

COPY RECEIVED
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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

MINUTES
Public Hearing
Tuesday, June 20, 2017 – 6:30 PM
Norma Drummer Room – Seymour Town Hall

Members present: W. Kurt Miller, Len Greene, Jr., Stephan Behuniak, Karen Stanek, Annmarie Drugonis and Al Bruno.

Members not present: Nicole Klarides-Ditria.

Others present: Town Counsel, Richard Buturla; Doug Zaniewski, John Cronin, Jr., Mike Lombardi, Rich Grudzias, Jonathan Erman, John Cronin, Sr., Dan Zaniewski and Kerry Lewis.

ITEM #1: Call meeting to order.

Meeting was called to order by First Selectman, W. Kurt Miller, at 6:30 PM.

ITEM #2: Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone saluted the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3: Public comment on proposed ordinance changes:

a) Emergency Management Director.

Doug Zaniewski, 10 Elaine Drive, Assistant Fire Chief, discussed his concerns with the proposed changes to the Emergency Management Director and Communications Commission Ordinances. He stated the fire department prefers the ordinances to go in line with state statutes.

Kurt stated the Ordinance Committee will have him come to their meeting to have a discussion with along with other emergency personnel to form the language of the ordinance.

Mike Lombardi, 21 Lakeview Avenue, Chief of Seymour Fire Department, discussed his concerns with the proposed changes to the Emergency Management Director and Communications Commission Ordinances. He voiced his concerns with the proposed changes violating state statutes. The fire department is concerned with the authority level that is being provided to the Emergency Management Director. He suggested having the Board of Selectmen and various town wide agencies discuss what is best for the town. Regarding the proposed changes to the Communications Commission Ordinance, The fire department would like to ensure they would not lose any authority. The authority on how the fire department is managed should be solely on the fire chief.

Stephan inquired about a more specific interpretation as to what the Communications Commission would hinder on their day to day operations.

Mike Lombardi stated they have a dispatch center and if they needed an operational change that could be time sensitive. He stated he has important decisions to make that are the best for the town and he doesn't have time go to through three or four people to make that happen. He discussed a current example of an issue that came up.

Kurt asked what he is uncomfortable with in the proposed verbiage.

Mike stated that it is broad and should be more precise. He stated there needs to be more clarification on what the fire chief should be responsible for as far as communication.

Len stated it would be a good thing for everyone to get together to work on this with the Ordinance Committee.

John Cronin, Jr. 107 Mountain Road, currently serves on the Board of Fire Commissioners. He is also a past Chief of the Fire Department. He stated the Emergency Management Director Ordinance can be simplified to making the Fire Chief responsible for all emergency management in town. He said that larger towns do not have a separate Emergency Management Directors or offices. The Fire chief is the Emergency Management Director in larger towns. The Emergency Management Director is meant to be a liaison between the town and the State of Connecticut as well as the federal government during times of emergency.

Al Bruno inquired what other towns similar to our size do when it comes to Emergency Management Director.

John stated he has looked at several towns and cannot answer for certainty. He currently works for the Town of Fairfield which is larger than Seymour and part of the Fire Chief's job description is Emergency Management Director along with his assistants. Part of the salary of the Fire Chief is considered Emergency Management.

Stephan inquired if the fact that Seymour's Fire Department is volunteer based has any impact.

John stated that the fire department has many highly trained firefighters. They rotate chiefs every couple of years. If the town were to write Emergency Management Director into the job description, it would require our future chiefs to be trained a little more in certain areas. He stated he is not suggesting eliminating the position all together. He suggested assigning it to a job function that is already created within the town. Emergency management came out of civil defense or civil preparedness. He continued to discuss the history of the job.

Len stated he always envisioned it as if something bad happened (ex: natural disaster), the Emergency Management Director would act as someone who can interact with all three departments to ensure everyone works well together.

John stated all three emergency departments (police, fire and EMS) interact on a daily basis. He stated everyone has a good working relationship.

The board discussed scenarios of lack of communication and the role the Emergency Management Director plays in that.

Kurt stated that this ordinance is old and would like it to be updated. He stated that this isn't about giving or taking power from anyone. He stated they aren't really changing the spirit of the original ordinance but are changing the language.

Anmarie stated that for 17 years this has sat with civil defense attached to it and no one had a problem with it.

John suggested thinning out the language.

Anmarie agreed the ordinance needs to be updated. She stated there might be an issue with having the Fire Chief as the Emergency Management Director because every two years they change the chiefs.

John stated that is an issue that the Board of Fire Commissioners has looked at in the past. The ordinance currently states that the chiefs will be appointed every year. He suggested changing that ordinance to appointing highly qualified people for the Fire Chief positions.

Kurt asked the Fire Commissioners to send all of the ordinances they would like looked at one time.

Doug stated he would like to add more language regarding control. He said that as long as the protections are there for us, the fire department isn't concerned with who is in charge of being the Emergency Management Director. State Statute says the Executive Director can appoint that position. He stated that the civil preparedness part of the ordinance still exists. There is no reason to go after this ordinance because it was written as civil preparedness.

Annamarie stated she isn't concerned with who the fire chiefs/commissioners are now. She is concerned with the next 10-20 years.

Doug stated that the biggest concern is the way it is currently written because it does not allow for what state law currently states. The state law states that the Fire Chief in an event of an emergency is in charge and the Emergency Management Director shall not supersede any police or fire department. Those are the issues that need to be addressed.

Discussion ensued on who should choose the Emergency Management position.

b) Communications Commission.

Doug Zaniewski stated the fire department would like to make sure some of the controls are kept at the fire department level as far as operations because they have been running into some issues.

Kurt stated the Communications Commission should be more involved with the infrastructure rather than the operations aspect.

Motion to recess the Public Hearing at 7:04 PM.

Motion: Al Bruno

Second: Len Greene, Jr.

Vote: 6-Yes 0-No

0-Abstain

W. Kurt Miller – Yes
Annamarie Drugonis – Yes

Len Greene, Jr. – Yes
Karen Stanek – Yes

Al Bruno – Yes
Stephan Behuniak – Yes

Motion to come out of recess at 7:05 PM.

Motion: Len Greene, Jr.

Second: Annmarie Drugonis

Vote: 6-Yes 0-No

0-Abstain

W. Kurt Miller – Yes
Annamarie Drugonis – Yes

Len Greene, Jr. – Yes
Karen Stanek – Yes

Al Bruno – Yes
Stephan Behuniak – Yes

c.) Historic Landmark Preservation

Jamie Brennan, 124 Bungay Road, discussed his concerns with the proposed changes to the Historic Landmark Preservation Ordinance. He discussed minutes from the June 20, 2016 Ordinance Committee meeting. He strongly opposes this ordinance as he believes it is written discretionary. He discussed various highlights page by page that he is concerned with.

Kurt discussed page 3 and asked if he had an issue with the definition of significant building. The board discussed various topics regarding the proposed changes and Jamie's concerns at length.

ITEM #4: Close Public Hearing.

Motion to adjourn at 7:31 PM.

Motion: Len Greene, Jr.

Second: Al Bruno

Vote: 6-Yes 0-No

0-Abstain

W. Kurt Miller – Yes
Annamarie Drugonis – Yes

Len Greene, Jr. – Yes
Karen Stanek – Yes

Al Bruno – Yes
Stephan Behuniak – Yes

Submitted by,

Reviewed by,



Lianna McMurray
Recording Secretary



W. Kurt Miller
First Selectman