



Town of North Canaan

Board of Selectman

April 1, 2024

Present: First Selectman Brian Ohler, Craig Whiting, Jesse Bunce

Selectman Ohler called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

Selectman Whiting moved to approve the agenda as presented. Selectman Bunce seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Selectman Whiting moved to approve the minutes from last month as presented. Selectman Bunce seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Positive community news:

NCES kids put on a great play at the elementary school. They have been doing the plays for 25 years.

Jennifer Crane spoke on behalf of the events committee. Springfest on May 18 in collaboration with the Recreation Commission to do a rock snake. The head has been painted. The school has a name suggestion box for the kids and there will be a booth set up at Springfest for rock painting. The snake will live on the rock wall at the fountain at the town hall, out of the way but accessible. For the carnival, this year wrist bands will be \$25 Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The carnival will be 6-10 and the ticket booth will be ½ hour earlier. On Saturday wrist bands will be \$35 and carnival will be 3-10 with the booth opening a ½ hour earlier.

A private citizen is donating a playscape to the middle school housed off of the AHA wing and Selectman Bunce will be donating the landscaping for it.

The flagpole at Sam Eddy Field has been looked at and the new pole will be made and donated by John and Lisa Jacquier.

The doughboy is currently under renovation and will be done before Memorial Day.

Public comment:

Maribeth Marchi read a letter she wrote to the select board into record regarding her association with the newsletter and other issues she wished to express.

Christian Allyn gave a brief explanation of the Housatonic River Commission's yearly dues were paid by the town, but this year was not in the original budget as they had not sent in a request. They had previously not done this but brought in an invoice and are hoping to be included in the budget.

Kathy Ducillo asked the logistics of asking questions regarding the budget. Selectman Ohler explained that the workshop for the Finance Department is on Wednesday and the 10th is the finance department meeting and questions can be asked at that meeting.

Tom Zettestrom stated that the annual Arbor Day celebration at the school will be April 26 and a tree will be planted.

For Earth Day in conjunction with the arbor day celebration there will be a community clean up day April 27th from 10-2 organized by Jessica Serna. Mountainside has indicated they will provide volunteers and refreshments. It will be hosted at the town hall parking lot and bags, gloves, lists of roads etc. will be provided. Washout rain date will be April 28.

After speaking with the town crew there are some roads that are really bad in town and will need to be completely redone – Lower Road being one. The town is working with Aquarion water as they have to pay for ½ of the road. Their numbers were low, and the selectmen are looking for them to increase their proposal. They will also be speaking with Specialty Minerals as their trucks use the road steadily. Crack and sealing technique used in the past will be used for Pease St, Bragg St, Canaan Valley Rd, Green Ave, Deer St, and Bond St. The town is waiting to hear from the State what the aid for roads will be this year. Old Turnpike South is going to be looked at by engineers to determine if basins and piping is appropriately sized and if not how to correct it. The basins will also be cleaned out. There were discussions with landowners on the hill and they are aware of the issues but that aspect of this is a land use issue not a town issue.

Vegetation management: Eversource will be doing work on several local roads, including limb and tree removal on compromised power lines. If a tree is on private property they will speak to the homeowner before doing any work and the property owner has the right to refuse any request. Target time is May 1 to July 1. Tom Zettestrom suggested that the tree warden be involved in discussions with Eversource prior to tree removal and he would like to be involved in the meetings as well.

Dog Park: Selectman Ohler explained the plan of moving the playground closer to the school area and using the existing area for a dog park. There is no liability as long as the public is forewarned with signs to enter at their own risk. Currently there are a lot of

discussions and working things out. The rec commission is in favor of this. This would include fencing along the river as well.

Old business:

Adopt a garden program: This idea was pitched last month of having local landscapers/gardeners to work with the Beautification committee on the local garden areas. All of the gardens have been adopted. There will be conversations and pitches to ensure that visions are in keeping with the beautification committee. Signage will be aesthetically pleasing. Tallon Lumber will donate mulch for the gardens. Bunny and Pat have been terrific and done incredible job over the years. Bunny McGuire had a meeting with one of the adopters and was impressed with her ideas.

