

APPROVED
**Candia's Virtual Selectmen's Public Session Minutes
October 28, 2024, 6:30 pm**

Note: Individual roll call has been taken after each motion.

6:46 pm Chair Brien Brock opened the Public Session Meeting followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attendance: Chair Brien Brock, Selectman Patrick Moran, Selectman Boyd Chivers, Selectman Russ Dann, Selectman Susan Young and Town Administrator Andria Hansen.

Approval of Minutes: Public session minutes of October 14th, 2024. None noted.

Motion: Selectmen Chivers made a motion to approve the October 14th, 2024, Public Session Minutes as presented. Selectman Young seconded. Selectman Dann questioned the name of the Fire Department. Fire Chief Young said officially they are still the Candia Volunteer Fire Department. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

First set of Non-Public session minutes of October 14th, 2024. None noted.

Motion: Selectmen Chivers made a motion to approve the October 14th, 2024, First set Non-Public Session Minutes as presented. Selectman Young seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Seal the first set of Non-Public session minutes of October 14th, 2024.

Motion: Selectmen Young made a motion to seal the October 14th, 2024, first set of Non-Public Session Minutes. Selectman Moran seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Second set of Non-Public session minutes of October 14th, 2024. None noted.

Motion: Selectmen Young made a motion to approve the of October 14th, 2024, second set of Non-Public Session Minutes as presented. Chair Brock seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider continuing the use of Zoom: Chair Brock said he brought this subject up over two years ago and now Selectman Chivers has asked to have it on this agenda for the public to be made aware of it and to receive their input.

Selectman Chivers said he has asked for Zoom to be included on their agenda after watching a decline in public participation. It also includes a distraction that results with getting zoom set up and in trying to mute someone. Zoom seemed appropriate during covid, but he feels that it has long lived its usefulness. That is why he asked for this to be put on the agenda, to alert the public that they are looking at discontinuing the use of zoom.

Chair Brock said he wanted to clarify something that was said in their last meeting, and the subject about zoom came up, when Chief Young said he understood him because they are both old, and that is the reason why he was against zoom. Chair Brock said, it has nothing to do with his age, because if he was 25 years old, he would be against using zoom. He is just not in favor of it. It served a purpose during covid, but he believes the best transparency is to go to the public meetings by showing up. Selectman Young said in her opinion in and that she is younger than both of them, so she likes zoom for a number of reasons. She likes the transparency whether the people use it or not. It cost \$199 a year and we have all the equipment for free from the time of covid. What is it going to hurt to have zoom on? She does not know what the problem is to use zoom. Selectman Chivers said one thing is the audience cannot see the screen.

Selectman Dann said he has used zoom a few times but feels they should have microphones if they are going to do that, because it is hard to hear. If they are going to do it, it should be done right.

Selectman Moran said he is not in favor of eliminating zoom unless they replace it with something else. If they want less interaction on the TV, and they have something to say, he thinks it is better to come to the meeting and to be face to face with all of them. However, to be able to record it and broadcast it on a Candia U Tube Channel or something like that, so that people can watch it at their own leisure, and it would be no different than viewing on a Town Channel, except it would not be costing them anything. He gets the whole zoom thing, and it is sort of a pain to have to sit there and unmute people, take or read comments and that it is a distraction, but having an alternative that does not have that same interaction would be nice. Selectman Young said she does not understand how it is a distraction as we are taking our minutes, the AI is doing that basically, so you have to look at the screen. If you are the person taking the minutes and looking at the screen and AI is doing the minutes. She doesn't understand it, especially during their budget season. She thinks that it is wrong. Selectman Moran said the zoom in the Budget Meeting was horrible because they were using the speaker on the TV and not the regular speakers, and they could not hear anyone on it. Selectman Young said she would support getting a few speakers, microphone or whatever they need to make this work, but that it is up to the Board. Selectman Moran said taking public comment off a tv screen, it has served its purpose. He is fully in favor of recording our meetings and posting them online. Selectman Young said it is too late, we've had people and Board members come on zoom when out of town, on a business meeting or things like that have come on zoom. A few of the Planning Board Members have come in on zoom. She does not understand, maybe they need public input.

Kevin Coughlin (resident) asked for clarification, are you asking for zoom off for all meetings or only the Selectboard? Chair Brock said only the Selectboard. Mr. Coughlin said there are 23 people on zoom right now. Selectman Moran said that is more than there has been for any meeting since he has been there, and the only reason they are there is because of the particular meeting discussion and because they don't want it taken off. Mr. Coughlin said the people in the audience don't need to see the screen, this is strictly for people to be virtually here to listen to what is going on. Yes, there is a function where they can raise their hand and then ask a question that is seldom used, but it is for people to be able to view remotely. The Planning Board has used it remotely and it is a great functionality for people to use and it's almost no cost. Mark Chalbeck's concern was the ADA Compliance of the closed captioned to be enabled. He struggles to see why you would not want to have more participation from the Town's people then to forcing it to be less, especially coming into budget season and people would be more interested. With the incoming season of weather when they might come, and they can use zoom. He struggles to see the urgency to stop it. Chair Brock said in his mind it is because the participation has not been there. It is tonight, but weekly its not really there. Mr. Coughlin said is not a burden and it is like Selectman Sue said, AI is now doing of the minutes and is a fantastic piece of technology. He ran zoom for the Budget Committee, and it literally was clicking the mouse a few times.

