

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Chaplin, Connecticut
Thursday, September 5, 2024**

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

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Susan Welshman, Recording Secretary; Dick Weingart, Board of Finance Chair; Jim Randall, EMD.

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

1. **First Audience of Citizens:** Angelique Jaques of 50 Chaplin Street stated that she was attending this evening's meetings to follow up on her request of last year to look into having speed bumps installed on Chaplin Street. She reported that people continue to speed along the road and run through the stop sign. She and other residents on the road are very concerned about the safety of children and pets on the road. J Roman responded that he would be in contact with Troop D regarding monitoring traffic on Chaplin Road.
2. **Additions to the Agenda:** None.
3. **Approve the Minutes of the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting on August 1, 2024.** *J Roman made a MOTION to approve the Minutes of the August 1, 2024 Regular Meeting. J Pinto seconded the MOTION. All in favor, MOTION Carried.*
4. **Communications and Reports**
 - A. Trooper Report – Troop D had not yet provided their monthly statistic reports.
 - B. Board Members Reports: None
 - C. Board of Finance Discussion: D Weingart reported that the Revised Budget Proposal # 3 for FY 2024-2025 will go to Referendum on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at the CVFD, 106 Phoenixville Road from Noon to 8 PM. He also reported that there was a Zoom Audit Kick-off meeting on 8/22/2024. The auditors are scheduled to be at the Town Hall starting October 7, 2024. D Weingart has requested that BOF members Victor Boomer and Peter Haines begin coordinating an examination of the Town's fixed asset inventory. Discussion of the schedule of standards for amortization occurred with D Weingart agreeing to send J Roman the schedule for review.
 - D. Correspondence: J Roman reported that the Senior Center Board of Directors have requested that Senior Center Director, Lisa Kegler, provide the BOS with a monthly report of Senior Center activities and attendance.
 - E. Building/Infrastructure: None
 - F. Treasurer Report: None
 - G. Department of Public Works Report: J Roman reported that the DPW has been busy with catch basin work.

- H. Chaplin Volunteer Fire Department Report: None

New Business

- A. Tax Collector Refunds: ***K Fortier made a MOTION to approve a tax refund to Elizabeth Garrison in the amount of \$4,132.51 and to Lereta, LLC in the amount of \$3,0. J Pinto seconded the MOTION. All in favor, MOTION CARRIED.***
- B. All Pending and New FOI requests: J Roman reported that on 9/3/2024, the BOS received an FOIA from Janis Farese (American Transparency) requesting an electronic copy of any and all vendor payees and the amount paid. A response of receipt was sent on 9/3/2024. Another FOIA was received by the Selectman's Office on 9/3/2024 from Linda Szykowitz, Fight Voter Fraud, Inc., requesting copies of both Registrar of Voters' certifications as well as a copy of form ED-632 which certifies that the canvassing required by CT statutes has been completed. A receipt response was sent on 9/3/2024 and the request was forwarded to Registrars Gene Boomer and Chris Komuves.
- C. Appointments and Resignations: ***J Pinto made a MOTION to approve the re-appointment of Danel Cates to the Recreation Commission for a term beginning 7/1/2024 and ending 6/30/2026; the re-appointment of Amie Kraemer to the Recreation Commission for a term beginning 7/1/2024 and ending 6/30/2026 and the re-appointment of Matt Foster to the Recreation Commission for a term beginning 7/1/2024 and ending 6/30/2026. K Fortier seconded the MOTION. All in favor, MOTION carried.***
- D. Discussion and possible action on sending the following question to referendum: "Shall the Town of Chaplin appropriate the sum of \$9,841,817 for the General Government and Education Expenditures for Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 as recommended by the Board of Finance? The legal ad warning of the Town Budget Referendum was read out by J Roman. ***J Roman made a MOTION to approve the legal ad warning for publication. Joe Pinto seconded the MOTION. All in favor, MOTION carried.***
- E. Discussion and possible action on a letter to Governor Lamont regarding Eversource rates. J Roman reported drafting a letter to Governor Lamont expressing the Town's displeasure in the recent electricity rate hikes, the reason behind them and the State's responsibility in addressing the issues to provide citizens with relief. Please see attached.

