



# TOWN OF SCOTLAND BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Scotland Town Hall 9 Devotion Road, P.O. Box 288 Scotland, CT 06264  
(860) 456-7797 x 1

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Aug 28, 2019

7:00 PM

## MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Scotland Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:00 PM by First Selectman Dan Syme. Board members present were Clare D'Appollonio and Rod Perry. Also present was Treasurer Cheryl Miller, SVFD representatives Jason Beaumont and Mike Gurnack, members of the public, and Jennifer Nelson, Administrative Assistant.

**II. Additions to the Agenda:** Rod Perry moved to add approval of agenda for Special Town Meeting to item VIII.e. Clare D'Appollonio seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**III. Audience for Citizens:** Kevin Benito asked for clarity regarding the special meeting on August 29 regarding the audit and tax issues, and if the auditor was the same auditor hired for last year's audit. First Selectman Syme noted nothing criminal had occurred and on advice of counsel, the meeting would be held in executive session to review findings of the Windham tax office noting various data errors.

Kim Martin asked if these errors spanned numerous years, then why wasn't it caught by the auditor before. First Selectman Syme responded the purpose of the special meeting would be how to address all findings tomorrow and how to appropriately close the books since tax collection has been moved to another entity. Ms. Martin also asked if all is held in executive session, then how do the taxpayers find out what actions are taken? Selectman D'Appollonio stated all actions would need to be taken in public session, so the public would be aware of what corrective actions were taken.

**IV. Written Communications:** None

**V. Approval of Minutes:** Clare D'Appollonio moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2019 meeting. Rod Perry seconded the motion. The minutes should be amended under item VI.a.—financial procedures, to include Selectman D'Appollonio's direction to include the policy for insufficient funds and accompanying statute language as an attachment. **The minutes, as amended, passed unanimously.**

**VI. Old Business:**

**a) Financial Procedures:** Treasurer Miller has been tied up with audit work, and she has not had an opportunity to review the latest draft. **Clare D'Appollonio moved to table any discussion of the document until the first meeting in September. Rod Perry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

**VIII. New Business:**

**a) Treasurer's Report:** Ms. Miller has been working with the auditors providing required and requested information for this year's audit. The school portion of the audit cannot be initiated until next week since the school has until Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> to provide the final reports to the state. The auditors anticipate starting final testing for their report. The computer issues appear to have been resolved,

and she is able to work on the internet without interruption. She has worked with Windham to develop monthly excel reports to reconcile tax income.

**b) Tax Refunds: Rod Perry moved to approve the following tax refunds for overpayment of taxes. Clare D'Appollonio seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

Ellenmarie Caisse		
Daniel A Caisse	\$872.48	Sec. 12-129 Refund of Excess Payments
John D Mish	58.22	"
Dennis L Miller		
Christine A Miller	59.77	"
Peter M Mathewson		
Ann M Mathewson	92.91	"

**c) Authorization to start hiring process for New Treasurer:** Ms. Miller has submitted her written letter of resignation, and First Selectman Syme and Gary Greenberg, candidate for First Selectman, confirmed with town counsel the current administration can fill the vacancy that will ensue and will comply with the town ordinance, and it would be the next administration's discretion regarding whether or not to reappoint. Mr. Greenberg was also asking NECCOG about back-office support to provide treasurer services. Current administration will start the process to develop a candidate pool, and will also have any proposal from NECCOG to compare. **Clare D'Appollonio moved to start the hiring process for a new treasurer. Rod Perry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

**d) Petition for Special Town Meeting to Purchase Fire Truck:** The SVFD has submitted a petition to hold a special town meeting to ask the town to purchase a new fire truck. The clerk has certified the signatures, and the petition is in compliance with Scotland's ordinance. **Clare D'Appollonio moved to accept the petition from the SVFD. Rod Perry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

**e) Approval of Special Town Meeting Agenda:** The selectmen reviewed a special town meeting agenda. The meeting must be held within 21 days to comply with the town ordinance, and the timeline is tight to comply with publishing requirements. **Clare D'Appollonio moved to approve the agenda for the special town meeting to be held September 10, 2019. Rod Perry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

**IX. First Selectman's Report:** First Selectman Syme shared the following:

- ❖ The preliminary work on the solar panel installation at the PSC is scheduled for next week. The town purchased a virtual net meter to record how much energy is generated, and how much energy is sent to Eversource;
- ❖ A meeting of regional EMS services was held with Chaplin, Hampton, and EMS planning consultant Bob Holdsworth to discuss merger opportunities. The required information to develop any proposals was submitted, and will be discussed at the next meeting;
- ❖ The Board of Assessment Appeals will meet next Tuesday at the town hall at 6:30PM for the sole purpose of motor vehicle appeals and will continue until all appeals are heard. After a brief discussion of conflicting meetings on that day, **Clare D'Appollonio moved to change the start time of the Special Town Meeting to 7:30 PM. Rod Perry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously;**

- ❖ NECCOG is working to develop a regional hazardous waste facility in Pomfret to complement the services offered by Mid-NEROC in Willington, and provide the towns with a closer facility. There are still state grants available to offset the cost of such a facility.

