



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

Board of Selectmen

Regular Meeting

Minutes

Thursday, November 18, 2021 @ 7 PM via Zoom

Members Present: First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, Selectmen Rosemary Coyle, Jason LaChapelle, Denise Turner

1. CALL TO ORDER: First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:
R. Coyle motioned to have consent agenda item #6A removed and added to the agenda as #5A. Seconded by D. Turner, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
4. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: L. Curtis recommended having full complement of selectmen to render decision on Chapter 92.
D. Bouchard congratulated all Board of Selectmen members and looks forward to future meetings.
R. Avery thanked past and current administration for their service and encouraged new Board of Selectmen members to celebrate diversity through the CORE Commission.
J. Knapp acknowledged progress on past and current agenda items and emphasized urging movement of the selection of a new fire chief.
Lisa Johnson, Meaghan Kehogreen, Amy Domeika and Michelle Gilman voiced their criticism of the reversal of the original proclamation dated July, 16, 2020.
Cathy Russi expressed her support of having government zoom meetings and is thrilled on the development of the Senior Center Building project.
5. CORRESPONDENCE: ATTACHED
6. CONSENT AGENDA
 - A. Approve Minutes of the November 10th Special Board of Selectmen Meeting
 - B. Accept resignation of Pamela Scheiblein from the Youth FIRST Coalition with a Term to Expire 12/31/2022
 - C. Tax Exemption of Volunteer Fire Department Members. R. Coyle motioned to approve Consent Agenda, seconded by D. Turner, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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7. Tax Collectors Refunds. R. Coyle made a motion to block approve, seconded by D. Turner, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.
8. Town of Colchester Personnel Transmittal Form – First Selectman. Andreas Bisbikos communicated that HR approved and M. Cosgrove (Finance) suggested bringing forth to the Board of Selectmen for approval. R. Coyle and D. Turner had various questions and concerns with a decrease in the First Selectman's salary and its effect on future budgets. J. LaChapelle stated that he did not see any harm in the First Selectman making a decision of this nature. Future discussion will need to take place about this matter. A. Bisbikos made a motion to table this for future discussion, seconded by J. LaChapelle. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
9. Possible Naming of Field R4 after Norm Kaplan. A. Bisbikos shared information he received that there is an ordinance that states before a field can be named after an individual, they would have to have been deceased for a year. There is a question around whether R4 is already named and that R7 might be available for naming. R. Coyle and J. LaChapelle both mentioned the fact that policy should be followed in the naming. Everyone agreed that N. Kaplan was a great man and coach and that we should honor him in naming a field after him.
10. ARPA Committee Recommended Guidelines. R. Coyle stated final decisions will come back to the Board of Selectmen for approval for each proposal. R. Coyle motioned to approve ARPA guidelines of up to 1M business category with cap of 25K per business, seconded by D. Turner. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
11. National Opioids Settlement Agreement. Money relief to be used here in town. Deadline for town to register with CT. Conference of Municipalities to join settlement is 1/2/2022. R. Coyle motioned to moved to authorized town of Colchester to participate in the National Opioid Settlement and register for it for our own municipality, seconded by J. LaChapelle. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
12. Evaluation & Award of RFP/Q for Affordable Housing Plan. M. Bordeaux provided quick overview of Affordable Housing Plan and Guidelines. Planning & Zoning applied to Dept. of Housing for technical assistance grant for the award of 15K. Two qualified respondents, one of which was SLR, the preferred one. M. Bordeaux requested the board authorize the First Selectman to sign any associated documents with SLR and execution of the RFP/Q. D. Turner made a motion to authorize this and it was seconded by R. Coyle. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
13. Code Revisions to Chapter 92 – Open Space Preservation Fund. J. LaChapelle raised questions on clarification of the understanding of Chapter 92 as it relates to the involvement of a third-party and any benefits the taxpayer may be able to gain by this. M. Bordeaux addressed some of those questions. L. Curtis also participated in further explanation about these code revisions. J. LaChapelle suggested a bigger push on public education. A. Bisbikos suggested further discussion on possible language modifications to move this forward. R. Coyle motioned to take no action at this time and put on a subsequent agenda. NO ACTION TAKEN.
14. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: L. Hageman expressed to take no action on amendment change. Willing to provide documentation on land transaction. She is part founding member of the Land Trust.

M. Egan spoke about preservation easements and accomplishing something at a fraction of ownership regarding Chapter 92

D. Bouchard had a question regarding ARPA committee looking for guidance. Some businesses had bailouts and what will the structuring advice be to businesses that already received funds. Also, regarding easements when owning farmland and guidance to heirs on where their power lies.

T. Rudko spoke to physically purchasing land rights and tax reductions, selling building rights to prevent from being developed. Is against town involving itself with third-party entanglement. Believes if town uses taxpayer money, then town should retain ownership.

D. Levine who is the president of the Colchester Land Trust clarified some legal issues. All of this will go to BOS to discuss for more findings. Offered time to talk with anyone to educate more on this subject.

K. Chapman believes this Chapter 92 is a huge issue and commented on the Land Trust. She hopes it is carefully considered and brought to the town.

C. Vaillancourt agreed with J. LaChapelle in that regarding farmland, save a portion of it so the town can use it. Also thanked A. Bisbikos for his offer to reduce his salary and save the taxpayers money.

M. Kohoegreen was surprised that there was any talk about needing more discussions for land easement because she stated there have been meeting after meeting about this. Understood what A. Bisbikos is trying to do with requesting a salary decrease but brought up disparity issues going from his previous teacher salary to this position.

L. Johnson expressed additional concern with reversal of proclamation and would like to see new proclamation reversed.

T. Vaillancourt thanked Andreas and Jason for putting taxpayers first. Commented to R. Coyle that just because things were done in the past a certain way, doesn't mean we should continue doing it that way.

L. Curtis stated she looks forward to talking with J. LaChapelle more on Chapter 92. Offered to schedule a meeting with Jason, Deborah and Andreas to talk more on this subject.

S. Chapman commented on citizens comment format and that we are not a racist community in regard to the prior proclamation. Also stated we need to be mindful of land use and long-term goals. Congratulated the incoming administration.

L. Johnson stated she likes responses to the citizens comments from the Board of Selectmen. Hopes to have a really open conversation about the proclamation.

M. Lehtinen congratulated Andreas and Jason and welcomed back Rosemary and Denise. Stated salary reduction was a good precedent, former President Kennedy did it. Thank you for keeping that campaign promise.

Nina spoke regarding the proclamation and supported L. Johnson for speaking out about her opinion on it.

J. Duigou spoke about walking a fine line with land conservation. Spoke about affordable housing, sustainable growth and not wanting urban sprawl. Suggested for a future topic the idea creating a cohesive Affordable Housing Committee to represent Land Trust and First Selectman's office to move forward.

L. Curtis expressed an interest in J. Duigou's idea.

15. FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT: Proclamation replaced. Exploring in-person meetings and zoom hybridization. Going forward meeting types will be determined by the Chairperson's committee/board. Senior Center Building passed Y-1421 N-851, and the project will proceed.
16. LIAISON REPORTS: R. Coyle suggested bringing fire chiefs interviews first, next month. D. Turner had no liaison reports but would like the CORE interviews on the December calendar. Fire chief and CORE should be priorities.
17. ADJOURN: J. LaChapelle motioned to adjourn, seconded by D. Turner. MOTION CARRIED

UNANIMOUSLY

Please see the minutes of future meetings for any corrections hereto.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Marli Rudko

Executive Assistant to the First Selectman