

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT



JAMES B. COSGROVE
First Selectman

RAYMOND E. DUNBAR, JR.
ANGELA M. HIGGINS

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Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting
Video/teleconference meeting
February 3, 2021
Fire Headquarters – 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. Present were First Selectman James B. Cosgrove, Second Selectman Raymond Dunbar and Third Selectman Angela M. Higgins. Also present were: Lisa Arpin, Town Clerk; Ray Ingraham, Linda Erlanger, Thomas Brockett, Frank Twohill, DeeDee Hakun, Peter Jackson, Carolyn Sires and Tracy Everson, RTM members; Nancy Witkowski, Susan Barnes, Todd Petrowski, Michael Perricone, Bobby Constanzo, Koloa Wolfgram, Larry Kluetsch, Rubin Danberg Biggs, Jeff Vailette, Pam Roy, Chris Collins, Daniel Rabin, Chris Hynes and Birbarie Whalen.

Motion made by Selectwoman Higgins to approve the minutes of January 20, 2021. Seconded by Selectman Dunbar. Vote unanimous.

First Selectman Cosgrove provided a brief overview of some of the issues that have been brought up concerning the Branford Housing Authority. He opened the meeting for discussion and comments by those in attendance. A lengthy discussion ensued.

Birbarie Whalen addressed the board and stated that she is a resident at Parkside and Beacon seems to do whatever they want to do not what the residents want them to do. The grounds are a mess and need to be cleaned up. The lifts keep getting stuck and the fire department has to keep coming out. The washer and dryers cost has gone up and they still keep breaking down.

Todd Petrowski clarified comments from the last meeting concerning the loss of property but he was referring to the loss of parking. His comments concerning the loss of money, he was referring to missing rent money prior to 2017. He stated that since nothing has been done with the land swap that was approved by the RTM, shouldn't that go back to the RTM?

Wayne Cooke addressed the board and stated that there is \$4.5 million missing and the town should do a forensic audit.

Michael Perricone addressed the board and stated that BHA board member Mark Colello has been asking for bank statements for the past 18 months but Kate Collins hasn't provided anything. If Kate Collins can't work with the other commission members she should not be on the Branford Housing Authority.

Nancy Witkowsky addressed the board and stated that the BHA board is not working and they are never going to be on the same page.

Carolyn Sires addressed the board and stated that there was an agreement with Merit and the state that all work that was to be done at the complex was to be recorded in triplicate. There is no accountability for any work and it is difficult to backtrack.

Ray Dunbar stated that there is a lot to absorb and none of it is an easy fix. There are more questions than answers and it's going to take time.

First Selectman Cosgrove stated that there is more information to gather and we will keep this on the agenda and thanked everyone for their comments.

Motion made by Selectman Dunbar to approve a request from the Branford Compassion Club for use of the Town Green (sharing with the JBML) on October 3, 2021 from noon to 5:00 p.m. to hold Animal Awareness Day.

Correspondence:

First Selectman Cosgrove read an email from Wayne Cooke concerning targeted and unconstitutional sign removal and the establishment of an Ad Hoc committee for the Tabor property. First Selectman Cosgrove provided information concerning the Tabor property and stated he will not be moving forward with a recommendation to form a development committee. Wayne Cooke addressed the board. Representative Everson addressed the board to clarify what the RTM discussed and recommended was to form a group to determine what the best use of Tabor property. Wayne Cooke addressed the board again and accused the First Selectman of giving away the Tabor property. Ray Dunbar stated that the property is not being given away.

First Selectman addressed the email concerning the targeted and unconstitutional removal of signs. He stated that the removal of the signs were not unconstitutional and they were not targeted. Signs are removed along the right away and have been for decades.

First Selectman Cosgrove read an email from Wayne Cooke concerning the silencing of citizens at meetings. Wayne Cooke addressed the board and stated that he is being silenced because he's not allowed to screen share.

First Selectman Cosgrove read a letter from Wayne Cooke concerning the Atlantic Wharf property. He stated that he has been in contact with the owner and stated the RTM concerns and

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reported back to the RTM. All protocols have been followed. There is no further action by this board.

Motion made by Selectwoman Higgins to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. Seconded by Selectman Dunbar. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Trista Milici
Clerk