



Board of Selectmen (1st Monday) - Jul 07 2025 Minutes

Monday, July 7, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Town Hall and Via Zoom

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

Town Officials: Environmental Planner Kevin Magee, Human Resources Director Mitch Goldblatt, Town Engineer Janice Plaziak, Facilities Supervisor Todd Rake, Affordable Housing Commission Chair Mary Jo Kestner (Zoom), Historic District Commission Members Teresa Buchanan and Todd Fanciullo, BOE Business Manager Linda Trudeau (Zoom), Town Attorney Peter Barrett (Zoom), Executive Assistant Karen Quercia, and Clerk Traci Brinkman

Others: Debbie DeMuisis and Jeffrey Ambroziak

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Havrda led the pledge.

2. Public Hearing on resolution to join the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority as a Member Municipality.

Ms. Kestner explained that the state has some funds available for town center housing in transit district areas. Guilford has already done a lot with zoning and they have the Town Center South Plan so they could qualify for this funding. There might also be planning opportunities to develop more dense housing downtown. She explained that there is nothing to lose by joining this.

Ms. Ruoff said she supports joining this as well because it opens up opportunities for the town and allows them to be considered.

Mr. Hoey said while this funding is strictly for municipalities, they can apply on behalf of other entities. In addition they will look at the town's zoning code to see if there are any tweaks that would help create these areas. There are no requirements, no costs or responsibilities on the town's end.

Ms. Plaziak just wanted to remind everyone to consider flood zones and environmental restrictions when considering incentives for development. The town center is near very flood prone areas and state funding doesn't just require a 100-year flood zoning compliance but a 500-year flood compliance, which is difficult.

Mr. Hoey said they are also constrained relative to septic. The codes regarding septic cannot and will not be changed.

The board closed the public hearing at 8:45 a.m.

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

None

4. Approval of minutes:

4.1 June 16, 2025 - Regular Meeting

Ms. Renner noted that action was missing after the executive session in item 4. The board decided to table the minutes to get that clarified.

Motion to table the minutes of the June 16, 2025, Regular Meeting for further clarification.

Moved by: Susan Renner

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

5. BOE Business Manager (Linda Trudeau):

5.1 Discuss and take possible action on a resolution to authorize a lease purchase agreement for the Board of Education.

Ms. Trudeau explained the Board of Education needs authorization to enter into a capital lease. The resolution was prepared by Bond Counsel Matt Ritter. This year's lease totals \$500,000 to purchase chrome books for grades 5-9, interactive boards at Adams and Baldwin, desktop computers for the central office and main offices of the schools, and a pickup truck for facilities with cab over the back of truck. She doesn't have proposals yet for the rates, but expects those on Friday.

Motion to approve the resolution authorizing a lease purchase agreement for the Board of Education.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Charles Havrda

Unanimous

6. Town Engineer (Janice Plaziak):

6.1 Discuss and take possible action to contract with Silver Petrucelli for architectural design and consultation services for 52 Church Street.

Ms. Plaziak explained that they have made progress on this issue, and it has become apparent that the building is contributing to the historic district. They are looking to retain the original structure as opposed to demolishing it. A committee comprised of town officials and Historic District Commission (HDC) representatives have been working to see how they can meet the needs of the town for additional parking and storage while still meeting the HDC's charge. She reached out to SHPO to see if they had a list of architects who have historic experience. They sent a list and Silver Petrucelli is on that list and is on the town's on-call architect list. They have great experience with regard to historic structures. She met with them and talked about the project and walked through the building. Their cost to develop a plan is \$48,500, which is below the \$50,000 threshold for on-call architectural services. The engineering department will do the site civil work and entertain proposals on landscape architecture.

There was discussion on using the storage for some smaller items like snow blowers, etc., which are needed for maintenance of the town center. It will not be an occupied building.

Motion to approve contract with Silver Petrucelli for architectural design and consultation services for 52 Church Street in the amount of \$48,500.

