

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF WESTBROOK
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, August 26, 2021
Multi-Media Room and Via ZOOM

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Bishop called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectman Bishop, Selectman Hall and Selectman Fuchs, Dick Dilorenzo, Ken Pederson, Tony Cozza, BOF member, Don Izzo, Emergency Management Director, Wendy Leone, Assessor, Kim Bratz, Tax Collector, Joan Angelini, Town Clerk, Chris Ehlert, BOF member and Chairman Energy Committee, Vincent Gentile, Chet Bialicki, and Pat Marcarelli, COB President.

2022-23 OPTION FOR GRANT LIST "FREEZE"

A copy of a resolution to provide Tax Relief for Elderly Homeowners was included in the BOS packet.

Mr. Bishop made a motion to adopt the Resolution for Providing Tax Relief for Elderly Homeowners document as presented. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bishop reported that Mr. Dilorenzo has requested that homeowners over the age of 65, regardless of income status, be granted a "freeze" on their property taxes.

Mr. Bishop read the following, developed by Ms. Leone, Assessor, regarding an estimated revenue loss if the town were to "freeze" property taxes for all individuals over the age of 65, regardless of income status:

"Based on estimates on the census.gov website approximately 27.4 percent of Westbrook's population is over 65. We have 3478 residential parcels, according to this statistic, approximately 953 would be affected.

It is difficult to estimate the revenue loss of opening up to everyone over 65. The amount of property values would most likely be higher than those receiving the benefit now. In this case the revenue loss would be greater.

The average assessment for those currently on the program is 143,338. The average assessment for all houses is 250,000 which are much higher than the current beneficiaries. The longer someone is on the freeze program, the greater the benefit and loss of revenue to the town.

Current revenue loss is 34,353.81 with 69 applicants. Using the mean of \$744 in benefit, the low end of revenue loss would be 709,032".

Ms. Leone outlined the parameters of a "freeze" program for those over the age of 65 that do not meet the eligibility requirements. This program allows for a tax freeze with a lien on the property that would be satisfied when the property sells or "changes hands". To date, no residents have taken advantage of this program. The program is outlined on the town's website.

The BOS had a thorough discussion relative to options available to residents over the age of 65 but took no action on additional programs for a tax "freeze" for residents over the age of 65.

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to better publicize existing tax relief programs that defer taxes and place a lien on the property until the property changes hands due to the sale of the property or death of the owner. Mr. Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUEST FROM RESIDENT – RE-DEDICATION OF TED LANE FIELD - Tabled.

WEST BEACH CONCESSION STAND CONTRACT EXTENSION

A copy of the contract with Mr. John Anello, Hog Wild, was included in the BOS packet. The contract expires in September 2022.

Mr. Bishop made a motion to extend the contract to September 2023 in the amount of \$4,100 due the Town for 2023. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF HISTORIC DOCUMENTS PRESERVATION GRANT

A copy of the grant application for the Historic Documents Preservation Program was included in the BOS packet. The grant total is \$5,500 and a total of \$1,151.66 will be provided via local funds (Town Clerk's Dollar Fund).

Mr. Fuchs made a motion to approve the grant as presented. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SET DATE FOR TOWN MEETING

Mr. Bishop made a motion to schedule a Town Meeting on 9/16/21 @ 7:00 p.m. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda items – acceptance of two library grants.

APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS

Re-appointment – Meri Wick – Mr. Hall made a motion to re-appoint Meri Wick to the Central Regional Tourism District for a 3 year term. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bishop made a motion to accept the resignation of Tony Fastaia from the PA/TA. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

First Reading – Eric Peterson – PA/TA – COB Representative

CAMERAS – TOWN DOCK

Mr. Bishop made a motion to add to the agenda a discussion of cameras at the Town Dock area. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bishop reported that the Harbor Commission has expressed concern relative to issues at the Town Dock. They have requested that a video camera be installed at the Town Dock. Mr. Butterworth, IT Director, has provided estimates for camera installation at the Town Dock (approx. \$1000-\$2000 for purchase plus \$500 annual maintenance fee).

It was agreed that a camera plan will be developed to include the Town Dock, Ted Lane Field and the Mulvey Center for further discussion via the budget process.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Bishop made a motion to approve the minutes from the 8/10/21 BOS meeting as corrected. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Correction: regarding the 4th of July discussion, note that individuals were on Salt Island, not Duck Island as reported.

BOARD, COMMITTEE, COMMISSION UPDATES – No report(s) received within 48 hours of posting agenda.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Bishop made a motion to add to the agenda an Executive Session for the discussion of staffing of the Emergency Management Department. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bishop made a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:09 p.m. for the purpose of a discussion of staffing of the Emergency Management Department. Mr. Hall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Helchowski was invited into the Executive Session at 7:33 p.m.

Regular Session resumed at 7:35 p.m.

No action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bishop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m. Mr. Fuchs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Attest,

Suzanne Helchowski
Executive Assistant

Noel Bishop
First Selectman