. The seller will wait to see if the grant funds are awarded prior to putting the property for sale.

K. Cwikla inquired whether this land will have public access. J. Hankins explained that this would be accessible to the public, however they do not always build trails. There is interest from the seller that the property be used for hunting. The details would have to be determined. Joshua's Trust owns a few properties in Lebanon.

R. Chesmer. MOVED to recommend that \$5,000 be allocated from the town's Open Space Account to conduct an appraisal of the 186.46 acres for land preservation purposes on Fowler and Waterman Roads. K. Smith SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

**6.5 Review and act upon determining the exterior color of the Community Center.**

The Selectman reviewed the exterior color options for the Community Center. The Selectman decided to move forward with a cream color, white trim, and green doors. R. Chesmer will provide Jim Russo with the specific paint color.

**6.6 Act on FY25 renewal for Self-funded dental plan.**

K. Smith MOVED to reduce the Anthem premiums by 10% for the fiscal year 2025. R. Chesmer SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

**6.7 Tip request for a Counterfeit Detection Money Counter for the Tax Office, not to exceed \$500.**

M. DeCaprio MOVED to approve the TIP request for a Counterfeit Detection Money Counter for the Tax Office, not to exceed \$500. R. Chesmer SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

**6.8 Discuss and act upon the purchase of a used sweeper for DPW.**

D. Hunniford proposed purchasing a 2002 used sweeper from the Town of Colchester for \$28,000. Lebanon's sweeper is from 1984 and a used sweeper is listed as a future capital expense with the potential allocation of \$100,000. D. Hunniford is well versed in the history of this machine and believes it would be a worthwhile investment for the town. The town sweeps every road each year.



B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to allocate \$28,000 from ARPA funds to purchase the used sweeper for the DPW. K. Smith SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

**6.9 Hire Aaron Pelletier as the new DPW Maintainer.**

K. Smith MOVED to hire Aaron Pelletier as the new DPW Maintainer. M. DeCaprio SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

*K. Cwikla MOVED to remove 5.3 from the Consent Agenda and move to 6.10 under new business. R. Chesmer SECONDED. Motion 5:0.*

**6.10 Review contract for the abatement and disposal of the AFFF product.**

J. Schall (Fire Chief) explained the contract covers the removal and disposal of forever chemicals known as PFAS. The chemicals must be removed from the holding tank of the fire tire. We are required to do so because the liability if there were a leak would be very expensive. There is dynamic pricing on the contract because the disposal will be in Canada. It is estimated it will cost \$15,000 for this project. The Fire Department will apply for a grant from the state to assist with the cost.

B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to authorize the First Selectman to sign the contract for the abatement and disposal of the AFFF product. R. Chesmer SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

*M. DeCaprio MOVED to remove 5.4 from the Consent Agenda and move to 6.11 under new business. K. Smith SECONDED. Motion 5:0.*

**6.11 Process payment to Vase Management LLC, to power wash and paint the entire exterior of the Community Center. Interior walls make any small repairs to sheetrock or trim before painting. Payment through ARPA funding approved for this project at 8-8-2023 BOS Meeting.**

J. Russo explained that this contract went out to bid and that Vase Management LLC was the lowest out of the six bids received. The organization is ready to start painting next week. R. Chesmer would like to know more about the type of paint used in the quote. If the paint meets the AZEK requirements. J. Russo confirmed and R. Chesmer would like that in writing. J. Russo will confirm the product name and that they are using the correct materials.

K. Smith MOVED to process payment to Vase Management LLC, to power wash and paint the entire exterior of the Community Center. B. Petrie-McComber SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

*K. Smith MOVED to review and process payment for an invoice of \$756.47 from Eversource for electrical work completed at the Community Center as 6.12 on the agenda. M. DeCaprio SECONDED. Motion 5:0.*

**6.12 Review and process payment for an invoice for \$756.47 from Eversource for electrical work completed at the Community Center**

D. Hunniford explained that this invoice from Eversource is an additional fee for the underground wires installed at the Community Center. The cost includes their fee and loading and traveling expenses.



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K. Smith MOVED to process payment for \$756.47 to Eversource from ARPA funds for the services provided at the Community Center. B. Petrie-McComber SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

### **7 Old Business**

#### **7.1 Review updated schedule for asbestos removal.**

S. Hill provided a status report and updated schedule for the asbestos abatement project at Town Hall. The meetings typically hosted at Town Hall will be moved to the Library, Fire Safety Complex, or the Senior Center. B. Petrie-McComber asked if the meetings would need to be declared as a special meeting since the location is changing. S. Hill will review with the Town Clerk.

### **8 Discuss and act upon approval of minutes.**

#### **8.1 2/6/2024 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting**

M. DeCaprio MOVED to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2024, Board of Selectman Regular Meeting. K. Cwikla SECONDED. Motion carried 5:0.

#### **8.2 2/12/2024 BOS/BOE/BOF School Study Subcommittee**

B. Petrie-McComber MOVED to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2024, BOS/BOE/BOF School Study Subcommittee. K. Cwikla SECONDED. Motion carried 4:1 M. DeCaprio ABSTAINED.

#### **8.3 3/1/2024 Board of Selectman Special Meeting**

R. Chesmer MOVED to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2024, Board of Selectman Special Meeting. M. DeCaprio SECONDED. Motion carried 4:1, K. Smith ABSTAINED.

### **9 Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

*Minutes are subject to approval at a subsequent meeting, with any amendments noted at that time.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Hill  
Administrative Assistant