5. Old Business

- A. American Rescue Plan Funds: No new report.

- B. Discussion and possible action on Polling Locations: Windham IT continues the work needed to get the Connecticut Voter Registration System functioning at the Ferrara Community Room for the October Early Voting Session. If the work is not completed in time, early voting will occur at the Chaplin Town Hall.
 - C. Update for the construction of fire pond and dry hydrant: J Roman reported that the fire pond is beginning to take shape and that two items on the payment schedule have been completed with a total of \$40,000 being paid out to contractor Bob Mott.
 - D. Discuss/updates on Bedlam and England Road Bridges: The Bedlam Road Bridge Project remains on hold. The England Road Bridge super structure should be complete in October with the bridge over the Natchaug in place sometime in November.
 - E. Town Administrator Update: NECCOG has submitted a list of tasks for the BOS to perform in working with the recruitment agency, Collins Company.
 - F. Update on IT Services: Athens Micro onboarding of the Town of Chaplin's systems is now complete.
 - G. Update on the Community Connectivity Grant Fund/Sidewalk Project: J Roman reported meeting with contractor and has contacted NECCOG Engineer, Syl Pauley, about performing an A-2 survey of the area. A preliminary proposal is being put together and will ultimately have to be presented at a Town Meeting after passing through various agencies such as the Historic District Commission.
- 6. Second Audience of Citizens - Note: Comments are limited to agenda items and subject to Chair discretion:** Ryan Perry of 256 Singleton Road attended the meeting and inquired about possible tax refunds if the mill rate turns out to be lower than the mill rate established by the Board of Selectmen in July. He reminded the Board that at their joint meeting in July, the BOS established a mill rate of 29.95 at the recommendation of the BOF. At this meeting, tax collector Lisa Madden stated that taxpayers could request a refund in writing if the mill rate is adjusted down. J Roman stated that Lisa Madden's information was premature and that the Town attorney, tax collector and Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance are working together to address this issue. Mr. Perry raised the concern that taxpayers would be voting on the budget under a possible false pretense that the mill rate may go lower and that overpaid taxes would be refunded. J Pinto stated that if he had known the mill rate and tax adjustment information was incorrect, he would not have made the MOTION to set the mill rate that evening.
- 7. Agenda Suggestions for next meeting:** None
- 8.** Date, time, and place of next meeting (October 3, 2024 at 7:00 PM, Chaplin Town Hall).
- 9. Adjourn:** Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.

*Respectfully Submitted by,
Susan Welshman
Administrative Assistant*



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September 5, 2024

The Honorable Ned Lamont
Governor of the State of Connecticut
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont and Legislators,

On behalf of the Chaplin Board of Selectmen and the residents of Chaplin, I write this letter to request consideration for a special legislative session to address the steep increases from Eversource for electric bills.

The underlying cause of these sudden and steep increases are well known and have been covered extensively by the media, but to summarize the majority of the increases have come from the Public Benefits charge. In 2017 the legislature voted to subsidize Millstone Nuclear power plant, which accounts for 77% of the increase of rates. The other 23% is attributable to the regrettable decision by PURA to implement a ten-month repayment for repaying the unpaid bills from the COVID-19 moratorium. Most recently, PURA has approved another rate adjustment on top of the public benefits increases that went into effect on July 1, 2024. I am hopeful with the changes to PURA's Board in the next year, including the governor's new appointment, will enable PURA to make consumer minded decisions moving forward.

Residents need relief now. The new State budget ended with a \$1.64 billion surplus and the State has a \$4.1 billion rainy day fund balance. Additionally, this last session \$370 million dollars of federal pandemic funds (ARPA) were allocated to other priorities, but not to lowering residents' electric bills or paying down the public benefits obligation. The state has funds to help relieve the energy burden and must act.

Based on the foregoing, not only does the state have the fiscal means to intervene, but it also has the obligation to do so.

Accordingly, the Chaplin Board of Selectmen and I respectfully and urgently request relief for our residents through a special session to address the out-of-control energy costs.

Sincerely,

Juan Roman III, First Selectman

Kenneth Fortier, Selectman

Anthony Pinto, Selectman