

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
June 15, 2022**

Present: Ryan Curley, First Selectman; John Dillon, Michael Hernandez, Robert Hetrick, Jr., Shaun Manning, Michael Pelton, Ralph Zampano

Staff:

Others Present: Nathan Bondar, LIHTC Development Group, LLC; Joan Nichols, Executive Director, CT Farm Bureau Association; Susan Malecky, Chair, Portland Housing Authority; Allen Harrison, Executive Director Portland Housing Authority; Members of the public

1. FIRST SELECTMAN CALL THE REGULAR MEETING TO ORDER

First Selectman Ryan Curley called the Regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Buck-Foreman Community Room, 265 Main Street, Second floor, Portland, CT.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVE JUNE 1, 2022, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:

Shaun Manning made a motion, seconded by John Dillon, to approve the June 1, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Vote unanimous; motion carried.

4. ACCEPT AGENDA

First Selectman Curley noted one change to the agenda. Joan Nichols will be attending the meeting via Zoom and will present first. John Dillon made a motion to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by Shaun Manning. Vote unanimous; motion carried.

5. COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE:

First Selectman Curley noted the progress made on Brainard Place. He also commended the Portland golf team on their championship.

- Presentation by Joan Nichols, Executive Director, CT Farm Bureau Association
Joan Nichols thanked the board and spoke about the history of the Right to Farm law in Connecticut. She explained how the law protects farmers and gives oversight regarding protection of farms. She also noted that the law applies to every town in Connecticut, although not every town has a Right to Farm ordinance. A Right to Farm ordinance is designed to help municipalities with guidance regarding regulation. It is equally important to non-farming community members as well as farming community members. It does not override any other existing regulations.

Ralph Zampano asked about situations when farmers may be facing lawsuits. Joan Nichols stated that she did not have specific information as the Farm Bureau would only be consulted if the farmer came to them.

John Dillon stated that there are numerous people raising chickens on small lots. He asked if the law stipulated those small areas would fall under the same guidelines as larger farms. Joan Nichols stated that would be a matter for the Department of Agriculture.

First selectman Curley asked for confirmation that the ordinance does not supersede existing town zoning or building codes. Joan Nichols confirmed that it does not supersede existing regulations. She stated that it is important for towns considering a Right to Farm ordinance to mirror the state statute.

- **Presentation by LIHTC Development Group LLC-Nathan Bondar (Housing Authority topic):** Nathan Bondar introduced himself and thanked the board for the opportunity to speak. He stated that his group works with many housing authorities throughout the state and across the country. He provided some background information about HUD and Housing Authority operations. The Housing Authority gets contracted rates from HUD which provides guaranteed rent rates for a contracted term (e.g., 15 or 20 years). Mr. Bondar stated that the Housing Authority is in process of converting to help ensure the continued affordability of housing within the community. He noted that he has been working with First selectman Curley and stressed the importance of the town and Housing Authority working together. The Housing Authority will now have the capability to expand and fill the need for housing within the community.

Susan Malecky, Chair, Portland Housing Authority (PHA), noted that the town will not need to outlay funds. Portland is presently at 8.2% of affordable housing.

Allen Harrison Executive Director, Portland Housing Authority, spoke about the importance of acting getting involved early. He stated the PHA will be able to leverage property to get more income and stabilize rents for residents (through vouchers). HUD is encouraging Housing Authorities to find other sources of income besides HUD funding. The PHA is working proactively to ensure sustainability and stability for residents. There are regular property inspections (Chatham Court) from HUD. In response to a question, there is not room for expansion at Chatham Court. Expansion would come from other property acquisitions.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Monthly Report – Committee on Solidarity:

April Graves, Chair of the Solidarity Committee, thanked Bob Shea for his help in getting banners up on Main Street. She also thanked volunteers for their efforts on the Disability Forum. She noted the upcoming Juneteenth event on Saturday, June 18, at which the committee will have exhibit tables and presentations. There will be a Pride Rally on June 25.

- B. Discussion – Right to Farm Ordinance:** Michael Hernandez asked about production farming. First Selectman Curley stated that he had received some complaints about a property that has changed usage and is causing some disturbance to neighbors. He noted that he had asked about situations in which a farm changes its usage. Ralph Zampano stated that some small farms have been sued civil court despite a Right to Farm ordinance. Shaun Manning reiterated that the town has resources (e.g., Agriculture) for guidance in such situations.

First Selectman Curley noted the towns in Connecticut that currently have a Right to Farm ordinance. Ralph Zampano stated that he had looked at those towns ordinance and noted that nearly all use the state statute as a guideline. John Dillon suggested that it is important to have Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetlands involved. First Selectman suggested tabling the issue until the next meeting.

C. Appointments/Reappointments to Boards and Commissions:

- Ralph Zampano made a motion to reappoint Deb Calavas to the Youth Services Committee. Second by John Dillon. Vote unanimous. motion carried.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution: Supplemental Appropriation- Capital Plan Improvements (Set Public Hearing)

First Selectman Curley discussed the need for a supplemental appropriation Capital Plan and noted the need for a SUV for the fire chief. He stated there is an opportunity to obtain a vehicle with funds that would be provided through supplemental appropriation. He opened the floor to discussion. Shaun Manning, Ralph Zampano and John Dillon agreed with the idea of the appropriation. The deadline for the grant is August 15, 2022. He asked for a motion to set a public hearing regarding supplemental appropriation for June 29 at 7:00 p.m., and special town meeting at 7:05 p.m. A motion to hold a public hearing on June 29 was made by Shaun Manning, seconded by John Dillon. Vote unanimous. Motion carried.

B. Review of Policy on Fixing Real Property Assessments

First selectman Curley distributed information regarding the current Policy on Fixing Real Property Assessments. He also provided ordinances from other communities (Colchester, Middlebury, Derby) for comparison. He suggested Middlebury was a good example on which to model an ordinance. Curley stated there is a need for clarification and this is an avenue to encourage new business. The board agreed that there is a need to investigate the issue further to establish consistency and clarity.

C. Refunds of Excess Payments – Eric Handel [\$127.55] [\$83.15]:

Robert Hetrick, Jr. made a motion to refund \$127.55 to Eric Handel, seconded by Ralph Zampano. Vote unanimous, Motion carried.

Robert Hetrick, Jr. made a motion to refund \$83.15 to Eric Handel, seconded by Ralph Zampano. Vote unanimous, Motion carried.

9. STATUS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

First selectman Curley noted the shelter diversion program grant. The town applied for and received a grant to enable the program to be extended by the Department of Housing for six months (beyond December) plus an additional two staff personnel.

The town is awaiting finalizing of funds for the Senior Center. The is not update on a contract for state funding for improvements to the High School/Middle School track. An RFP process will begin soon. The goal is to have the track work completed by June 2023.

The Riverfront property remediation projects will require additional grants to open additional opportunities for usage of the properties (rather than simple remediation). The sidewalk project is progressing. The town is awaiting engineering report to send to the state and hopefully begin work within the upcoming months.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

11. BOARD OF SELECTMEN GENERAL INFORMAL DISCUSSION

First Selectman stated that he had a meeting with MCRC who has received a grant. Portland business can apply for funds from MCRC (\$1,000,00 will be available). More information will be forthcoming.

12. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- Review Town Charter
- Ethics Ordinance

13. ADJOURN MEETING

Shaun Manning made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jon D'Arpino, Substitute Board Clerk
June 16, 2022