

**MINUTES  
Town of Guilford, CT  
Board of Selectmen  
Board of Selectmen Meeting  
Monday, February 5, 2024, 8:30 am  
Town Hall and Via Zoom**

First Selectman Matthew Hoey called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Board Members: Matthew Hoey, Charles Havrda, Susan Renner, Louis Federici and Sandra Ruoff

Town Officials: Manager of Purchasing and Accounting Darlene Minore, Town Engineer Janice Plaziak, Human Resources Director Mitch Goldblatt, Finance Director Maryjane Malavasi, Peter Barrett, Leah Foster and Karolin Regan of Youth and Family Services, Facilities Engineer Steve Neydorff, Deputy Police Chief Sal Nesci, Environmental Planner Kevin Magee, Executive Assistant Karen Quercia and Clerk Traci Brinkman

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Foster gave a presentation on the DAY survey results. They have been administering this survey every two years since 2010. It serves as a profile of student life. This gauges what kids grades 7-12 are experiencing with respect to drugs, mental health, and family relationships. They went over the four core measures and trends over the past 13 years. The perception of peer disapproval is decreasing. The perception of risk for marijuana is up, but use is also up. It shows that kids know use is a risk at their age, but due to whatever reason such as peer pressure or access, they are still using and use is still increasing. It also shows that 30-day use rates for alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana have increased. The percentage of peer disapproval has decreased. Depression and suicide percentages are down; however it was noted that cases at Youth and Family Services continue to rise. There was discussion about Covid having an impact on the data. With regard to vaping, 97% of kids at Adams say they have never used, which is great. GHS rates are higher there. There are more kids using marijuana or cocaine as the grades increase, but 99% in seventh grade said they are not using. Positive and peer influence is down, which could also be attributed to Covid, but since that time it seems the kids are actively engaging in the community. There was discussion about the perception of risk going up even at a time when marijuana has been legalized.

**2. Public Forum (Limited to 3 minutes on agenda items)**

None

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Havrda and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to add to the agenda the purchase and upfit of police vehicles.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Havrda and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to add to the agenda the appointment of Mary Cosgrove to the Parks and Recreation Commission.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Renner and seconded by Mr. Federici, the board voted unanimously to add to the agenda the appointment of Nick Cusano to the Parks and Recreation Commission.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Renner and seconded by Mr. Federici, the board voted unanimously to appoint Donna Falcone as the Municipal Agent for the Elderly.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

**3. Approve minutes of:**

**1. January 16, 2024 - Regular Meeting**

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Mr. Havrda, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

**2. January 16, 2024 - Budget Workshop**

*Motion:* Upon a motion made by Mr. Havrda and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024 Budget Workshop as presented.

*Vote:* In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None

**3. January 17, 2024 - Budget Workshop**

*Motion:* Upon a motion made by Ms. Ruoff and seconded by Mr. Havrda, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 Budget Workshop as presented.

*Vote:* In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None

**4. January 23, 2024 - Special Meeting**

*Motion:* Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Mr. Havrda, the board voted to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Special Meeting as presented.

*Vote:* In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None

**4. Town Engineer (Janice Plaziak):**

**1. Consider and take possible action to add to the charge of the Waste Transfer Station Advisory Committee to explore and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on programs to continue the food scrap collections at the Transfer Station and a hauler option.**

Ms. Plaziak said the board recently had a presentation from Waste Zero and DEEP regarding the ongoing grant program. The desire is to try to continue the food scrap collection at the transfer station and have a hauler option. The suggestion is to add to the charge of the current committee to learn about programs, investigate options and make recommendations to the board regarding the continuation of a food scrap program. Currently the committee just has oversight of setting fees at the transfer station.

Mr. Hoey said the range of options could be significant. Ms. Plaziak is going to do her best to narrow down what is feasible to continue. There is also potential bridge funding from DEEP. He added that eventually the goal is to pass an ordinance that requires haulers to do food scrap diversion, but they are not there yet. Ms. Plaziak said another consideration is unit based pricing, not just for food scraps but waste reduction overall. She added that getting there will take some time.

Mr. Plaziak explained that the current food scrap collection at the transfer station is covered by a grant, so after that is over there will be a cost to that. There is also a benefit reduction in tipping fees. They are paying \$2,000 a month for that through the grant for pickup at the transfer station. She believes it would cost less when it's a known ongoing program, but that's to be determined through bidding and getting prices. The grant ends the end of April.

