

MINUTES of ANNUAL TOWN MEETING - November 28, 2022

MINUTES of ANNUAL TOWN MEETING of the electors and citizens qualified to vote at town meetings of the Town of Old Saybrook, Connecticut, on November 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. with approximately 150 persons attending. Carl Fortuna, First Selectman, called the meeting to order and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Carl Fortuna moved, seconded by Brad Thorpe and unanimously voted that Nick Prevost serve as Moderator for this meeting.

Nick introduced himself and asked the Town Clerk, Sarah V. Becker, to read the call of the meeting.

ITEM 1. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to appropriate \$5,106.38 from the capital non-recurring account for the purposes of upgrading the software for the Town's two digital signs, Town Green and Gateway East (by Mystic Market).

The Moderator called on First Selectman Fortuna who explained the software upgrade requested by Larry Hayden, IT Director, and noted that it would include remote accessibility.

Scott Giegerich moved, seconded by Brad Thorpe and unanimously voted to ADOPT Item 1.

ITEM 2. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to appropriate \$125,000 from the capital non-recurring account for the purposes of upgrading end of life software for the camera systems used by both the Old Saybrook Public School District and the Town of Old Saybrook.

The Moderator called on First Selectman Fortuna who explained that Julie Pendleton spearheaded this research which will monitor students at the schools and other Town facilities having cameras only in emergency situations. Carl advised that a camera will be installed to overlook the Ballot Box at the front door of the Town Hall and perhaps add additional surveillance where deemed needed.

On a motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously voted to ADOPT Item 2.

ITEM 3. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to appropriate \$20,000 from the capital non-recurring account for electrical work related to the Gazebo on the town green.

The Moderator called on First Selectman Fortuna who reviewed how the gazebo on the town green has been upgraded to assure accessibility by everyone and that electrical outlets were added to allow for safe use by those needing use of this function and is a much better facility for town events.

Grant Westerson moved, seconded by Alan Schwarz and unanimously voted to ADOPT Item 3.

ITEM 4. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to appropriate \$4,000 from the capital non-recurring account for the purpose of staining the newly installed fence on Whisper Cove Road.

The Moderator called on First Selectman Fortuna who explained that this fence is the responsibility of the Town to maintain and had deteriorated over time. He noted that Brad Thorpe had suggested that staining the fence would prolong its life. The cost of staining is \$4,000 and that \$44,000 had previously been approved for this project. Brad Thorpe moved, seconded by Chuck Savage and unanimously voted to ADOPT Item 4.

ITEM 5. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to appropriate \$500,000 for a Small-Town Economic Assistance Program reimbursable grant for the purposes of completing sidewalk work from Old Post Road to the Westbrook town line.

The Moderator called on First Selectman Fortuna who advised that Items 5, 6 and 7 on this call are dependent on grant monies and will be handled by the Town paying for the projects first and then the State of Connecticut will reimburse the Town the funds spent which will be returned to the accounts used to pay for the projects. This Town Meeting vote will authorize the projects. He further outlined the scope of the sidewalk projects. Yearly maintenance will be covered in the Town's Maintenance budget to assure disrepair will be minimal.

On a motion duly made and seconded, Item 5 was unanimously ADOPTED.

ITEM 6. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to appropriate \$500,000 for a legislative earmark for the purposes of making improvements on Phase II of the Main Street Connections Park which funds are being received by the town from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation.

The Moderator noted that since First Selectman Fortuna had already addressed the specifics of this appropriation, a motion was duly made, seconded and unanimously voted to ADOPT Item 6.

ITEM 7. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to appropriate \$769,500 for a legislative earmark (grant-in-aid funding) for the purposes of completing sidewalk work from Old Post Road to the Westbrook town line, which funds are being received by the town from the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)).

The Moderator noted that since First Selectman Fortuna had already addressed the specifics of this appropriation, a motion was duly made, seconded and unanimously voted to ADOPT Item 7.

