

**AMENDED**

**Board of Selectmen  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 12, 2022  
Preston Town Hall - Lower Level**

**1. Call to Order**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

***Members***

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier  
Jerry Grabarek  
Ken Zachem

***Also Present***

Kimberly Lang, Recorder  
Cindy Varricchio - Finance Director

**3. Acceptance of Minutes**

**a. April 28, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes**

The following correction was noted:

- Page 2, third line from the bottom, the word “they” needs to follow ‘explained that’

***Ken Zachem motion to approve April 28, 2022, Regular Meeting minutes as amended. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

**4. Correspondence**

- Invitation to the Connecticut Greenway Council 22nd Annual Awards on June 3, 2022, in Groton.
- Letter from Preston Plains Water Company declaring that they have first right of acceptance to provide water to the Blue Camp project.
- Letter from Connecticut Department of Veteran’s Affairs seeking data from the Assessors Office showing how the town has assisted veterans. Data was not collected during the pandemic and they are now collecting data for the past two years.
- Eversource outlining their work in the area in the upcoming season.
- Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition requesting a \$350 donation to support their volunteer program.

## 5. Reports - None

## 6. Appointments/Resignations

- Reappointment - Mikel Brockway (5-year term to end 03/31/2027)

A letter of endorsement was received from Amy Brosnan requesting that Mikel Brockway be reappointed to the Parks & Recreation Commission. She stated that he has stated an interest to continue on the Commission and that he has been an asset to the Commission during his service thus far.

***Jerry Grabarek motioned to reappoint Mikel Brockway to the Parks & Recreation Commission for a term ending March 31, 2027. Ken Zachem seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

- Retirement - Millie Peringer as of May 31, 2022

It was stated that Millie started as an Assessor in 1984 and has served the Town of Preston for the past 38 years and her dedicated service has been greatly appreciated.

## 7. New Business

### a. Assessor Appointment

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that she has looked into the feasibility of partnering with the Town of Ledyard. She has spoken to Ledyard Assessor Adranna Hedwall who has 17 years of experience and is very well qualified with a CCMA II. She would work in Preston approximately 12 hours a week but would be available by phone to Preston residents during the work day even if she is in Ledyard. By partnering with Ledyard it works out to be \$708 a week with an annual cost of \$36,800. Ledyard will bill Preston for her hours. Preston will need to maintain a stipend budget for conferences and mileage. This would be a savings of approximately \$25,000. The Town of Preston would sign a memorandum of understanding for one year to see how it works for both parties.

***Ken Zachem motioned to hire Andrianna Hedwall as an Assessor and to give Sandra Allyn-Gauthier the authority to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Ledyard. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

### b. Budget Referendum

It has been requested that the Referendum be moved to Wednesday, June 22, 2022. The reasoning is that the Town Hall would need to be open on Monday, when it's normally closed, to allow last-minute voter registrations to occur. Because the Town Hall is traditionally closed Monday this would be an added cost.

***Jerry Grabarek motioned to move the Referendum from Tuesday, June 21, 2022, to Wednesday, June 22, 2022. Ken Zachem seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

**c. State Budget - Senator Osten - Firehouse Funding**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier shared what the state has decided and what they are still working on as far as their budget is concerned. She reviewed the following topics: Child Care Tax, Gas Holiday Tax, Calculating vehicle value, and the best way to implement vehicle taxes. It was shared where the state was at with each topic and what parts have not been solidified.

It was also shared that the town will receive \$300,000 from the State thanks to Senator Cathy Osten who introduced the funds as part of the State Budget. Each of Preston's two firehouses, Poquetanuck Firehouse and Preston City Firehouse, will each receive \$150,000 to make necessary upgrades to better serve the community.

***Jerry Grabarek waived Courtney Community Funding Projects onto the agenda. Ken Zachem seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

There was a brief discussion about where the funding for Courtney Community Projects was in the process. And it was determined that until the funds work their way through the processes the Town will need to continue to wait.