Transfer Station bulky waste containers. That crew along with the town crew were able to get heavy duty covers and create a pulley system to use the tarps as covers. As of today, we will begin accepting bulky waste.

Transfer Station Solar project: After hiking the property behind the town hall and identifying where the electrical transmission line would cut through the property, it was determined that the solar company is going to have a very difficult time as the lines would be buried and there is ledge and limestone to blast through in order to bury it. The property is beautiful and would have to be greatly disturbed. Currently we are hopeful that they will not be successful in getting funding and that would be the end of the issue. However, if the funding comes through, they will need to come back with a serious plan of how to get through the property.

The scale at the transfer station is an ongoing conversation and no decision has been made yet.

Building Department report: Selectman Ohler read the report into record.

ZEO report: Selectman Ohler read the report into record.

Social Services report: Selectman Ohler read the report into record. The town needs to appoint a senior assistance position to help the social worker. This is a new state law. Clarification on what this position needs to look like is still being sought.

Selectman Whiting report: Selectman Whiting met with the State Department of Education regarding how to approach changing the legislature. The town is free to come up with a plan of how to divide the budget. It gets sent to the State and if the board approves it, we can go to referendum and if passed be put into effect the following fiscal year. Once Representative Horn finishes legislative session she and Selectman Ohler will approach the other town leaders with the plan. The session ends in May, and we want to get through

all of the budget season first. The Recreation commission mentioned that the tennis courts have mold on them. He has a donation for a heavy-duty steam cleaner/washer and is hoping to get some volunteers to clean it one of these weekends soon. Pricing for the fence will be coming as well. The fencing itself is ok, but the poles need be fixed and/or replaced. Selectman Whiting is happy with the people that are reaching out to donate time/effort/items for the town. It is a really positive vibe in town. Selectman Whiting is wondering if maybe along with the gardens maybe someone would volunteer to mow the Steve Blass Field freeing up the town crew. We are working on the Youtube channel and hoping that we will be able to upload videos directly to that. There was a public suggestion to have the coaches take turns mowing the field like it used to be done.

Selectman Bunce: Have we identified any grants for the town? Selectman Ohler explained that 6 grants have been identified as potential and that Paul is spearheading this. Selectman Bunce would like to look into the one regarding the trails. Selectman Ohler stated that would be fine. The AARPA money needs to be used by June and Selectman Ohler suggested having a special meeting to break it down. Selectman Bunce attended the sewer district meeting and explained what occurred. It was a short meeting. The zoning meeting on April 8 will have 3 special permits and the Honey Hill project will be on April 22. The Cub Scout Pinewood Derby was fun and good attendance. The Easter egg hunt was very nice and well attended. There was a discussion regarding introducing a product from Allyndale in with the salt for winter. Selectman Bunce gave the DOT guidelines to Selectman Ohler to review. With the MIRA contract ending in 2027 Dave Jacobs has been put in charge of the tipping station in Falls Village which will be behind the Fire department. If we were to use this, we could be saving money. They are looking for towns to be part of this. Selectman's Ohler and Whiting have both spoken to Mr. Jacobs as well.

Public comment:

The riverbank at Lawrence field is still on hold as we have not heard from George of Allied Engineering yet with plans. There was a suggestion to look into getting better equipment for the kids rather than what is currently at the playground.

Selectman Ohler will speak to the Board of Finance regarding having the Housatonic River Commission dues put into the budget.

Stacy Dodge questioned if other towns don't buy into the plan for the region 1 budget what happens? Selectman Whiting explained that we would then have to lobby the legislature. Right now, it doesn't make sense to hire an attorney if we can sell it on our own.

Kathy Ducillo – spoke into record regarding her involvement with the newsletter and her feelings on how that situation was approached.

Selectman Ohler explained his position on the newsletter topic. After fielding complaints, he sought legal counsel for neutrality. The attorney understands risks and liabilities. He explained that private citizens are not allowed to handle a newsletter that comes from the town. An example of a successful newsletter is Norfolk Now which is created by and funded privately by private citizens. He is not saying that private citizens cannot do a newsletter.

The town hall is closed tomorrow due to election day.

Selectman Whiting moved to adjourn. Selectman Bunce seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08pm

Respectfully submitted,

Ayrslea A Odell

Recording Secretary