**X. Second Audience for Citizens:** Kim Martin wanted to confirm the wording of the special town meeting meant a vote would occur that evening, and if possible could the administration ask the school to consider postponing their board meeting.

Rob Keator wanted to know when information of the proposal would be available for the townspeople to review, and whether or not the question at the town meeting will be “yes” or “no” to finance the purchase. First Selectman Syme will work with the treasurer to develop 3 financing proposals after the fire department has chosen a builder, and will also get information on tax impact from the assessor for households in Scotland, and yes, the town will be the purchaser, and the truck will be town property.

Mike Gurnack wanted to let the public know the department needs to replace the 1987 engine tanker. The department can no longer get parts for the truck, and it cannot be repaired in a consistent manner. They have sought grants to offset the impact of the purchase, to no avail, and encouraged anyone with questions to go to the fire department on Monday nights to look at the equipment and understand the nature of their request.

Wendy Sears asked what the lifespan of a new truck would be. Mr. Gurnack responded the standard is a 30 year lifespan. The previous truck was paid for with ambulance recovery billing, but that revenue stream has been severely limited by Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Ms. Martin wanted to know if the department had looked into liquidating any unused equipment or if any of the other trucks could be liquidated to offset expenses. Jason Beaumont responded the trucks are all used, and liquidation wouldn't be an option.

Alain Bourassa asked if the truck being replaced could be sold, and if so, would any revenue be returned to the town so money goes back to the taxpayer.

Gary Greenberg opined the proposal should be coming from the Board of Selectmen if the truck is town property.

Dennis LaBelle asked if the BOS could adjourn the town meeting to referendum, and asked what the mechanisms were to put this to referendum so more resident have the opportunity to vote.

Mr. Keator recommended slowing this process down so residents can have an opportunity to be aware of what's being asked of them, and is the town in a position that can afford this proposal? First Selectman Syme responded the audience could table any action at the meeting if they so choose and the meeting could then be informational only. Mr. Keator also asked the administration to talk about balancing financial obligations and emergency response for people. This town is extremely strapped, and will the town outlive the fire truck.

Ms. Martin noted the town has used undesignated funding for many years to offset increased expenses, and we no longer have that luxury available to us, and major tax increases appear to be the town's future.

Alain Bourassa didn't think Scotland could outlast the fire truck, and we need to consider our debt load. No other town will want to assume that load. First Selectman Syme responded the administration and treasurer went to OPM last month, and they said towns throughout CT are in tough shape, and Scotland is not as bad off as we claim. Their advice to the selectmen was to just keep raising taxes.

Ms. Martin wanted to know how often trucks were used at the department. Chief Beaumont replied every time a truck leaves the building, it's considered in service, and they are used frequently. Ms. Martin recommended that such information would be useful at the town meeting.

Kevin Benito asked when final numbers would be available to review, and hoped it would be before the night of the meeting. Mr. Benito also commented no one was trying to deny the department equipment they needed, but specific details need to be brought out before responsible conversation can occur.

Gary Greenberg commented the truck would take 365-400 days to build, and the department could withdraw the petition since the ordinance requires a meeting within 21 days, and asked who is petitioning whom, and for what? The town needs to be able to provide information about taxpayer liability for purchase.

Mr. LaBelle commented different interest rates will have different impact on borrowing, and such details need to be determined before rational decisions can be made.

John Beck asked about a report given by the First Selectman during his report regarding EMS consulting services. Mr. Greenberg responded he was at that meeting, and the data requested would be used to create a plan after a data analysis is performed. There was no consensus to hire this service, or what programs would be pursued. Mr. Beck also asked if there was any consensus among the three towns to work together or consolidate services. First Selectman Syme was pessimistic.

Ms. Sears asked if the town votes "no" at the town meeting, then what? Eventually the truck we do have goes out of service, and the department is down to 1 truck.

Mr. Benito reiterated his concern that information is presented before September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Bourassa didn't think having a meeting and making a decision on the same night would be successful.

**Clare D'Appollonio moved to adjourn at 8:45 PM. Rod Perry seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Nelson, Administrative Assistant

All minutes submitted are draft minutes until approved by the board of selectmen.