

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Chaplin, Connecticut
Thursday, May 5, 2022**

Members Present: Juan Roman III, First Selectman; Anthony Pinto, Selectman; Kenneth Fortier, Selectman

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Richard Weingart, Chairman/Board of Finance; Diana Alvarez, Town Treasurer; Jim Randall, Emergency Management Director

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.
2. First Audience of Citizens: J. Randall asked about the status of the street signs on South Bear Hill Road and moving them back off the road. J. Roman stated that he spoke with Dave Stone, DPW Supervisor, and he said the signs are far enough off the road. J. Randall said there was one that is twisted, J. Roman will let D. Stone know.
3. Additions to the Agenda: J. Roman had two items to be added to the agenda, New Business - (6F) "Discuss and possible action regarding extending DPW On-Call position", Old Business – (7G) "Electronic Sign"
4. Approve minutes of the Board of Selectmen regular meeting on April 7, 2022 and special meeting minutes on April 26, 2022. *J. Roman made a **MOTION** to approve the April 7, 2022 regular meeting minutes. J. Pinto seconded the **MOTION**. Two (2) yes votes and one (1) abstention, **MOTION** passed.*

*J. Roman made a **MOTION** to approve the April 26, 2022 special meeting minutes. J. Pinto seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

5. Communications and Reports
 - A. Trooper Report: The Board reviewed the Trooper report and noted that he was out on vacation last month for 2 weeks. There was a homicide in town last week and J. Roman spoke to the Trooper covering the incident and that the person of interest was caught. There was one fatality last month and also an incident regarding an intoxicated person with a rifle. There has been increased traffic enforcement due to the DOT construction work in town.
 - B. Board Members Reports: J. Roman read a report from Leslie Ricklin, Chair/Ad Hoc Bicentennial Committee, regarding the scheduled events for 2022. They continue to sell T-Shirts and ads for advertising in the play program via Facebook. The play is in the works and Rusty Lanzit is working on a cast. They have talked to the Recreation Commission and created a schedule of events for 9/10 and plans for a parade are underway. A historical talk is scheduled with Cathy Smith regarding Ruth Snow Bowen and her quilts. Also, there are plans to have a time capsule.

J. Roman read a report from Warren Church, Chair/Historic District Commission regarding a feasibility study to be paid for by a federal grant to help determine what can be done with the Chaplin Museum building if it should remain in place or be moved. This would be a study done by an independent party and to be spearheaded by J. Roman and W. Church and will present the findings to the Board of Selectmen.

J. Roman read a report from DPW Supervisor, D. Stone, salt was over budget, the International truck may last one more winter, and that the sweeper broke down again. The sweeper will cost approximately \$1700-\$2000 plus labor to repair. Pricing for a used sweeper is from \$40,000 - \$45,000. Currently there is a about \$85,000 in the CIP fund and this needs to be purchased sooner than later. J. Pinto stated there was one at the Equipment Auction facility in Franklin. Also discussed was the boom mower and that \$148,000 will be needed to replace it. Leasing vs purchasing was discussed and this needs to be in the CIP plan to be discussed further with the Board of Finance.

- C. Board of Finance Discussion: D. Weingart stated that regarding the equipment replacement line item in CIP there is \$86,000 and if the budget passes, then there is another \$50,000. This year there is enough for the sweeper. He reported that the public hearing was not well attended, only three members of the public were there. The town meeting is Monday night and then a referendum will be held. The Board of Finance will meet on 5/23 to set the mill rate. They appointed an auditor for FY 2021-22. This will be the final year with Offerdahl, and the Board will do an RFP (request for proposal) to see if anyone else is interested in auditing for the town. State budget funding in all areas were the same as proposed. One issue is the car tax which is capped at 32.46 mills and our budget was calculated on 29 mills therefore we will get more revenue through taxes. CCM sent grant numbers in February it was 29 mills, and our reimbursement was going to be \$72,000-\$73,000 but with the new cap number it drops and there will virtually be no reimbursement. He recalculated the tax revenue at 32.46 and it makes up the difference so keeping the mill rate projected as of now. Chaplin Elementary School has no increase in the budget, Superintendent Ken Henrici sent a new budget.
- D. Correspondence: None
- E. Building/Infrastructure: J. Roman reported that the paving bid has been published and due in on 5/24. A tree at N. Bear Hill Road intersection has been cut down for the new intersection. We are waiting on a DOT permit to be issued to the contractor. D. Weingart stated that he reached out to the municipal finance community, and they said you can prepay but be sure you have an award letter. He would like the procedure when new bids are opened to forward to the Board of Finance with a comment from

the First Selectman about the status so when bids are accepted there are enough funds to cover it.

6. New Business

A. Tax Collector Refunds: None

B. Resignations and Appointments: Resignation from Chris Blair, Recreation Commission, effective end of June 2022. It was noted that this is when her term expires, she is giving them a heads up that she will not be asked to be appointed again.