Mr. Hoey noted that they are still down a member from Guilford and Madison on the committee.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to add to the charge of the Waste Transfer Station Advisory Committee to explore and make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen on programs to continue the food scrap collections at the Transfer Station and a hauler option.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

## **5. Director of Human Resources (Mitch Goldblatt):**

### **1. Consider and take possible action to allow employees to open a Roth 457 Retirement Account through voluntary payroll deduction.**

Mr. Goldblatt said currently employees who work 24 hours or more can put in for a tax deferred plan. A group of employees also requested an option for a post-tax Roth 457. He thought it would be an easy addition, but has since learned it would require a plan document change to do that. This has not been prepared yet so he requested the board table this until the next meeting.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Ruoff and seconded by Ms. Renner, the board voted unanimously to table action to allow employees to open a Roth 457 Retirement Account through voluntary payroll deduction.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

**2. Discuss and take possible action on the purchase of four police vehicles off of state contract as well as the upfit for the vehicles.**

Deputy Chief Nesci explained that the police department is currently seeking to purchase four additional police vehicles and to have the upfit done for six police vehicles (these four and two previously purchased). The four 2023 hybrid police interceptor utility vehicles are currently available through MHQ under state contract. They have had difficult time locating and purchasing hybrid vehicles due to a number of supply chain issues and a strike. They are requesting \$183,416 to purchase the vehicles that were being budgeted in FY2024-25, because they know they can secure them right now and fold them into the existing fleet as needed. They have discussed this with Ms. Malavasi in finance and there is funding to purchase them during this fiscal year.

Mr. Hoey said ARPA funds would be an appropriate use to get these vehicles today, considering the difficulty they have been having. When it was first presented they talked about the need to have the vehicles painted, but they changed their thinking on that. There is a movement to give the department a fresh new look. Department members are excited about keeping them gray and moving from traditional black and white, which would save money.

Ms. Havrda noted that upfitting the vehicles is over 50% the cost. Deputy Chief Nesci said he was involved with upfitting vehicles when he worked in Meriden, and the prices have always been very high. They are taking a basic standard vehicle and adding all the components to it, such as lights, sirens, computer mounts, radio wiring and the cage in the back. They are police vehicles, but that is the mechanical portion of them. MHQ could upfit the vehicle, but they have another vendor for a lower price.

He added that some equipment they can salvage, but sometimes it becomes obsolete and they have to upgrade to new technologies. Vehicles also change slightly so they need new mounts and components.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Mr. Havrda, the board voted unanimously to purchase four police hybrid vehicles from MHQ off of State Contract (#22PSX0133) in the amount of \$183,416 using ARPA funds. And to contract with Soli's garage for the upfit for six vehicles for a total cost of \$109,115.88.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

**6. Discuss and take possible action on Town Hall Landscaping proposal.**

Mr. Hoey noted that the front entrance area of town hall is an eyesore and in need of attention. The could use some landscaping and may also look at the brickwork. John Cunningham has done work for the town on numerous occasions, adding new benches around the Green and Jacobs Beach as well. He is going to put design concepts together to see what they can do for the front door area and some changes to Town Hall South. It was noted that the \$4,500 cost does not include plant material.

Ms. Renner asked if they could possibly find anyone to provide volunteer services, such as one of the garden clubs.

Mr. Hoey said he can ask, but he is not sure they have the level of expertise John has. If they were to go with John then it is possible to bring in volunteers to do the work itself or maintenance staff.

Mr. Havrda suggested they should try to keep the recommendations to low maintenance items.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Mr. Havrda, the board voted unanimously to approve contracting with John Cunningham for a landscaping proposal for Town Hall and Town Hall South.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

## **7. Consider and take possible action on the FY2024-2025 Budget and Capital Plan.**

Ms. Malavasi said the capital plan was at \$982,000, but per the boards discussion in the budget workshop she adjusted it to be \$1,076,921 which is just slightly higher than where they are today. She made some changes to capital in consult with Parks and Recreation. They cut the design and replacement in half for ceiling tiles. She made a reduction to lighting at Bittner, took out the pallets for storage and expanded irrigation at Adams field hockey field. All totaling \$62,000.

There was discussion on the police cars that were just approved and if that would affect the budget. Ms. Malavasi said it would not, that has already been moved to alternate funding.

She added that the board has two options: to bring down the budget to a 2.99% increase or a 3.135% increase. The 2.99% would be on the assumption that the reduction comes from the Parks and Recreation program fund and they would need to take \$125,000 from that or somewhere else. Previously the board had brought them down \$186,000 in capital so that has been brought back up.

If the board takes the same \$60,000 subsidy from the Parks and Recreation program fund similar to last year, this would bring the increase to 3.135%.

There was discussion about the money in program fund and using that to offset program expenses.

Mr. Hoey believed there is general support to use that for the cost to run programs including, salaries, benefits, maintenance and utilities.

Mr. Havrda said considering the additions back to capital he is in support of the 2.99% increase.

Mr. Goldblatt said he received insurance quotes from CIRMA, which were better than originally budgeted so there is an estimated \$75,000 savings there.

Ms. Ruoff said at this point somewhere down line they may have to go back to Parks and Recreation, so they can take the \$75,000 savings since they know it exists.

Ms. Malavasi said if they took the full \$75,000 they would only need \$50,000 from programs. Mr. Hoey said he thinks the threshold should be \$60,000 from the program fund so they should take that amount from there. He added that there could be another potential round of cuts as well. They should take out whatever they need from the \$75,000 to bring it down to the same percentage.

If need further cuts after Board of Finance, they will look to other departments.

Ms. Malavasi said the bottom line budget will remain the same at \$47,223,073 and capital is \$1,076,921. The budget represents a \$1.5 million increase over the previous year. It was noted that \$1.1 or \$1.2 million of that increase is attributed to salaries.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to approve the FY2024-25 Budget at \$47,223,073 and Capital Plan in the amount of \$1,076,921.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

**8. Discuss and take possible action on noise control ordinance variance application.**

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to approve the noise control ordinance variance application for the New England Taco Festival taking place July 27&28 at the Guilford Fairgrounds.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstaining: None*

**9. Appointments and Resignations:**

**1. Act on recommendation to reappoint Michelle St. Peter to the Board of Assessment Appeals to fill an election vacancy for a term to expire November 2, 2027.**

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Renner and seconded by Mr. Federici, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Michelle St. Peter to the Board of Assessment Appeals to fill an election vacancy for a term to expire November 2, 2027.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstaining: None*

**2. Act on recommendation to appoint Mary Cosgrove to the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term to begin March 1, 2024 and expire February 28, 2028.**

Ms. Renner noted there is another candidate they received and added to the agenda for this position. Mr. Hoey said the first applicant came in first and if appointed would obviate the second appointment, but they appreciate his interest and he will be considered for future opportunities.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Havrda and seconded by Ms. Ruoff, the board voted unanimously to appoint Mary Cosgrove to the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term to begin March 1, 2024 and expire February 28, 2028.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstaining: None*

**3. Act on a recommendation to appoint Nick Cusano to the upcoming vacancy.**

Since the board acted on the previous appointment this appointment is not necessary.

**4. Act on appointment of Donna Falcone as the Municipal Agent to the Elderly.**

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Ruoff and seconded by Ms. Renner, the board voted unanimously to appoint Donna Falcone at the Municipal Agent for the Elderly.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

## **10. Committee Reports**

Ms. Ruoff said the affordable housing committee is meeting on the 20th of this month. Mr. Hoey said the ordinance creating that advisory committee into an official commission is complete. They will have to set a public hearing on the ordinance at their upcoming meeting. One of their charges will be to develop a process around “fee in lieu of” and also be the body that manages that.

## **11. Correspondence**

Ms. Renner said she received a communication about the process of bringing up a recommendation for Boards and Commissions so everyone gets a fair chance. There was some discussion around how far in advance to fill a vacancy. The consensus of the board is that 30 days before a vacancy expires is adequate time for an applicant to prepare.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Mr. Federici and seconded by Ms. Renner, the board voted unanimously to not fill an expiring vacancy on a board or commission prior to 30 days before the expiration.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

The board also received a letter about the driveway problem. Mr. Hoey said he already forwarded that to staff and it is being looked into.

## **12. Old Business**

Mr. Hoey said George Krivda's fee for the non-profit ARPA consulting did not exceed the \$40,000. He only charged \$17,330, which leaves a balance of \$22,670. The Foundation has learned they are going to be the beneficiary of a gift from the Guilford Savings Bank, so the building they are currently in will now become their building, but will require some renovation. They would like the board to consider allowing them to keep the balance to do some renovations.

The board agreed to allow them to keep that allocation.

**13. New Business**

None

**14. Public Forum (Limited to 3 minutes on any issue)**

Debbie DeMuis said during Covid they received a lot of robo calls from the first selectman every Friday. She wonders in what situations they deem it necessary to use. Her suggestion is that before a budget vote and other important meetings, like marijuana dispensaries, they use that tool. She knows the public doesn't attend like they all want them to. But she feels when there is an important town meeting or vote on the budget a call might be helpful.

Mr. Hoey said for a number of years it was only supposed to be used for major announcements and nothing with a political overtone or nature. On a budget vote it could be perceived as misuse to tell everyone to get out and vote for the budget if this board supports the budget. They would have to be careful on how to parse the words.

Ms. DeMuis said she is glad the board voted on a 30-day approval to give people enough time to submit an application for boards and commissions. Roger Joyce was approved for Planning and Zoning more than 30 days before that term was up and they would have had someone to recommend. She is discouraged about the way this has progressed previously.

*Motion: Upon a motion made by Ms. Renner and seconded by Ms. Ruoff the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 a.m.*

*Vote: In Favor: Hoey, Havrda, Renner, Federici and Ruoff  
Opposed: None  
Abstaining: None*

Respectfully submitted,

*Traci K. Brinkman*  
Clerk  
Board of Selectmen