



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 17th, 2022, at 6 PM Meeting Room I, Town Hall

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2022 FEB 23 PM 2:00
Phyllis Fuernberg
TOWN CLERK

1. **Call to Order:** First Selectman, A. Bisbikos called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Correspondence**
4. **Citizens Comments:** K. Russi spoke in support of having Zoom capability and logo for new Senior Center. A. Bisbikos responded with information on the upcoming hybrid capability for meetings at Town Hall. B. Dennler spoke in support of having Zoom capability.
5. **Consent Agenda:** J. LaChapelle motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by D. Turner. *Motion carried unanimously.*
 - A. Approve Minutes of the 2/3/22 Board of Selectmen Meeting
 - B. Tax Collector's Refunds
6. **MOU Between the Town of Colchester and the Colchester Police Union:** R. Coyle recommended to put on the next agenda updating the Employee Handbook and Personnel Policy and add this to list of holidays because this will affect all employees including unions. No action taken.
7. **ARPA Consultant Recommendation – UHY:** A. Bisbikos discussed an independent review of eight ARPA consultant firms by a group of individuals: Those individuals were CFO, M. Cosgrove; Town Planner, M. Bordeaux; ARPA Chair, D. Koji, and A. Bisbikos. All individuals chose UHY as their number one choice. Examples were given on why UHY was chosen above all others. The annual fee is 30K per year. An example was given of a contender that quoted 730K. M. Cosgrove stated that the top two firms were interviewed and addressed specific questions asked of the board regarding their business processes. R. Coyle would like UHY to come and speak to the board. A discussion ensued about the differences between the various vendors and what ultimately led to the group's decision to choose UHY. J. LaChapelle motioned to approve Andreas to sign the contract with UHY. Seconded by D. Bates. *Motioned carried unanimously.*
8. **Staffing Updates:**
 - A. **Current Status** – Ruby York will be the Fire Administrative Assistant and her start date is February 28, 2022. Daphne Schaub, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, her last day was February 17. She is heading to Florida. Six per diem firefighters were added.
 - B. **Zoning Enforcement position:** New language added which relates to blight responsibilities. R. Coyle

- C. motioned to make changes to the Zoning Enforcement Officer/Assistant Building official job description as presented. Seconded by D. Bates. *Motion carried unanimously.* A. Bisbikos will be posting the position asap.
- D. **Public Works Director position:** R. Coyle outlined the differences between the previous job description and the current updated one. S. Ramsby clarified an item within this job description that addresses drug testing. R. Coyle motioned to move the document as it exists with all the changes for sewer and water. Seconded by D. Turner. *Motion carried unanimously.* A. Bisbikos stated he will post this position for a month to see what applicants apply. There is an internal candidate and some previous ones that will be included as well in the process.
- E. **Water Supervisor position:** Changes were made, and R. Coyle gave a quick overview of the history of this position and questions arose regarding compensation. A. Bisbikos stated this position will be posted for a month to see what applicants apply and there is an internal applicant as well. R. Coyle motioned to move the updated sewer/water updated job description. Seconded by D. Turner. *Motion carried unanimously.* J. LaChapelle questioned why there was a resurrection for a position that has been dormant since 2017 and how will it affect the budget. M. Previti, interim Public Works Director and Pam Minella, the Sewer/Water Supervisor were asked to give their perspective and provided insight on the need for these positions. They each gave an overview of their current responsibilities that are undertaken and spoke to the absolute need for these positions to alleviate the overburdening workload that currently is being experienced.

9. **Sewer & Water/Bacon Academy Board of Trustees**

- A. **Possible appointment of Stephen Coyle and Gregg Lepage to represent the Sewer & Water Commission on the Sewer & Water/Bacon Academy Board of Trustees subcommittee. Possible appointment of Tom Dessureault and Andrew Norton to represent the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees on the Sewer & Water/Bacon Academy Board of Trustees subcommittee.** Water bill was initially 15K in 2020 and with interest is now 17K. An overview was given on the history of this bill's origin and determining the responsible party/parties for the monetary responsibility of payment. The subcommittee was suggested to be formed so discussions between these two groups can be held to reach an agreement and then a recommendation would be presented to the Board of Selectmen. Brief discussion initiated by J. LaChapelle on the political makeup of the subcommittee. J. LaChapelle insisted on having a balanced point of view on the subcommittee, but because minority representation will not be in place, felt that the viewpoint will be skewed. A. Bisbikos provided an overview of what this subcommittee will be tasked with and what the entire process will entail. R. Coyle motioned that S. Coyle, G. LePage, T. Dessureault and A. Norton represent the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees on the Sewer & Water/Bacon Academy Board of Trustees subcommittee. Seconded by D. Bates. *Motion carried*
4 -1 with J. LaChapelle as the dissenting vote.

