



# BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Clifford J. Hurgin Municipal Center, 1 School Street  
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TOWN OF BETHEL  
TOWN CLERK

*Matthew S. Knickerbocker, First Selectman*  
*Richard C. Straiton, Selectman*  
*Paul R. Szatkowski, Selectman*

## MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, April 15, 2014

7:00 p.m.

CJH Municipal Center - Meeting Room "A"

**PRESENT:** First Selectman Knickerbocker, Selectman Straiton, Selectman Szatkowski and Town Counsel Martin Lawlor.

**Call to order/Pledge of Allegiance:** First Selectman Knickerbocker called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. David Olson, William Hillman, Nicholas Hoffman, Meghan O'Connor and Wendy Smith, members of the Charter Revision Commission and their counsel, Attorney Vitti were present.

**Joint session with Charter Revision Commission - confer on Charter Revision Commission draft report:**

Charter Revision Commission Chairman David Olson addressed the Board of Selectmen and explained the action the Charter Revision Commission took regarding the Board of Selectmen recommendations on the Charter (Board of Selectmen 3/18/14).

David Olson noted the following:

1. With respect to Item 4, Paragraph C6-3A(1), and with due consideration of the Board of Selectmen's recommendation and thorough discussion with the Tax Collector, the Commission voted unanimously to sustain its Draft Report's language that moves the date for the Annual Town Meeting from the first week in May to the first week in April.
2. With respect to Item 7, C6-4C, the Board of Selectmen recommended consideration of "except for easements". The Commission agreed that its Draft Final Report language using the word "*disposition*" is too broad. Accordingly, the Charter Revision Commission voted unanimously to return to our earlier language by using the word

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“demolition”. Thus, Town Meeting approval will be required for the sale, purchase or non-emergency demolition of real estate owned by the Town.

3. With respect to Item 11, C8-14, the Board of Selectmen recommended removing the provision that “*Each Fire Chief shall be the chief administrative officer of their respective fire company and shall be responsible to the First Selectman for the operation of said company*”. The Commission deliberated extensively in arriving at its Draft Report language, considered recommendations of the Chiefs and the Companies’ opposition to a Fire Commission. The Commission believes unanimously that the Draft Report, as written, captures the fire companies’ request that the Charter reflect their need for a demonstrable strong relationship with the Town, as required by their insurers and regulators. Accordingly, the Commission voted to sustain its Draft Report’s language.
4. With respect to Item 18 (new paragraph), the Board of Selectmen recommended a seven (7) member Public Utilities Commission comprised of four (4) appointed members and all three (3) members of the Board of Selectmen. The Commission continues to unanimously support its Draft Report language whereby the Public Utilities Commission is comprised of five (5) appointed members. Our rationale is to maximize the opportunity to appoint technically qualified people to the Public Utilities Commission, to optimize the technical oversight of planning and operations and to provide separation between rate research, evaluation and recommendation and actual approval of rate structures (approval must remain with the Town’s legislative authority by statute).

Charter Revision Commission Attorney Nicholas Vitti advised that within 15 days from this evening, the Board of Selectmen must approve or reject the Charter Revision Commission findings, or accept portions thereof. It must then be published and decided when to submit the recommendations to the electors. It is also up to the Board of Selectmen to determine the balloting, i.e. all proposals as one question, similar proposals grouped together, etc.

**Public Comments:** Ann Cleary

**Minutes of March 18, 2014 Regular Meeting:** Selectman Szatkowski made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

**Minutes of March 20, 2014 Special Meeting:** Selectman Straiton made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

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**Minutes of April 4, 2014 Special Meeting:** Selectman Szatkowski made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to approve the minutes as presented. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

**First Selectman Report - Bridge / road update:** First Selectman Knickerbocker advised that the beams have been installed and now that the asphalt plants have reopened, it won't be much longer before the bridge is back open to traffic; it is anticipated to be by the end of May.

### **New Business**

#### **1.) Consideration of request - Greater Danbury Soap Box Derby**

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to approve the request of the Greater Danbury Soap Box Derby Association to hold their race series on Trowbridge Drive, on May 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> (rain date May 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>), May 31<sup>st</sup> & June 1<sup>st</sup> and on June 7<sup>th</sup> & June 8<sup>th</sup> (rain date of June 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>), subject to receipt of the appropriate insurance and facility use form, as well as notification to the Park occupants and Police Department. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Selectman Szatkowski suggested exploring charging a fee for these types of requests for use of town properties.

#### **2.) Consideration of Tax Collector's request for Tax Refund Authorization**

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to approve the Tax Collector's request, dated April 15, 2014 to authorize Tax Refunds in the amount of \$13,110.95. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

#### **3.) Consideration of Resolution - Fair Housing Resolution**

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to adopt the (annual) Fair Housing Resolution as follows:

**WHEREAS**, all persons are afforded a right to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice; and

**WHEREAS**, Federal fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and homeownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

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**WHEREAS**, Connecticut fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and home ownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

**WHEREAS**, the **Town of Bethel** is committed to upholding these laws, and realizes that these laws must be supplemented by an Affirmative Statement publicly endorsing the right of all people to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the **Town of Bethel** hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase and obtain financing and enjoy all other housing-related services of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis as provided by state and federal law; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the chief executive officer of the **Town of Bethel** or his/her designated representative is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of an illegal discriminatory housing practice in the Town of Bethel and for advising such person of the right to file a complaint with the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) or the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or to seek assistance from the CT Fair Housing Center, legal services, or other fair housing organizations to protect his or her right to equal housing opportunities.

Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

#### **4.) Consideration of accepting Call for Annual Town Meeting**

First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to accept the Call for the Annual Town Meeting. The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday, May 5, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in the Bethel High School Auditorium.

#### **5.) Consideration of "Muraca v Bethel" - *Executive Session Anticipated***

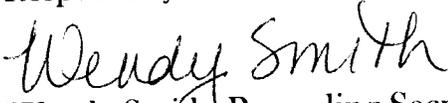
First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Straiton, to go into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. for the purpose of discussion of Muraca v Bethel and invite in Town Counsel Martin Lawlor. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

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Executive Session ended at 8:10 p.m. No action was taken.

As there was no further business on tonight's agenda, First Selectman Knickerbocker made a motion, which was seconded by Selectman Szatkowski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Vote, all in favor, motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary