

## **Board of Selectmen's Meeting – November 8, 2021 (Approved minutes)**

Robert McGarry called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm at the Town Office Building, 21 Field Park Drive, Haddam CT 06424.

Kate Anderson and Sean Moriarty were present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Agenda:** Moriarty made a motion to approve the agenda. There was a brief discussion. McGarry added a discussion of Higganum Center. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

**October 12, 2021:** Moriarty made a motion to approve the October 12, 2021. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comment:** N/A

### **Selectman's Update:**

#### **Projects**

- Rossi Property – No change
- Scovil Hoe – Met with DECD & the potential developer on 10/19 to discuss the grant and next steps. DECD should have a draft process from DECD shortly.
- Roads – Paving season is drawing to a close.
  - Ague Spring Road, Basket Shop, Blue Hills Road and Plains Road - Unimproved roads. Chip sealed
  - Silver Springs Drive – Chip Seal
  - Mill Run Lane – Chip Seal
  - Arkona Drive – Chip Seal
  - Jackson Road – Chip Seal
  - Brainard Hill – Chip Seal (1 section Grind, grade and pave)
  - High Street – Grind, grade and pave, drainage
  - Lake Ave - Grind, grade and pave, drainage
  - Dublin Hill Road – Grind, grade and pave, drainage
  - Grapevine, Little City Road (Sections), Candlewood Hill (Sections) – Asphalt overlay
- Haddam Center Sidewalks – Bids opened. Contractor selected - Costa & Son, LLC. Documentation sent to DOT for authorization to award.
- Private Projects – No change

#### **Personnel**

- Bob Russo, Temporary Building Inspector
- ZEO position will be posted soon

**Other**

- Election went smoothly.
  - Thanks to our Registrars, Town Clerk & Assistant and poll workers.
  - Special thanks to all the candidates.
  - Recount tomorrow for P&Z.
- Break-ins – Rash of car/garage break-ins Little City Road/Laurel Grove Drive.
  - State-wide problem
  - Take your keys & valuables
  - Lock your car, garage & sheds

**Moriarty:** Glad we are here for the next two years and eager to get stuff done.

**Anderson:** Grimm's Haunted house was a great success.

The Pop-Up Market will begin on Small Business Saturday. We will plan a Tree lighting on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Santa can come and afterwards visit the market across the street at HES.

Similar events at the same time, looking to 2022 to plan the entire year of events.

**Board of Education Update:** Peter Sonski presented the Board of Education update. Attached as Schedule I.

**Tax Refunds:** Attached as Schedule II

Anderson made a motion to approve the November 8, 2021 tax refunds as presented. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Resignations:** David Challenger, Board of Finance has resigned. He was a great asset to the Board and will be missed.

Susan Kautz, of the Sustainability Committee has resigned.

**New Business:**

**Hire Transfer Station Attendants:**

Moriarty made a motion to accept the recommendations made by Chris Corsa, Assistant Director of Public Works, to hire Jessica Jascot & Gary Narducci as the new Transfer Station Attendants. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Discuss hiring process for Building Inspector:** Interviews will be on November 18, 2021 from 1:30pm – 3:00pm. Selectmen would like to view the recommendations of those who conducted the interviews.

## Discussion of Higganum Center:

There was a discussion among the residents and the Board regarding the Higganum Center.

**Public Comment:** Liz Bazazi read a letter on the record:

*The repaving of route 81 presents an opportunity to make Higganum village more attractive to walkers and cyclists. Where Main street is a state road, as it is in Higganum, it's necessary to advocate to the state DOT for improved pedestrian and cyclist access and safety. I ask you to encourage ConnDOT to 1) restripe the newly paved road with narrower lanes, allowing for larger shoulders for safer pedestrian and bike travel; and 2) designate, once again, the bike lane with stenciled cycling icons as were applied during the c. 2000 sidewalk project. If possible, these paint-based changes should extend at least to the intersection of High Street, though ideally to Dish Mill Road.*

*Walkable/bikeable places—where people are placed before cars—perform better economically than those that are car-centric. Buildings—both business and residential—in walkable places demand higher rent. People—both locals and visitors—who walk and bike to a business districts, spend more than those who drive. Biking and walking increase where it feels safe and is convenient to do so. Linked street grids and trails increase convenience. Sidewalks, bike lanes, and lower traffic speeds provide pedestrians and cyclists a real and perceived sense of safety. Narrower auto lanes are one of the simplest ways to slow traffic. Wider walking and cycling lanes improves pedestrian and cyclist safety and, therefore, increase non-vehicular transportation.*

