

Board of Selectmen's Meeting –April 8, 2024 (Approved minutes)

Robert McGarry called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm at the Town Hall, 21 Field Park Drive, Haddam CT 06438.

Kate Anderson and Peter Baird were present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda: Baird made a motion to approve the agenda. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: March 11, 2024: Anderson made a motion to approve the March 11, 2024, minutes. There was a brief discussion Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: Curtis Browne, 58 Schuler Lane: He would like to seek approval for the second round of Tylerville Business Interruption Loan/Grants regarding the Swing Bridge & Rotary construction.

Mark Lundgren, Higganum: In favor of 2nd round of Tylerville Interruption Loan.

Mike Karam, Haddam: Read a letter under the record. Attached as Schedule I

Illeana Douglas, Haddam: made a comment regarding HES and the public information session that was held in June 2023.

Selectman's Update: Attached as Schedule II

Anderson: There is a proposed cell tower being being put up in Haddam Neck on Ague Spring Road. The Connecticut Siting Council is accepting public comments until April 20th
You can email your comment to siting.council@ct.gov

Board of Education update: Attached as Schedule III.

Tax Refunds: Anderson made a motion to accept the April 2024 Tax Refunds of \$1,128.03. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously. (Attached as Schedule IV)

Appointments:

Sustainability Committee: Anderson made a motion to appoint Neal Perron to the Sustainability Committee. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Deputy Registrar: Baird made a motion to appoint Lynne Cooper as the Deputy Registrar. There was a brief discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Discussion of 2nd Round Tylerville Interruption Loan: Anderson (Chairwoman of EDC) presented to the board the current need for a 2nd round of Tylerville Business Interruption Loan/Grant program.

McGarry made a motion to approve a 2nd round of business interruption loan/grant program with an increase to \$6,000 per month and other recommendations the EDC suggests. There was a brief discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

Old business: N/A

Date & Location of next meeting: May 13, 2024, at 6:30pm at the Haddam Neck Fire House (50 Rock Landing Road, Haddam Neck, 06424)

Adjournment: Anderson made a motion to adjourn. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm. Minutes taken by JoAnn Ricciardelli



Good evening Board of Selectman,

I am here today as the founder of the Haddam Beautification Committee to emphasize the importance of beautification efforts for our town. As someone who deeply cares about our community's well-being, I believe that investing in beautification projects can significantly enhance the overall quality of life for all residents and visitors alike. Beautification goes beyond mere aesthetics; it fosters a sense of pride and belonging. When our town is well-maintained and visually appealing, it creates a positive impression for those who call Haddam home, visitors, and potential newcomers. This in turn, can boost local tourism and economic development, as people are more inclined to spend time and money in areas that are attractive and well-kept. Why would they want to invest here if the signal we send is that we don't invest in ourselves?

From the landscape work the Beautification Committee has done since its conception last year, and of course from the civic garden work the Haddam Garden Club has been doing for nearly 30 years, we've seen incredible enthusiasm for beautification from the community. A clear signal has been sent recently however that there is a general frustration that the town does not take beautification seriously. People are tired of driving through Haddam and seeing neglect for our buildings and our properties. One resident commented "I've lived in many towns over the years, and I have noticed this is the worst as far as upkeep goes. Definitely no pride." Another resident said "So sad you have to sacrifice your Sunday on something our town should be doing. We are all extremely grateful." We can't rely on volunteers alone for this work. The town needs to invest in a landscaping contractor to maintain, not just mow, our town properties, town green, and centers. There is a difference between haphazardly mowing lawn once a month if we are lucky and maintaining property on a regular basis. Such as mulching, weeding, edging, planting, and lawn restoration as most of the green areas we do have are weeds.

As you drive through neighboring towns like Deep River, Durham, Chester, and Essex, you will see communities that take pride in their appearance. They clearly understand the power of beautification and it shows. How can surrounding towns do it, yet Haddam can't seem to figure it out? Especially when according to the most recent census data, Haddam is the most affluent of our surrounding river towns.