Moved by: Susan Renner

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

7. Facilities Supervisor (Todd Rake):

7.1 Discuss and take possible action on upgrades to the Lathrop House.

Mr. Hoey explained that the BOE has moved its offices out of the Lathrop House and it now falls back to town use. The town has a need for additional space. They intend to move the engineering department,

which consists of three people and Economic Development Coordinator John Tarutis into the building. Mr. Tarutis is currently sitting at an admin desk in the Selectmen's Office and has to move to the conference room to make confidential phone calls. There was discussion about a portion of the Lathrop House that could store refrigerators and freezers used by Social Services for holiday food items.

Mr. Rake said they did go out for quotes for electrical, painting and carpet cleaning. He explained the renovations would be done in two phases. The first phase this summer would include the preparation and upgrades of carpet/floor cleaning, painting, and IT to get the two departments in there. One big piece of that is also the electrical. There are a lot of unknowns because of the age of the building. He plans to get more information from contractors, but they are recommending a 400 amp three-phase service, because this would plan for the future. SBC has reviewed this as well as Silver Petrucelli, and they all agree with this recommendation. This would allow them to eventually put an elevator in the building. He plans to return in a couple of weeks with more fine-tuned information on the electrical and prices.

Mr. Rake received quotes from multiple contractors for painting. M and R was the lowest price at \$24,280, but this excludes the cost of paint, which would roughly be \$3,000. He also got quotes for carpet cleaning/flooring and recommends Miracle Mist for \$3,385.

Ms. Renner said she thought the original idea was to possibly sell this house. She understands the need for office space, but now they are going in this direction with a large price tag.

Mr. Hoey said the use of the building was contemplated during the facilities study in 2018 or 2019. There is no room at Town Hall South, and privatization of this building is a significant challenge. There is no onsite parking and it shares a septic system with the library.

Ms. Plaziak said the physical setbacks are very limited and the creation of a separate lot would be challenging. It was originally going to be part of the library expansion, but she thinks it is a better building to retain and develop for future use because of adjacencies to the library and town hall, as well as the physical challenges to making it a separate entity.

Mr. Hoey said making these improvements also does not preclude them from eventually privatizing it.

The only exterior improvements are a handicap ramp in the back and movement of an electrical panel which will also increase in size. These changes will need to go through the Historic District Commission.

Phase II, of this project would include a full renovation and modernization of the facility.

There was discussion about doing everything before moving people in. It was noted that Phase I will take about a month, while Phase II will likely take several months to years before anyone can move in.

Ms. Plaziak said the engineering department will only be in that building temporarily because they will eventually move into the new Public Works Department.

Mr. Hoey said there are a lot of other projects, such as the police department and public works that would take precedent over a full renovation of the Lathrop House.

There was discussion on the cost of the IT. The cables are 30 years old so the cost for new wiring to connect that building to Town Hall is about \$7,500. Currently, Comcast is in there now, but that fee could go away if they purchase for \$550 a one-time cost wireless bridge or they could leave it as a backup.

Motion to approve upgrades for the Lathrop House, which includes contracting with M and R painting for work totaling \$24,280, with Miracle Mist for carpet and floor cleaning totaling \$3,385 and for IT Upgrades up to \$7,500.

Moved by: Charles Havrda

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

8. Environmental Planner (Kevin Magee):

8.1 Consider and take possible action on changes to the East River Preserve Deer Management program to allow for Deer Management efforts following the archery season, as dictated by the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Magee said that over the past five hunting seasons, they have only been averaging about three to four deer a year, compared to six during previous seasons. They are not getting what they need to protect the land from deer browsing. Under the current hunting program, hunters can only be on the property 22 days. It is Monday through Friday from October 15-November 15, daybreak until 11 a.m. The recommendation

is to follow the state's deer management program, but still keep the schedule from Monday to Friday with no hunting on holidays, days school is not in session and on weekends. The state program runs from September 15-January 31.

Ms. Ruoff said she is not against it, but people using it for other things beside hunting should be aware.

Mr. Magee said it is not shut down for any other uses and they will make them aware. He added that there have been no conflict between hunters and other users. The only bad interaction has been dogs off leash spooking the deer

Motion to change the East River Preserve Deer Management Program to follow the archery season as dictated by the State of Connecticut, except only allowing hunting on weekdays.