10. **Public Safety Committee**

- A. **Possible appointment of Chuck Maynard and Brad Bernier to represent the Fire Department on the Public Safety Committee subcommittee. Possible appointment of Officer Bryan Kowalsky and Trooper First Class Ian Hawed to represent the Police Department on the Public Safety Committee subcommittee.** J. LaChapelle raised the question as to what the point of the subcommittee is and why there is no citizen involvement to sit on this subcommittee. A. Bisbikos responded regarding transparency as being a purpose for this. R. Coyle provided the overview of the process for the makeup and charge of this subcommittee. Discussion ensued regarding the viewpoints on having citizens involved or not on the subcommittee itself and what the charge of this subcommittee would be. R. Coyle motioned to appoint Chuck Maynard and Brad Bernier to represent the Fire Department on the Public Safety Committee subcommittee and appointment of Officer Bryan Kowalsky and Trooper First Class Ian Hawed to represent the Police Department on the Public Safety Committee subcommittee. Seconded by D. Turner. *Motion carried 4-1 with J. LaChapelle as the dissenting vote.*

11. **Donate Life Flag for the month of April:** A. Bisbikos read an email from Colchester citizen, P. Kupezak, who is committed to raising awareness for organ donation. April is national organ donation and awareness month. He has asked that again this year, the flag be raised from April 11 to April 22. The POW MIA is taken down for this period and the local Veterans have always supported this. The flag would be raised by a Parks and Recreation employee. J. LaChapelle motioned to approve of the Donate Life Flag being raised for two weeks beginning Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. April 11, until Friday afternoon, April 22, 2022. Seconded by D. Bates. *Motion carried unanimously.*
12. **Concession Stand Agreement:** A. Smith spoke to his involvement in the community and why this concession stand should be opened again. A. Smith is the only applicant that has applied for this endeavor. In addition to servicing games at the Rec Plex, the day camp children will also be able to purchase lunches. The board conveyed their thanks for this becoming an offering on behalf of the community. R. Coyle motioned to authorize A. Bisbikos to sign this contract to operate the food and soft drink concession awarded to Anton Smith. Seconded by J. LaChapelle. *Motion carried unanimously.*
13. **Citizens' Comments:** D. Antonacci and her son Raphael, expressed their excitement about the future concession stand. A. Shilosky spoke in favor of the Public Safety Commission and agreed with J. LaChapelle that there should be citizens on that commission. He also spoke to some substantial hurdles that would need to be addressed regarding the ordinances. P. Bureau agreed with J. LaChapelle with involving the citizens on the Public Safety Committee and spoke to his disappointment about three of the Selectmen not appearing in person at the last BOS meeting and this one as well. B. Denmler spoke in support of the town staffing the Public Works Director and Water Supervisor positions. M. Egan commended the Board of Selectmen for wanting to create the Public Works and Water Supervisor positions. T. Rudko spoke to state and Town Charter requirement for minimum party representation for town boards and committees and spoke in favor of having a Police Commission and the distinction of authority between the Public Safety Commission and the Police Commission. T. Vaillancourt spoke to the backstory of the Police Commission, his negative family consequences, and his opinion on the charge to have only a Public Safety Commission and not entertain bringing back the Police Commission. C. Vaillancourt spoke to the targeting of the Police Commission against her and her daughter and their censorship towards her while she served on that commission. She expressed her disgust for the past regime who shuffled this under the rug and how she was bullied and silenced when she brought up questions fighting for the town. A. Bisbikos asked for community members to partake in the process of this subcommittee. C. O'Donnell agreed with the formation of the Public Safety Commission but thinks that there should be a citizen's Police Commission reinstated in the town for oversight. A. Bisbikos stated that the citizens will have a voice in it. K. Cardys critiqued the First Selectman, previous speakers and their delivery of their speeches, the format of the BA parents meeting held at Town Hall and the First Selectman's statement regarding the Bacon/Ledyard basketball incident. A. Bisbikos responded by stating he stands behind his statement 110%. A. Shilosky interjected reviewing the Resident State Trooper contract and how it oversees the Police Commission.
14. **First Selectman's Report:**
 1. The Colchester Senior Center just received its Community Focal Point designation through Senior Resources Area Agency on Aging. Community Focal Points provide critical information and services to older adults through a variety of means and serve as a community hub for local senior activity.
 2. In case you missed it, both Channel 3 and Channel 8 did a wonderful story on "Freezin' for a Reason". A big thank you to Fred Brown, Greg Cordova, and Rob Suchecki for bearing the chilly temperatures and raising money for the Colchester Fuel Bank. The 2022 total raised was \$14,987.80
 3. An oil leak at Bacon Academy occurred Tuesday night. The Fire Department and Public Works were immediately on the scene. Our town and school system are collaborating with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Department of Public Health, and our friends at Chatham Health. It is estimated that up to 2,000 gallons had spilled, with some of it making it into Sherman Brook, which runs behind the school. The oil spill is contained and should not affect the neighboring homes who have wells. Nonetheless, homes will be contacted and offered a free sampling of their wells. Officials will be sealing off the affected space of the leak to contain current odors. Air quality tests and filtering are being