I urge the Board of Selectman to prioritize beautification efforts in our town's budget and planning initiatives. This may include things like allocating resources for a qualified landscape contractor, tree planting programs, community garden projects, public art installations, and maintenance of existing green spaces. I would also like to urge the town to take inventory of what Public Works and Park & Rec does or doesn't do in relation to beautification and provide new guidelines and additional support if necessary. The neglected Great Hill Park playground on Jail Hill Road for instance is one example.

Additionally, I'd like to see the BOS explore creating a blight ordinance. Blight not only diminishes the aesthetic appeal of our community but also poses various health and safety risks. Abandoned properties, overgrown yards, and neglected structures can pose fire hazards, and decrease property values for neighboring homes. Furthermore, blight can create a sense of neglect and disinvestment discouraging potential investors and new residents from choosing our town.

In conclusion, beautification is not just about making our town look pretty; it's about creating a vibrant, inclusive community where residents can thrive and take pride in their surrounds. I hope that you will consider these points and take proactive steps to prioritize beautification efforts for the betterment of our town.

Thank you,
Mike Karam
Founder, Haddam Beautification Committee

April 8, 2024 - Board of Selectmen - Schedule II

BOS Meeting Selectman's Update 2024-04-08

Projects

- Rossi Property
 - DECD granted a 6 month extension on the remediation funds.
- Scovil Hoe
 - Parker Benjamin's demolition contractor conducted work outside the scope of their demo permit –
 - Framing for a mezzanine
 - Removal of material with lead paint and universal waste. (No asbestos material was impacted)
 - We met with VHB & Eagle Environmental at the site.
 - PB ordered to stop work until: plans approved for mezzanine, plan for addressing hazardous material.
 - DECD has frozen remediation expenditures
 - DEEP has been notified
 - PB has hired CT Environmental & Demo LLC to address the issues at Scovil
- HES
 - Held 2 information meetings
 - 3/20 – Review architect's report. Est 90-100 people attended
 - \$9.5M to convert old wing for Sr. Center, Community Center, CSP & Registrars offices
 - \$32M to move all town offices into HES
 - 3/27 – Present Rak proposal Est 50-75 people attended
- Swing Bridge
 - This week's 63 hr closure cancelled. Next one scheduled is next week.
- Roundabouts – Met with DOT and Mx Chamber last week. Work has started. Current plan is to do off road work this year.
- Tylerville Water – No report
- Private Projects – No report

Personnel

- P&Z authorized by statute to make appointments to PIC (CGS §8-23(c), and §8-23(f)) & ARB (CGS §8-2j)
- Tracy Thompson. Assessor Technician, is out on an extended medical leave
- Bill Warner left on a 6 month LOA. Should be on the Appalachian Trail as we speak

Other

- BOF completed their proposed budget \$8.6M, 2.2% increase and Capital Plan \$1.5M
- RSD17 BOE submitted their budget –
 - Total \$48.5M, 4.6% increase
 - Assessment to towns - \$47.5M, 2.6% increase

April 8, 2024 - Board of Selectmen - Schedule III

Summary of March 2024 RSD17 Board of Education Meeting

Cougar Pride

KES Principal Dennis Reed introduced several students who shared their positive experiences with the KES Book Club. This before-school club has been extremely popular among KES students and helps to foster a lifelong love of reading.

Superintendent's Report

HKHS announced the top two scholars from the Class of 2024. The valedictorian of the Class of 2024 is **Liza Murphy**, and the salutatorian is **Ava Harriman**. Congratulations to our HKHS scholars!

HKMS is excited about the March Spring musical, *The Pirates of Penzance*. The students have been working very hard with Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fagan.

HKIS 4th and 5th-grade students engaged in hands-on financial education through the stock market program led by Mr. Houlton. By learning how to buy and sell stocks at a young age, these students are gaining valuable skills that will benefit them in the future and set them on a path toward financial literacy and responsible investing practices.

Student Representatives' Report

Madison Moriarty reported on the start of spring sports at HKHS. The athletics department partnered with HKYFS on a program called *Substance-Free Athletics to Protect Your Game* about the negative effects of substances on athletic performance. She also shared that March 27th was Senior portfolio day, and Juniors spent that day taking the SATs.