Moved by: Sandra Ruoff

Seconded by: Susan Renner

Unanimous

9. Director of Human Resources (Mitch Goldblatt):

9.1 Consider and take possible action on the Tuition Discount Agreement with Quinnipiac University.

Mr. Goldblatt said he was approached by Quinnipiac to put together a partnership similar to the ones done by other local universities. They would offer employees a 10% discount on tuition in exchange the town would invite them to benefit fairs. They would also put out announcements for job postings on websites as well.

Motion to approve the Tuition Discount Agreement with Quinnipiac University.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Charles Havrda

Unanimous

9.2 Consider and take possible action to allow an employer match of up to 8% into the Lincoln Financial 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan for employees who did not originally commit the full 8% contribution upon hiring.

Mr. Goldblatt explained that when the 401a plan was set up, an employee could contribute a minimum of 3% up to 8% with a town

match of the same amount. He added that once the amount choice was made it couldn't be changed. When the town made the move from Mission Square to Lincoln Financial they thought there might be an opportunity to change this aspect of the plan. They were not able to change that, because they are not starting a new plan, just transferring one plan to another record keeper. There is a workaround for the 11 people that did not contribute the 8%. They would allow them to open a 457 account and put the additional percentage up that would get them to 8% in there and the town would match the difference back in the 401a. Unfortunately they cannot go backwards, so an 8% person cannot drop it to 3%.

This will still make the town competitive with its 401 plan and make it more feasible on employees.

Mr. Hoey said he found the provision very inflexible that they had to make a decision when they first walked in because life does change.

Ms. Malavasi said the reason they are stuck in that provision is because the town mandates the first 3%. If they did not do that and it was 0-8% it would allow flexibility. It is something in the IRS rules that makes this scenario happen.

Mr. Goldblatt said the reason they mandated it, is because every new full-time employee was mandated to put in whatever their contract mandated for pension. They still wanted people to make a contribution to their retirement as well.

Ms. Ruoff said she feels this is a step in the right direction.

Motion to allow an employer match of up to 8% into the Lincoln Financial 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan for employees who did not originally commit the full 8% contribution upon hiring through the process as outlined by the Director of Human Resources.

Moved by: Charles Havrda

Seconded by: Lou Federici

Unanimous

10. Economic Development Coordinator (John Tarutis):

10.1 Receive an update regarding the Fanfest in October.

Mr. Tarutis said the Gilmore Girls Fanfest wants to return to Guilford October 16-19 and they would like to hold it on the Green with a tent. They bring over 600 individuals from around the world to Guilford for

this event. They had reserved The Green for those dates, but he knows the board wanted an update on where things stood, especially with regard to the impact on parking. They have reserved about 200 parking spaces at St. George's. Combined with town parking spaces they are looking at 300. Many of the attendees fly and uber in and do not have vehicles.

The board discussed the art festival which does provide shuttles, but probably draws in more people. Ms. Ruoff noted it couldn't be worse than that event with regard to traffic and parking.

Mr. Tarutis said he didn't think the impact would be anywhere near the art festival.

Ms. Jacob said they also arrange for carpools from where they are staying so not everyone attending drives a car.

There was discussion about how this event positively impacts some businesses, but not others.

Ms. Renner did not think they should use the Green. It is a private group, but she understands the town has taken over the application process. It would disrupt the town for the entire weekend during the most beautiful time of the year. She thinks it is great for the town but belongs at the fairgrounds.

Mr. Federici felt there is still pressure on the Green even if it is at the fairgrounds. He is moved by the economic impact, but if there are four more similar requests then it becomes a slippery slope.

After further discussion, the board asked for a detailed application to consider at a future meeting with the organizer in attendance.

11. Discuss and take possible action on a resolution to join the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority as a Member Municipality.

Motion to approve the resolution to join the Connecticut Municipal Redevelopment Authority as a Member Municipality with the sign-off of town counsel.

Moved by: Sandra Ruoff

Seconded by: Susan Renner

Unanimous

12. Consider and take possible action on the Noise Control Variance Application from the Guilford Police Department for its National Night Out.

