



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

Board of Selectmen

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 6, 2022 at 7:00 PM via Zoom

Members Present: First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, Selectmen D. Bates, Rosemary Coyle, Jason LaChapelle and Denise Turner

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- 1. Call to Order:** First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:** R. Coyle made a motion to move #18 to #4 and #4 to #18. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0. D. Turner made a motion to add masking as a discussion and make it #7 and move everything down. Seconded by D. Bates. Motion carried 5-0. D. Bates motioned to add, Agenda Discussion as #10. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0. R. Coyle motioned to add Rudko Lawsuit as #8. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0.
- 4. Luis Medina Contract Review:** R. Coyle motioned to terminate and/or release all legal related items in reference to Attorney Luis Medina, i.e., services, representation, and monies paid. Also requested was to provide correspondence on completed actions to this motion and that any future retainer agreements are to be approved by the Board of Selectmen during a special meeting. See provided Motion #1 for full details. Open discussion ensued by board members. Seconded by D. Turner. A. Bisbikos stated that the case has been settled and a judge has signed off on it. Open discussion ensued. R. Coyle motioned to move the question. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 3 -2 with J. LaChapelle and A. Bisbikos dissenting. Main motion on floor was then voted on. Motion carried 3 - 2 with J. LaChapelle and A. Bisbikos dissenting.
- 5. Citizens Comments:** The following citizens commented on the Taras Rudko lawsuit: G. Furman, M. Egan, M. Lehtinen, J. Barnowski, M. Bylone, A. Day, B. Dennler, K. Kardy, J. Malsbenden, J. Farrell, H. Perham, A. Domeika, C. Calabrese, V. Rose, M. Swyden, J. Rose, Nina, C. Ryan, S. Chapman, D. Lambert, K. Paquette, D. Bouchard-Sanchez. L. Curtis stated that because the town hall has been compromised by water damage, that there possibly be a recommendation to change custodial management to have the library stay open to 9:00 p.m. to accommodate public meeting usage because of the lack of conference rooms available at town hall.
- 6. Consent Agenda:** R Coyle motioned to move the Consent Agenda, Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0.
 - A. Approve Minutes of the 12/16/21 Board of Selectmen Meeting
 - B. Tax Collector's Refunds
- 7. Masks:** D. Turner asked if there was any plan to put a mask order in place for the town. A. Bisbikos indicated he would not be entering into any mask mandate and that we need to rely on personal responsibility. D. Turner motioned to reinstate indoor mask mandate immediately for all town buildings and that the First

Selectman strongly recommend the same for businesses. Seconded by D. Bates. Open discussion ensued. Motion carried 3-2 with A. Bisbikos and J. LaChapelle dissenting.

8. **Rudko Lawsuit:** R. Coyle motioned to have the Board of Selectmen direct the First Selectman to have Shipman & Goodwin prepare a memo delineating and explaining the requirements of the Joint Motion for Judgement by Stipulation agreement for further clarification of this settlement on what those involved have to do, can't do or what statutes they need to follow. A. Bisbikos stated that the judge has already settled the case so there will be a hand recount and that there's already a motion on the table to intervene by Shipman & Goodwin related to items in this motion. Open discussion by board members ensued. D. Turner motioned to move the question. Seconded by R. Coyle. See Motion #2 for full details. Motion carried on moving the question 3 – 2 with A. Bisbikos and J. LaChapelle dissenting. Main motion on floor carried 3 – 2 with A. Bisbikos and J. LaChapelle dissenting.
9. **Flagpole Donation Review:** D. Bates inquired about the height of the pole. A. Bisbikos stated that it's 25', in good condition and there is a place to store it per Mike Previti from Public Works until a future location is determined. D. Bates was questioning the height and if this could result in an insurance issue. R. Coyle was questioning why no other towns wanted to accept it. J. LaChapelle motioned to accept it. Seconded by A. Bisbikos. Motion carried 5-0.
10. **Map Copier Maintenance Agreement:** R. Coyle moved to authorize the First Selectman to sign any and all paperwork associated with the maintenance agreement. Seconded by D. Bates. Motion carried 5-0.
11. **Agenda Discussion:** D. Bates proposed that the Board of Selectmen receive the agendas on Fridays to review and do research on them. Also, would like the tax abatement paperwork in a pdf, scanned and available for review in a separate pdf file. One pdf for the agenda and a second pdf for the tax abatement documentation. R. Coyle requested a tentative agenda by Friday and no later than Tuesday the remainder with any changes or additions. A. Bisbikos stated he would do his best to meet those requests. Open discussion ensued by board members.
12. **Brownfield Assessment Grant:** R. Coyle moved that the First Selectman can execute the required contract documents associated with the CT Dept of Economic and Community Development. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0.
13. **Director of Human Resources Job Review:** S. Ramsby, Director of H.R. spoke in detail about the current job description and associated funding which is split between the town and the Board of Education and the needed modifications to the current job description. Discussion continued regarding the decrease in funding from the town from 30% to 20% and the sought-out approval from the Board of Selectmen regarding this. A. Bisbikos polled the board for those in favor or not in changing the job description and funding to reflect 80/20 (Board of Education and Town respectively) which would result in S. Ramsby supporting the Board of Education for four days and the town for one day. The entire board was supportive of this ask. A new job description will be presented at the next Board of Selectmen meeting on January 20. A discussion continued about setting a date for a special meeting to continue with addressing interviews for various applications received for various committees. A. Bisbikos conveyed that a special meeting is necessary to address the interviews that have been postponed. That special meeting will be January 13, @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom using the "waiting room" function with staggered times. D. Turner stated the importance of looking at the list to see how many people we want to interview so that all will be accommodated that are signed up for that evening.

