

**Board of Selectmen
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 10, 2022
Preston Town Hall - Lower Level**

1. Call to Order

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Members

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier

Ken Zachem

Jerry Grabarek

Also Present

Kimberly Lang, Recorder

Danielle Wilcox

3. Approval of January 27, 2022, Meeting Minutes

The following corrections were noted:

- Page 1, under Correspondence, first arrow - Jim Corley's last name was misspelled
- Page 3, under Capital Planning, the second bullet - it should be \$55,000, not \$51,000

Jerry Grabarek motioned to approve the Minutes as amended. Sandra Allyn-Gauthier seconded the motion. Both Jerry Grabarek and Sandra Allyn-Gauthier voted to approve, with Ken Zachem abstaining from the vote.

4. Correspondence

a. TEC Associates - P & W Railroad - 2022 Vegetation Control Program

The information received from TEC Associates outlines the different methods that will be taken to keep railroad tracks and crossing clear of vegetation to ensure safety.

5. Reports - None

6. Appointments and /or Resignations

a. Vacancy:

It was stated that the Board of Education has yet to recommend someone to fill the vacancy left by Tom Turner's passing. His passing is a great loss to his family and to the town of Preston.

b. Appointments:

The Parks & Recreation Committee has recommended that Danielle Wilcox fill the vacancy for the term ending on March 31, 2023. Ms. Wilcox was present and let the Board of Selectmen know that she is a long-time resident of Preston and has served on the Board for Baseball and is interested in becoming more involved with town activities such as serving on the Parks & Recreation Committee.

Ken Zachem motioned to approve the appointment of Danielle Wilcox to the Parks & Recreation Committee for a term ending on March 31, 2023. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

7. New Business

a. Budget Preparation 2022-2023 - This was covered sufficiently during the Special Meeting and there was no further discussion.

b. Legislative Agendas & COST Town Meeting

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier summarized what was discussed at the COST Town Meeting. After speaking with Senator Heather Summer, Sandra Allyn-Gauthier found the Senator's information was very helpful concerning Capital Planning with regards to possible grants and possible solutions. For example, a Community Wellness Center that serves multiple purposes makes it a good investment for the town.

Concerned that the closing of MIRA; solid waste management and recycling issues have come to the forefront several possible solutions are being discussed.

Legislators want to push for the Special Education funds from the federal government, which should be contributing 41% of the cost. However, they presently only provided 6-7% of the cost. Also, they'll be working on the funds for special education expenses that follow the child until the end of the fiscal year when they move districts.

SCRRA has talked about a regional composting facility however the issue becomes location due to the noxious odors that it would emit.

CCM Legislators are working on Governor Lamonte's state-wide motor vehicle taxes rather than by town. They would cap the tax at 29 mils. The concern is that the state won't keep the promise to make up the difference that towns would lose with this system. It is felt that this would help make it more fair and equitable throughout the state.

Also brought up at the meeting were the need for increasing bonding and municipal sharing grants that could be used to match federal grants being offered. Also, municipal sharing grants were established several years ago, but no funds have been made available for this purpose. The municipal spending cap is set at 2%, while there are no funds available at the moment it is felt that there needs to be clarification of the criteria for obtaining funds and spending those funds for when money becomes available.

The group at the meeting felt that there needs to be clarification on mask mandates for schools - is it the decision of the Board of Education *or* the superintendent.

The Opioid Settlement - all 169 towns signed on so the state can receive the maximum amount of funds available to Connecticut.

Nip Rebate is still being worked on. It was stated by Ken Zachem that by his calculations it should be \$6,000-10,000 for the town.

It was reported that they are updating the ARPA tool kit online so more information will be available once that is done.

COST discussed at their meeting which programs will have an increase in funding and what new programs need to be developed. DOT spoke about nationally competitive grants for municipalities becoming available soon.

c. Covid Update

With statewide mandates ending, it was suggested that the board wait to see what the Board of Education does in the schools so that the town can be consistent with any mandates. It was pointed out that the school will most likely follow the recommendations of Uncas Health District as they have done throughout the pandemic. Masks mandates will continue through February 28, 2022.

d. Eversource: 2022 Vegetation/Tree Work/Scorecard

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared that Susan Stott is the designated arborist for the area and that if problems are seen along any roads to contact her and Jim Corley to coordinate efforts to resolve the issue promptly. It was suggested that after budget season to invite her to a meeting to have a further discussion on the matter.

8. Old Business

9. Tax Refund

a. Ralph & Susan Matias - #2020-02-0040383

Ken Zachem motioned to approve the tax refund for Ralph & Susan Matias - #2020-02-0040383 in the amount of \$99.22. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

10. Public Comment - None

11. Adjournment

Ken Zachem motioned to adjourn at 7:35 P.M. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Kimberly Lang

Recorder