*In CT, there is no law determining a minimum road width. While 28' is standard, the transportation commissioner may determine where a lesser width is warranted, such as where Main Street is a state road. Diminishing road width, bike lanes and sidewalks are visual clues to drivers that they are entering a village. Within the Higganum Village District, traffic speed should be 25 mph and lane width 11'. For approximately a half-mile beyond the village edge the speed limit should be 35 mph and lane width 12'. Sidewalks and bike lanes should be 6'. Something as simple as a stripe of paint can be a transformative tool. Please, help Higganum Village reach its potential as a vibrant social and economic center by encouraging ConnDOT to restripe car lanes to a narrower width, thereby increasing shoulders, and apply cycling icons to improve the pedestrian and cycling traffic that will bolster the local economy.*

The following comments were sent to the Selectmen prior to the meeting:

**Tanja B. Moriarty 39 Little Fawn Trail, Higganum:** I am writing today as a town resident to urge the Board of Selectman to explore, promote and convert our town-owned Haddam Elementary School building (HES) into a full-fledged and thriving Community Center over the next two years.

Locating our town's civic and administrative functions, as well as recreational activities to this wonderful, central space would be an excellent use of our town-owned property. It will provide a healthy hub for our seniors, middle-aged adults, and youth—everyone! Can you imagine meeting at HES for clubs, wellness classes, community dances, coffee houses, picnics, sports, walking

dogs, and playing on a centrally located playground? It will also stimulate good traffic to our businesses and draw more folks to our outdoor recreational areas and trails.

I believe that whenever people gather for non-polarizing activities, there is a healthy exchange of ideas and relationship building. Our town desperately needs more of this. Please do everything in your power in the next two years to bring this idea to fruition for the good of our town and its future.

**Jane Baird:** My name is Jane Baird and I live in Higganum. I am writing to express my thanks for your leadership and as you begin your new term, I urge you to take a proactive approach to planning for the future of Higganum. Higganum Center has tremendous potential to leverage our natural resources and become a destination for shoppers, hikers, cyclists, kayakers, fisherman and others. Our Plan of Conservation and Development, the 2019 public charrettes about Higganum Center, and various other vision statements over the years have focused on developing Higganum as a walkable, lively center with easy access to outdoor recreation, good restaurants and family friendly shops and activities. Unfortunately, many recent changes are detracting from the family friendly atmosphere that would support that vision. Specifically, I am referencing the closure of Citizens Bank (which has remained vacant) and the launching of various adult-only businesses (including the tattoo parlor, vape/tobacco store and gun shop) which likely discourage other child and family focused businesses from entering our small business district. I don't have an issue with those businesses per se, but they don't exactly contribute to our desired "bring your kids to Higganum Center vibe" that the charente attendees cited as priorities. It's also worth noting that our ability to rent HES to a school is probably compromised by these businesses' proximate location. I would urge you to place a high priority in your new term on several initiatives including: 1) The public septic project that will allow restaurants and other types of businesses to be developed; 2) Scovil Hoe for its potential to attract businesses like maker's spaces, breweries, and restaurants; 3) Higganum Cove which could be established as a destination town park with access to the river and Swan Hill hiking trails, 4) HES—if the town can't rent it to a school, please allow for the building so serve as a village hub (as it did before the school was closed) by using the space as a community center where many town civic and administrative functions, perhaps including Youth and Family Services and HK Recreation, could be located. I appreciate the opportunity to share my views and look forward to your progress on helping Higganum Center to reach its potential. Thank you.

**Hamish MacPhail, Higganum:**

First, I'd like to congratulate you on the recent election results. As each of you talked about during your campaigns, Haddam is at a pivotal juncture, with ample opportunity for progress. As we collectively plan our future over the next 2 years, I hope that this board serves as a place for visionary thinking, strategic planning, and positive progress.

Part of that work includes a vision for the former Haddam Elementary School. When that school closed, our town not only lost a school, but a center of gravity for our community, too. And, as we decide what to do with the property, we have an opportunity to bring that sense of community back.

Leasing the entire property to an interested party would not achieve that goal. Selling the property would not achieve that goal. Only town use for the public good would achieve that goal. I strongly advocate for the HES site to transform into the Haddam Community Center.

In this day and age, there are rare occasions for our townspeople to be amongst one another, learn new skills together, play sports together and watch community theater together. In towns across America, former school sites have become community centers because the layout, space and parking are suitable to that transformation.