Motion to approve the Noise Control Variance Application from the Guilford Police Department for its National Night Out.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

13. Appointments and Resignations:

13.1 Act on a recommendation to appoint Victoria Gersten as an alternate to the Economic Development Commission to fill a vacancy for a term to expire on April 30, 2028.

Motion to appoint Victoria Gersten as an alternate to the Economic Development Commission to fill a vacancy for a term to expire on April 30, 2028.

Moved by: Matthew Hoey

Seconded by: Lou Federici

Unanimous

13.2 Act on a recommendation to appoint Francis Paranto as an alternate to the Economic Development Commission to fill a vacancy for a term to expire on April 30, 2026.

Motion to appoint Francis Paranto as an alternate to the Economic Development Commission to fill a vacancy for a term to expire on April 30, 2026.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Charles Havrda

Unanimous

13.3 Act on a recommendation to appoint Francis Paranto as an alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill a vacancy for a term to expire on February 28, 2027.

Motion to appoint Francis Paranto as an alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals to fill a vacancy for a term to expire on February 28, 2027.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

13.4 Act on a recommendation to reappoint Catherine Adams to the Human Rights Commission for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Motion to reappoint Catherine Adams to the Human Rights Commission for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Moved by: Sandra Ruoff

Seconded by: Charles Havrda

Unanimous

13.5 Act on a recommendation to reappoint Irina Esterlis Cottrill to the Human Rights Commission for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Motion to reappoint Irina Esterlis Cottrill to the Human Rights Commission for a term to expire on June 30, 2029.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

13.6 Act on a recommendation to reappoint Terri Cain to the Water Pollution Control Authority for a term to expire on July 31, 2029.

Motion to reappoint Terri Cain to the Water Pollution Control Authority for a term to expire on July 31, 2029.

Moved by: Susan Renner

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

13.7 Act on a recommendation to appoint Jeffrey Ambroziak to the Board of Ethics for a term to expire on July 31, 2029.

Motion to appoint Jeffrey Ambroziak to the Board of Ethics for a term to expire on July 31, 2029.

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Susan Renner

Unanimous

13.8 Act on the appointment of Zachary Rodriguez to the Human Rights Commission to fill a vacancy for a term to expire June 30, 2027.

Motion to appoint Zachary Rodriguez to the Human Rights Commission to fill a vacancy for a term to expire June 30, 2027.

Moved by: Sandra Ruoff

Seconded by: Susan Renner

Unanimous

14. Requests for use of Town Property

14.1 Act on request from the Shellfish Commission to place a sign on the Green advertising its Clam Jam 2025 taking place on July 19, 2025. (Sign Placement 7/5-7/19)

Motion to approve request from the Shellfish Commission to place a sign on the Green advertising its Clam Jam 2025 taking place on July 19, 2025. (Sign Placement 7/5-7/19)

Moved by: Susan Renner

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

14.2 Act on a request from the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce to use the Green and to place a sign on the Green advertising its Chowder Challenge for a Cause and Marketplace taking place on September 28, 2025. (Sign Placement 9/14-9/28)

Motion to approve request from the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce to use the Green and to place a sign on the Green advertising its Chowder Challenge for a Cause and Marketplace taking place on September 28, 2025. (Sign Placement 9/14-9/28)

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Sandra Ruoff

Unanimous

14.3 Act on request from the Guilford Police Department to use the Green and to place a sign on the Green advertising its National Night Out taking place on October 3, 2025. (Sign Placement 9/19-10/3)

Motion to approve request from the Guilford Police Department to use the Green and to place a sign on the Green advertising its National Night Out taking place on October 3, 2025. (Sign Placement 9/19-10/3)

Moved by: Lou Federici

Seconded by: Susan Renner

Unanimous

15. Committee Reports

Mr. Hoey said the bid document is going out on an affordable housing analysis.

16. Correspondence

None

17. Old Business

None

18. New Business

None

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

None

Motion to adjourn at 10:44 a.m.

Moved by: Sandra Ruoff

Seconded by: Charles Havrda

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Traci K. Brinkman
Clerk
Board of Selectmen