processed to ensure a safe environment once students return to school. The cleanup process is expected to take months and will be expensive.

4. Eversource will be investing \$20 million in a significant gas project. The project could generate up to \$650K in additional revenue for next year. Natural gas will become available in the coming years, potentially at a reduced price for residents. More details on the project, including its expected start time, will be forthcoming.

5. I had the pleasure of attending the Valentine's Day party at the Senior Center. Patty Watts, the Senior Center Director, and her staff did a fantastic job hosting the event. I enjoyed breaking bread with our invaluable senior population and listening to their guest performer playing Billy Joel songs.

6. I had the pleasure of doing a library tour with Kate Byroade, Cragin Memorial Library Director. I was particularly fascinated with all the rich history that has become a fixture of our library. In support of historical documentation, Ms. Byroade and I would like to gather historical Bacon Academy yearbooks to document our town with. Yearbooks are very interesting for people doing genealogy and can help give a sense of a relative's interests and personality. Please reach out to me or Ms. Byroade if you have a yearbook to donate. We are looking for year books for the following years:

Before 1930

1932-1943

1945-1952

1956-1959

1962

1964-1965

1968-1977

1989

1991-1993

1995-2012

2014-Present

15. Liaison Reports: **J. LaChapelle:** reported on various Board of Education items. A special meeting regarding state mask guidance for February 17th, was cancelled due to oil leak. Talk of annual oil contract and investigating an underground oil storage tank option. Field trip and policy discussions. **D. Turner:** the CORE Commission met for the first time, elected Chair and Vice Chair, and set a tentative schedule for meetings. Their next meeting is scheduled for March 23rd. **D. Bates:** Parks and Rec approved concession stand. Norton Park is continuing fundraising and hoping for the ARPA funds. Ethnic Commission received positive feedback from a citizen on how well they work together. Cragin Library is having a big book sale fundraising event March 3rd to March 8th and have ongoing monthly fundraising. **R. Coyle:** Commission on Aging met, and the Chair encouraged members to complete town budget and also the affordable housing survey. Bylaw change was voted on regarding a nominated officer which will ultimately come to the Board of Selectmen for a vote. Continuing work on Health Fair scheduled for May which focuses on mental health. Senior Center Director provided possible logo designs which resulted in lots of discussion. Open Space Advisory Commission waiting on the state's response to the Brownfield grants. Talk around developing a new Wildlife Management Plan (WMP). **A. Bisbikos** spoke to various Board of Finance activities.
16. Adjourn: J. LaChapelle motioned to adjourn at 7:49 p.m. Seconded by D. Turner.

Respectfully submitted by Marli Rudko.