**d. Human Resource - Job Classification & Compensation Study**

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier spoke of having a Human Resources study done and using the results to better determine the job description, and specific duties of a position, and to justify salary increases in an objective, prudent manner. The study would rate each job on a numbered scale to determine the job's authority, as well as the education and experience needed for the position. She shared that a study was done in Brooklyn years ago and they are about to do another one. There would be value in both information and cost to partner with Brooklyn to complete this study. Randi Frank HR Consulting Firm will be conducting the study. Cindy Varricchio shared background information on Randi Frank and stated that she will provide a good, fair study so that Preston could move forward with equitable hiring and evaluating practices for employees. And partnering with Brooklyn would give Preston valuable comparison data and would be cost-effective.

***Ken Zachem motioned May 19, 2022 Meeting unto the agenda. Jerry Grabarek second the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

With the Board of Finance Public Hearing set for May 19, 2022, at 7:30 PM, it would be impossible to leave the Board of Selectmen Meeting scheduled for 7:00 PM. After a brief discussion it was decided to cancel the scheduled Regular Meeting at 7:00 PM and hold a Special Meeting an hour earlier that would allow the Board of Selectmen to attend the Board of Finance's Public Hearing.

***Ken Zachem motioned to cancel May 19, 2022, Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting and to have a Special Meeting at 6:00 PM on May 19, 2022. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

**e. ARPA Draft**

A spreadsheet was shared with the Board members showing the proposed spending of the Town's \$1,368,772 ARPA funds. The spreadsheet showed expenditures by department and explained each expenditure's priority, justification, and benefit to the town. It was also noted that all funds need to be obligated by 2024 and spent by 2026. The spreadsheet shows that in 2022 - \$656,646 would be spent and 2023 - \$17,740 would be spent exhausting the first installment. And that \$463,231 in 2023; \$99,609 in 2024; and \$2,246 in 2025 would be spent. This leaves \$129,300 that could be used to cover unforeseen rising costs or to cover the cost of developing a needed strategic plan, or it could be set aside to use with matching grants that the Town applies for.

It was suggested to possibly set aside \$10,000 to pay a grant writer. Grants are often offered with little notice and short turnaround time; having a strategic plan in place and a person who could quickly take up the task to compile the needed documentation and file the grant would be beneficial to the town. It was also suggested that the town partner with the school in some areas such as grant writing and HR coordinator in order to save money and pool resources.

Jerry Grabarek asked where the generator for the Town Hall is listed in the ARPA fund spending. He was told it was included in the \$190,000 Town Hall Renovation.

It was also mentioned that cost of a pumper truck listed in the last 5-year Capital Improvement Plan has gone up significantly and will need to be addressed.

***Jerry Grabarek motioned to waive onto the agenda Eversource rental fees. Ken Zachem seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

Ken Zachem shared that he has been asked where the Eversource rental payments were going. He was told that PRA gets the funds and they are tracking how it is used.

It was also asked how the \$2,000 NIP money is being used. Cindy Varricchio stated that it can not be deposited into the General Fund because there are stipulations as to how the Town

can use that money. The funds need to be tracked to show the State that they are being spent correctly. It will most likely be spent by Public Works.

***Ken Zachem motioned to discuss insurance updates on the agenda. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

It was shared that it is still not finalized but they are actually discussing the increase to go higher than the original estimate of 8%. It's looking to be as high as 10.50%. This is terrible because some towns have already voted on their budgets and it will be difficult for them to meet the higher amount. The increases are being blamed on Covid, the backlog of elective surgery being done, and dental costs. But there are still no final numbers.

#### **8. Old Business - None**

#### **9. Tax Refund**

- a. Nadinia Ballestrini - 2019-03-0050218 - \$155.22
- b. Nadinia Ballestrini - 2019-01-0000093 - \$26.90

***Ken Zachem motioned to approve the tax refund to Nadinia Ballestrini - 2019-03-0050218 for \$155.22 and 2019-01-0000093 for \$26.90. Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

#### **10. Public Comment - None**

#### **11. Adjournment**

***Ken Zachem motioned to adjourn at 8:20 P.M... Jerry Grabarek seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

*Kimberly Lang*

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