ITEM 8. As recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, to approve the following appropriations totaling \$1,408,292, which funds have already been received by the town from the United States Department of the Treasury pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), as approved by the Board of Selectmen ad hoc ARPA committee.

The Moderator called on First Selectmen Fortuna to speak to this Item.

First Selectman Fortuna advised that the Town has received approximately \$3,000,000 and there was no procedural outline as to how to allocate the monies. The Board of Selectmen appointed a committee of eight (8) to serve as their ad hoc committee to review applications and propose funding. Members of the committee: Kristen Roberts, Bruce Carlson, Maureen Zabotone, Kacie Costello Hand, Judy Sullivan, Susan Esty, Brad Thorpe and Elizabeth McEvily. The Town has already allocated \$400,000 plus these new proposed requests with over \$1,000,000 still to be determined by December 31, 2024. The money must be spent by 2026. He further listed the request qualifications which would be allowed to be considered. Towns receiving less than \$10,000,000 can declare designations as lost revenue. Chuck Savage raised the question regarding reporting requirements by the recipients of the funds. First Selectman Fortuna advised that the Town Treasurer and Finance Director has the right to audit the funds and the signed form legally obligates the requester to use the funds in the manner requested; if it is found that this did not occur the recipient would have to return the funds to the Town.

On a motion duly made and seconded, the following items were ADOPTED:

- i. To appropriate \$100,000 to the Economic Development department for the purpose of development, marketing and promotion plan focusing on creating seasonal events to attract people to Old Saybrook's small businesses, entertainment attractions and restaurants.
- ii. To appropriate \$2,124 to reimburse the First Church for the purchase of 4 air purifiers.
- iii. To appropriate \$8,288 for the Historic Walking Tour.
- iv. To appropriate \$500,000 for the purpose of upgrading Main Street sidewalks and safer pedestrian experience
- v. To appropriate \$21,830 to the Public Health Nursing Board of the purpose of contracting a psychiatric APRN.
- vi. To appropriate \$23,860 to the Rotary Club for the purposes of offsetting fundraising losses due to COVID.
- vii. To appropriate \$80,000 for the purpose of building a senior pavilion for seniors at Saybrook Village Senior Housing.
- viii. To appropriate \$100,000 to the Valley Shore YMCA to support after school childcare program.
- ix. To appropriate \$25,000 to HOPE Partnership to contribute to the first year's salary of the new Executive Director due to lack of fundraising during COVID.
- x. To appropriate \$101,000 to SayBucks Giveaways for the purpose of injecting dollars into Old Saybrook's business community.
- xi. To appropriate \$247,000 to Old Saybrook Social Services to assist residents that have been adversely affected by COVID.
- xii. To appropriate \$14,000 to the CT Cancer Foundation to offset fundraising losses due to COVID.
- xiii. To appropriate \$36,786 to the VFW to offset funding losses due to COVID.

- xiv. To appropriate \$97,270 to the YFS to provide mental health and prevention services to school aged youth or families.
- xv. To appropriate \$17,200 to the American Legion to offset fundraising losses due to COVID
- xvi. To appropriate \$11,934 to Odedra Brothers LLC dba "Pier Blue Inn" to offset losses incurred due to mandatory shut down due to COVID.

First Selectman Fortuna advised that item xvii "To appropriate \$22,000 to Aum Somnath LLC dba "Himalaya Café" to offset losses incurred due to COVID" was WITHDRAWN by requester prior to this meeting.

ITEM 9. To receive and act upon the reports of the town officials as printed in The Annual Town Report for the fiscal year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

This year's Town Report was dedicated to and First Selectman Fortuna called forward Suzanne Taylor (Pension Board 32 years /27 years as Chairman), Dorothy Alexander (21 years Zoning Board of Appeals) and David LaMay (16 years Board of Finance) - (Robert McIntyre – 12 years Planning Commission, 9 Years Zoning Board of Appeals) was not present). The First Selectman thanked them for their service and spoke about each person's accomplishments, leadership, experience and the many contributions they have made to the Town of Old Saybrook.

On a motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah V. Becker, CCMC
TOWN CLERK