C. Human Resources: Office Clerk Job Description

The Board reviewed the job description and interviews have started. J. Roman stated he is also looking at filling other positions due to vacation time of people not being able to take the time. Right now, the new position is 12 hours. Also, he would like the Treasurer to come in and help cover when the Finance Manager is out and he will need to sit down with the Board of Finance to figure out how this will work, he does not want multiple people dealing with finances of the town. *K. Fortier made a **MOTION** to approve the Office Clerk Job Description. J. Roman seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

D. Discussion and possible action regarding employee vacation and sick accruals. J. Roman stated that the employee handbook allows employees to carry over 5 days of vacation time into the next fiscal year. He would like to increase this to 10 days, but 5 of the 10 must be used by October 31st. Also, he would like employees to have the ability to donate sick time to other employees in need; some employees used a lot of their sick time due to COVID. K. Fortier said he only had a problem with this due to the accounting piece, one employee's sick time may be worth more than another's due to salaries. K. Fortier stated he thought the two weeks of vacation is fair but wouldn't put in the October 31st restriction. J. Roman stated that he wants the employees to use up their time that is why there is a restriction. *J. Pinto made a **MOTION** to change the handbook so employees may carry over up to two weeks of unused vacation time from one fiscal year to the next with prior approval from the First Selectman or his/her designee. One week of said days must be used on or before October 31st of the fiscal year in which the vacation is carried into. K. Fortier seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

*J. Pinto made a **MOTION** to change the handbook so employees may donate up to one week of sick time to another employee who has exhausted their sick time due to their own extended illness or that of a sick family member. K. Fortier seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

- E. Discussion regarding the sale of Tutko Road.
J. Roman talked to the Town Attorney, Dennis O'Brien for clarification regarding easements, who is entitled to it and what does or doesn't constitute it. The Bakers who own property in Ashford and 29 acres in Chaplin, which Mrs. Baker just deeded to her son, would be landlocked if the road is sold to someone else. The sale of the road will be discussed at the Town meeting and now this is an issue. Option 1 the sale of the road goes with easements for the Bakers and the Weingarts and option 2 it doesn't get sold; the town keeps the road, but we don't have to maintain it. At the town meeting the public may decide to sell but then the final decision would be the Board of Selectmen.
- F. Discuss and possible action regarding extending DPW On-Call position.
J. Roman stated that the town had an on-call driver just for the winter, but he would like him to also fill in when staff are out on vacation, etc. K. Fortier asked how this would work with the union. J. Roman agreed that needs to be addressed and the Board agreed to allow him to explore this option further with the union.

7. Old Business

- A. Chaplin Museum: see earlier discussion
- B. American Rescue Plan Funds – COVID19: J. Roman stated that the 1st quarter reporting has been done. The Congregational Church is doing well with fund raising but still need \$20,000-\$25,000 for repairs and he would like the Board to approve this from ARPA funds. He will write something up for the Board of Finance too. *K. Fortier made a **MOTION** to approve using ARPA funds for the Chaplin Congregational Church repairs for \$20,000-\$25,000. J. Pinto seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

J. Roman would also like to upgrade the website using the ARPA funds. The bidding process was discussed due to the ordinance of purchases of \$7500 or more must go out to bid. He will talk to the attorney if software qualifies for this. *J. Pinto made a **MOTION** to approve using ARPA funds to upgrade the website. K. Fortier seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

- C. COVID-19: The Board reviewed positivity rate in the State is at 10%, Chaplin is 4.1%, no action will be taken at this time. They have plenty of masks and testing kits. They will be holding a 3rd vaccination clinic at the Library/Senior Center Building on 5/23 at 6pm.
- D. All Pending and New FOI Requests: None
- E. USDA Grant – Purchase of a new firetruck: J. Pinto reported that as they get closer to when the truck arrives, they will have a better idea on what the trade-in numbers will be. They will need additional funds as there is

not enough money in CIP to pay for the truck when it arrives. They will be getting \$91,000 from the grant which is reimbursable. He will get a definitive answer on when they can get a price on the trade-in which will also come off the invoice from Greenwood. D. Weingart stated they should be fine with the funds.

F. Benjamin Chaplin's cupboard update: The cupboard will be moved to the restorer's garage tomorrow.

G. Electronic Sign: J. Roman reported we are still waiting for reimbursement, and we should know this week. The landscaping quote was reviewed from Burnett Landscaping. We have a balance of \$15,000 in the grant. *J. Pinto made a **MOTION** to accept the Burnett Landscaping proposal to do the landscaping around the sign. J. Roman seconded the **MOTION**. All in favor, **MOTION** passed.*

8. Second Audience of Citizens - Note: Comments are limited to agenda items and subject to Chair discretion. J. Randall suggested looking at government surplus for the sweeper.

D. Weingart stated that he reached out to other towns using the message board about appropriating ARPA funds and six with the same form of government as us said they use the town meeting process. Other towns did a Board of Selectmen recommendation to a committee. Another said their town attorney said to go through the regular appropriation process. He also asked our auditor and he said it was a legal matter. He advises that no funds should be spent until the process is defined. J. Roman stated that if the town received under 10 million it isn't so restrictive. The two items approved does not have to happen right now and D. Weingart can talk to NECCOG who is administering the account

D. Weingart stated regarding the Tutko Road issue at Town meeting it can be tabled. J. Roman said the town attorney said it can not be tabled but postponed.

9. Agenda Suggestions for next meeting
Communications and Reports

- Trooper Report
- Board Members Reports
- Board of Finance Discussion
- Correspondence
- Building/Infrastructure

New Business

- Tax Collector Refunds
- Resignations and Appointments

Old Business

- Chaplin Museum
- American Rescue Plan Funds – COVID19
- COVID-19
- All Pending and New FOI Requests
- USDA Grant – Purchase of a new firetruck
- Benjamin Chaplin’s cupboard update
- Discussion regarding the sale of Tutko Road

10. Date, time, and place of next meeting (June 2, 2022, at 7:00pm, Chaplin Town Hall).

11. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm

*Respectfully submitted by,
Suzanne Krodel
Administrative Assistant*