Michael Perry reported to the Board that March 19th was Middle School Band Day, during which 8th-graders come to the high school to play in large groups in the auditorium and smaller ensembles. He also shared that the high school recently hosted a college fair, and several clubs have started holding Spring fundraisers.

Healthy Food Certification

The Board unanimously voted to approve the annual participation in the Healthy Food Certification, which includes all food offered for sale to students including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups. Food and beverages sold at special events (like games, fundraisers, and shows) are exempt from the restrictions.

Acceptance of the FY23 Financial Audit Report

Prem Aithal introduced Michele Loso of Seward and Monde who gave the Board a summary of the district audit and its process. No material weaknesses were found and the results can be viewed in the *Board Documents* section of the March 2024 Board Meeting.

<https://www.rsd17.org/district/board-of-education/boe-meeting-schedules-minutes>

Master Plan Update

Superintendent Wihbey and Director Whittaker provided the Board with an update regarding the Master Plan and a memorandum from Arcadis with information to assist the Board in the next steps. The Board discussed phase options and possible timeline options. More information will be presented in future meetings.

Personnel & Evaluation Subcommittee

Corey Roberts reported that the committee discussed the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation, and the upcoming Nurses' negotiations.

Curriculum Subcommittee

Kathy Zandi reported that HKYFS presented the results of the Youth Voices Count survey administered to high school students, and HKYFS has scheduled a presentation of the results at the middle school on April 18th for anyone who would like to attend. The committee received updates on the *If You Love It Teach It* course, the Internship program, extracurricular activities, and the Curriculum Council.

Finance and Facilities Subcommittee

Prem Aithal reported from the finance perspective on the audit findings and thanked the Administration for their work during the workshop process. Shawna Goldfarb reported information on the scheduling of the summer work, the high school HVAC system, and the security audit update from the facility's perspective.

Communications Subcommittee

Lisa Connelly reported that Superintendent Wihbey spoke with the committee regarding upcoming community speaking engagements and short articles with information and accolades for each school. The committee will also set up the budget FAQs and an article for HK Now.

2024-2025 Budget

The Board of Education's Proposed Gross Expense Budget for FY25 is \$49,818,029, an increase of \$2,162,321 or 4.5%. The Board of Education's Proposed (Non-Assessment) Revenue Budget for FY25 is \$1,285,128, an increase of \$31,050. The Net Budget Increase (Budgeted Expenses less Budgeted Revenue) is \$2,131,271 or 4.6%. Factoring in estimated fund balance being returned to member towns of \$1,060,457, Net Town Assessments increase by \$1,201,814 or 2.8%. The referendum will be held on May 7th at regular voting locations.

The Board of Education and the Superintendent will continue to communicate budget details and answer questions from the community. Questions may also be directly submitted through this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pwntIsC-X2PYR1mE5f_dmR9yAZXzo0U3aBHp-ECmOPY/viewform?edit_requested=true

On Our Website

RSD17 2024-25 Budget information may be found at:

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1712316524/rsd17org/x17k6dodcndu0dxo3odr/FY25BoardofEducationsApprovedProposedBudget40224.pdf>

April 8, 2024 - Board of Selectmen - Schedule IV

| <u>Last Name</u> | <u>Bill Number</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Prior/Current</u> |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|

Real Estate (01)

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Total: **\$0.00**

Personal Property (02)

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Total: **\$0.00**

Motor Vehicle (03)

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|--------------------|---------------|----------|---------|------------|
| knapp, jessica | 2021-03-54802 | \$64.02 | prior | |
| gallant, kyle | 2021-03-53221 | \$287.41 | prior | |
| garcia, rita | 2022-03-53286 | \$114.03 | current | |
| woynar, jacqueline | 2022-03-60059 | \$635.57 | current | paid twice |
| | | | | |
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Total **\$1,101.03**

Motor Vehicle Supplement (04)

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|------------------|---------------|---------|---------|
| chapman, douglas | 2022-04-80201 | \$27.00 | current |
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Total: **\$27.00**

Grand Total: **\$1,128.03**