- 14. Department Assistant Job Review:** M. Cosgrove recommended that the clause “permanent clerk” for the Board of Finance be removed. Reasoning is that fewer clerical and HR hours could result, if not modified. A. Bisbikos stated there is a clerk candidate that is willing to carry out this objective. R. Coyle motioned to confirm that the last sentence in the job description is what required modification. Seconded by D. Bates. Motion carried 5-0.
- 15. Per Diem Fire Fighters rate of pay increase:** S. Hoffman, Fire Chief spoke on the current rate which is \$15/hr. Would like to be more competitive. Other local departments are paying up to \$20/hr. and he is asking for a rate of \$17.50/hr. to be approved initially as a first stage. R. Coyle inquired about the source of funds. S. Hoffman stated money is already in the budget. R. Coyle made motion to increase current rate for per diem firefighters from \$15/hr. to \$17.50/hr. beginning January 10, 2022. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0.
- 16. Steven Hoffmann – Fire Chief Contract Approval:** S. Ramsby spoke regarding initial acceptance letter and subsequent contract. D. Turner motioned to accept contract for the new Colchester Fire Chief, effective January 3, 2022 and authorize the First Selectman to sign. Seconded by R. Coyle. Motion carried 5-0.
- 17. Public Safety Commission Review:** Working draft. A. Bisbikos stated this working draft is to foster greater collaboration between the town community and members of public safety, while also increasing transparency. Open discussion ensued. Officer Scheel spoke in favor. Resident State Trooper, Tetreault spoke in favor. S. Hoffmann spoke in favor. S. Shoemaker spoke in favor. A. Bisbikos stated that next steps are to review documents to see if there are any conflicts with the Charter, and review of grammatical changes. Stronger draft to be presented at next regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting. Open discussion ensued in which Resident Trooper, Tetreault addressed a question from J. LaChapelle regarding the lack of citizen oversight of the police and how that is currently handled. The committee will consist of at least four community members for representation. A. Bisbikos will be collaborating with the fire and police department. R. Coyle would like to be part of this collaboration because she is the liaison to the Fire Department. A. Bisbikos would like to put this on future agendas as an active item moving forward to include future discussions.
- 18. Skipped - Executive Session:** Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the Town of Colchester and Municipal Employees Union “Independent” Local 506, SEIU, AFL-CIO, CLC (Representing Transfer Station, Parks & Recreation, Highway Crew, Fleet Maintenance, and Water Department Employees).
- 19. Collective Bargaining Agreement Decision:** R. Coyle motioned to accept this. Seconded by D. Turner. Motion carried 5-0.
- 20. Board of Selectmen Bylaws Review:** J. LaChapelle took issue with F5: *Board will not respond to comments made during Citizens Comments with the exception that the Chairperson only may respond if in discretion of the Chairperson such comments require an immediate response.* J. LaChapelle feels there should be a dialogue between citizens and board members. An open discussion ensued between all board members.
- 21. Citizen’s Comments:** M. Egan spoke against having a dialogue during Citizens Comments. K. Kardy spoke in favor of mask mandates. S. Chapman spoke against having a dialogue during Citizens Comments. M. Egan expressed her opinion regarding the First Selectman. Leslie Curtis spoke regarding vaccines and thanked the

board for their time. A. Day spoke regarding Robert's Rules. G. Transue spoke against having a dialogue during Citizens Comments. M. Lehtinen spoke regarding Robert's Rules and thanked A. Bisbikos for his decorum during the meeting. J. Laravie expressed his displeasure with D. Bates but commended the rest of the board. D. Bouchard-Sanchez discussed legal opinions sought by the previous administration, Rudko legal action and writ mandamus, and addressed missing November 2nd voting materials. G. Furman spoke regarding the Rudko legal matter.

22. First Selectman's Report:

1. Public acknowledgement of the hard work conducted by first responders for executing a well thought out distribution plan for Covid-19 test kits and N95 masks.
2. Town is coordinating with the state on delivery of additional Covid-19 test kits (plenty of additional N95 masks available)
3. On Monday, January 3, the New Fire Chief Steve Hoffmann took charge. Thanked Sean Shoemaker for his dedication to the interim role as Fire Chief who will remain with the town as Fire Marshal
4. Met with Joe Courtney had a great meeting discussing interesting topics
5. Lt. Governor Bysiewicz held a press conference with other dignitaries at the Senior Center to announce the state's \$2.5M bonding to offset the town's cost for the new Senior Center
6. Worked with current CFO, Maggie Cosgrove to issue an RFP for an independent consultant to review ARPA applications
7. Recognized Cato Corner for making Food & Wines Top 50 cheesemakers list
8. Town of Colchester Police Department has secured body cameras and tasers ahead of the state's schedule
9. Due to impending storm, the Senior Center, Youth Center, Library and Town Hall will be closed tomorrow, Friday, January 7.

23. Liaison Reports: None

24. Adjourn: J. LaChapelle motioned to adjourn at 11:46 p.m. Seconded by D. Turner