Imagine that Haddam Community Center housed recreational activities for kids, a state-of-the-art playground, adult cooking classes, teen support groups and space for social events, a basketball rec league, a dog park in the back field, and rented space for small start-up businesses or a shared workspace for remote workers. The impact to the livelihood, happiness and connectedness of Haddam residents would be substantial, and we'd have a stronger community because of it. Not all of these opportunities are developed in a single year. This vision takes time, energy, volunteerism and support. I hope that we can use this year to set a vision, identify potential programs that can use the space on Day 1, and build a new playground for the center of our community to show families that we care about their needs, and to encourage people to come to our downtown. Then, after we create a strategy for the space, we can make key investments and welcome businesses to rent space at the Center. This would provide steady income for our town. Please consider transforming HES into Haddam Community Center because you'll transform a community's sense of identity in the process. Thank-you.

### **Tim & Gretchen Teran:**

Congratulations on your re-election. Well done and well deserved.

Your next 2 years of governing will be some of the most important in building the foundation of Haddam's future. And, in particular, the future of Higganum.

Opportunities and challenges abound and with an eye towards "thoughtful growth" you have the opportunity to make a greater impact on Higganum's future than any other recent administration. As long-term residents of Higganum / Haddam we ask that you seize the moment, proactively engaging in planning for the future of Higganum. And, in particular, as stewards of our town growth we ask that you carefully consider the following major opportunities we have to define our future and how we approach them:

**Higganum Center** has tremendous potential to be a charming, riverside town and a destination for shoppers, hikers, cyclists, kayakers, fisherman and town residents.

Our Plan of Conservation and Development, the 2019 public charrettes about Higganum Center, and various other vision statements over the years have focused on developing Higganum as a walkable, lively center with easy access to outdoor recreation, good restaurants and family friendly shops and activities. The 2019 Charrettes went further to indicate residents feel we have an opportunity to become a destination for outdoor recreational activity with businesses that support that focus.

However, over the last few years, we've seen the bank close (and remain vacant) and new businesses such as a tattoo parlor, vape/tobacco store and gun shop open in an already small commercial center. There is nothing at all wrong with these businesses per se, but to have them close together in an already small district could have a chilling effect on achieving our mutual vision of a family friendly, upbeat town center. Many other types of businesses that we want in town might be discouraged by their close proximity to adult-only types of businesses. And so might the kind of residents we say we want to attract to our town -- couples with growing families. Furthermore, renting HES to a school, which has been a goal of the BOS, might now pose very difficult given how close it would be to these businesses.

The public septic project for Higganum should be a top priority. It will allow restaurants and other types of businesses to be developed in town.

**Scovil Hoe** has tremendous potential, and in keeping with current tastes and trends should be purchased for a low price by the town and stabilized just enough to attract business who might prosper in an historical, more raw physical setting (maker's spaces, breweries, restaurants, etc).

**Higganum Cove** has tremendous potential. It should be developed as an appealing town park with access to the river and Swan Hill hiking trails celebrating our history through the stories told through its ruins and our future by encouraging a multitude of outdoor activities and the CT river -- it is our only public town access to the river (other than the Transfer Station).

**The Rossi Property** has tremendous potential. Everyone agrees it is an eyesore, but the town should carefully consider what is a fair, market price for the property and whether in fact the town should own more property.. Should the town vote to pursue the purchase of this property we question the current asking price. \$2 million seems excessive, as the land has been for sale for years with no buyers.

**HES** has tremendous potential. Most agree it was a great purchase for the town, representing a potentially wonderful asset that should not be left to lie dormant. If it cannot be rented to a school, the town should follow the clear wishes of residents, as expressed in the 2019 Charrettes for Higganum Center, to make it a community center where many town civic and administrative functions, as well as Youth and Family Services, HK Recreation and others, are located. We look forward to hearing your vision at Monday's meeting, we hope you will take these suggestions seriously and importantly we look forward to helping you succeed in every way we can.

**Adjournment:** Anderson made a motion to adjourn. No discussion. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned 8:22 pm. Minutes taken by JoAnn Ricciardelli



## Schedule I - November 8, 2021 - Board of Selectmen's Meeting

### **Summary of October 2021 Board of Education Meetings**

**Superintendent Transition:** In October, the District welcomed Jeff Wihbey as the new RSD17 Superintendent of Schools. Superintendent Wihbey presented his Entry Plan which includes conducting facility inspections, reviewing policies, contracts, and budgets, and holding interviews and focus groups with stakeholders throughout the community. At the completion of the entry plan, the Superintendent's observations, data analysis, and stakeholder feedback will be shared formally with the Board and at PTO and faculty meetings across the district. The Board has asked Interim Superintendent JeanAnn Paddyfote to stay on through the end of her contract to create an Employee Handbook, write district job descriptions, update district policies, and support the Superintendent during the transition.

**Strategic Plan:** As part of its strategic planning process launched this spring, Regional School District 17 is conducting a district-wide survey until November 24th. The survey is open to employees, parents, students, recent alumni and community members without students in the District. Involvement of the entire community is important to the long-term framework for decision-making that builds upon the common values held by the RSD17 community. The survey can be found at [www.rsd17.org/district/rsd17-strategic-planning-survey](http://www.rsd17.org/district/rsd17-strategic-planning-survey)

**District Update Emails:** The Board of Education announces a new way for Haddam and Killingworth residents to stay up-to-date with District information by signing up for email updates. Through a partnership with the Towns of Haddam and Killingworth's alert system, District emails will include board meeting summaries, occasional surveys, and information on Annual Budgets and Referendums. You can also sign up to receive updates and alerts from Haddam and/or Killingworth. Sign up for email updates at [www.rsd17.org/community/haddam-and-killingworth-alerts](http://www.rsd17.org/community/haddam-and-killingworth-alerts)

**Science Textbook Update:** The Curriculum Subcommittee recommended, and the Board agreed, to update the AP Biology textbook. The AP Board recommends textbooks be updated every 10 years, and the current textbooks are from 2011. The AP Biology curriculum is being updated to focus less on memorization and more on the scientific thought process, integrating more authentic research and incorporating online study guides.

**Facilities Assessment:** The Facilities Committee has received a 300 page draft of the facilities assessment report from Tecton Architects. The firm's representatives gave the committee an overview of the report and the committee sent the firm back with notes of interest and areas of concern for follow up and research. The goal is to have a presentation to the full Board in December.

**Finance Committee Update:** Like last year, the finance committee is tracking unexpected Covid-related expenses. As of six weeks into school, approximately \$26,000 has been spent on additional hires and equipment. The committee also reported that the initial look at the unaudited balance from the end of the last fiscal year had two items to note; an increase in approximately \$113,000 in fuel costs and about \$90,000 in revenue from the Excess Cost Share Grant.

**On our Website:** The Strategic Plan Survey can be found on the [www.rsd17.org](http://www.rsd17.org) website under "District" → "RSD17 Strategic Planning Survey".



# November 8, 2021 - Board of Selectmen's Meeting - Schedule II

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Bill Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Prior/Current</u>
<b>Real Estate (01)</b>			
lundgren, jeremiah	2019-01-2565	\$27.98	prior
blodget, neal*	2020-01-336	\$113.70	current
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$27.98</b>	

## Personal Property (02)

<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	

<b>Motor Vehicle (03)</b>			
vw credit	2020-03-59226	\$114.49	current
carlsen, lucia *	2020-03-51450	\$39.17	current
Morgan, kristyn *	2020-03-56258	\$28.13	current
Morgan, kristyn *	2020-03-56259	\$43.36	current
Hubner, karen*	2020-03-54176	\$17.15	current
Honda Lease	2020-03-54118	\$279.47	current
Anku, Jerry	2020-03-50228	\$31.68	current
BAC*	2020-01-1016	\$182.57	current
sturges, jeff	2020-03-58639	\$36.95	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56249	\$34.58	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56248	\$7.00	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56247	\$7.00	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56246	\$7.00	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56243	\$7.00	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56244	\$7.00	current
morenz, mark*	2020-03-56245	\$7.00	current
Toyota Lease	2020-03-58983	\$472.01	current
Toyota Lease	2020-03-5895	\$438.25	current
Toyota Lease	2020-03-58990	\$264.84	current
Toyota Lease	2020-03-59002	\$442.43	current
Resnick, teresa	2020-03-57487	\$12.19	current
Brookes, Mary*	2020-03-51113	\$39.11	current
Brookes, Mary*	2020-01-451	\$329.93	current
Brookes, Mary*	2020-01-449	\$64.29	current
Barton, Maryann*	2020-03-50504	\$22.42	current
Barton, Maryann*	2020-01-205	\$119.39	current
Gestay, steven*	2020-01-3269	\$48.84	current
Laramie, Sharon*	2020-03-55027	\$10.09	current
blodget, neal*	2020-03-50839	\$7.71	current
blodget, neal*	2020-03-50840	\$7.00	current
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$3,128.05</b>	

\* = lost mail from Post Office.  
Realized missing after delinquent bills mailed and complains came in. Webster Bank was able to reprint checks. Checks coming from lockbox rejection accounts.

Refunds are due to the resident paying the delinquent bill which contained interest and it should not have.

## Motor Vehicle Supplement (04)

<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	

**Grand Total: \$3,156.03**