Chair Brock said the Planning Board Committee did take a vote and he was the only one that said no to zoom. Mark Chalbeck said no, only because of the ADA Compliance. Selectman Young said she thinks the School will be starting to use zoom. Chair Brock said they are going to try but would need to work out the details.

Dean Young (resident) said about Selectman Chivers point earlier about the participation dropping, he thinks that speaks about the public and that they are happy with what the Selectboard is doing, but he will bet them all the money in the world that if something went on there or there was a hot button issue that the public would be on zoom for the meeting. It just speaks to the fact that they are all doing a good job as a Selectboard and the public doesn't have the issues to go on zoom. However, you know the public would, if there were issues, just like at the Planning Board when there have been issues, and the meeting room was full and the Board as well. Last week at the Budget Committee meeting his son was the only one on zoom. So, he thinks it speaks well for what the Board has been doing and he votes to keep zoom as well.

Ann Lacey (resident) said she is glad it is only the Selectboard that is considering eliminating zoom. She assumes a lot with the Planning Board in particular and she is away in the winter and that is the only way for her to know what is happening in town. She said she should be on zoom more, but she trusts what is going

on, but also trusts the Planning Board with some of their decisions. She thinks transparency is important, and does not want it voted out, because it is a great tool. The more air they have in the government the better it will be. She thanked the Selectboard for all they do.

L. Acevedo (resident) said they should keep zoom because it makes meetings accessible to people who cannot physically be there for any number of reasons, whether they are out of town, have children and cannot drive at night. There are so many reasons of why they cannot physically be there and zoom makes the meeting accessible to a lot of people who otherwise would not be able to participate.

Town Administrator Hansen said Pattie Davis (resident) sent them an email that reads. I would like to speak opposition of discontinuing zoom. The zoom option makes attending meetings open to more residents such as those caring for loved ones or not otherwise attend. This particularly applies to elders who do not want to drive at night and to those who cares for their spouse that cannot leave at night. For families that are split shift that cannot leave the children at night, just to name a few. Others may include parents who do not want to leave their children in the evening and multitasking by putting dinner on the table, getting the kids ready for bed etc. while keeping one ear on the meeting, or those who are out of town as she is. Ideally everyone in town should go to the meetings, but if they did attend, not everyone would fit into the meeting room. If the reason is because of Closed Captioned, then should add the Closed Captioned. If it is because it is not ADA Compliant, then neither are the meetings. without signing. Pattie Davis.

Selectman Young said there are 27 comments and 47 likes on social media, in stating they do not want zoom taken away. She will not read them, but they can read them at their own leisure. She indicated there is another letter from someone else in town about the same thing.

Selectman Dann said everyone is talking about how important zoom is. He feels if anything is going to be done it should be done at the deliberative session. That is where all the money is spent and where people don't know what is happening. You have a small number of people, but if they are going to do it, that should be included in it. Selectman Young said that it is at the school. Selectman Dann said that would be foolish, because at the Budget Meeting there was only one person on zoom and no one knows what is happening with the dollars and cents, but here on zoom they can say if they like a person or that person that doesn't mean anything. It's the dollars and cents that people get disturbed about, so that should be incorporated with it, and if it isn't incorporated in it, then he doesn't think they are doing the job that people think they are doing. Selectman Moran said they were able to live stream the deliberative session a few years ago. Chair Brock said, but they could not hear it.

Laurie Schleck (resident) via zoom said she would like to keep zoom. She is very worried about people with sickness, our meeting room is small and that it is that time of year, so this would enable people who may not be feeling well to use zoom without risking others.

Crystal Clock (resident) via zoom said she votes to keep zoom. Having a child with autism at home she cannot bring him to the meeting, and she does not have someone to stay with him, so she would love if they could keep zoom, so she can stay in touch with what is going on.

Dave Labbe (resident) via zoom said he thinks zoom is very important because if this was not available tonight he would not be able to voice his opinion and to hear what is going on without having to go back later which is to late. He brought up the 23 Main Street project that he thought would never pass, but to his dismay it did happen. That is why having access to zoom right there is very important to allow that for people.

Kye Power (resident) via zoom said she has issues with driving and sitting, and going to a Board meeting at night is very difficult for her.

Terri George (resident) via zoom said the idea of having them all attend the meeting is wonderful, but with technology that is the way with the future. So many people are accustomed to do this through zoom because the world is so busy. Jim and herself has used it and occasionally speak, but not frequently. The idea that they can jump on and be connected to their town is extremely important to them. They cannot get there to every meeting so its important to them to keep zoom.

Selectman Chivers said he is glad that they brought this up and to hear what they have heard.

Motion: Selectmen Chivers made a motion to approve and continue using zoom. Selectman Young seconded. Selectman Dann said he would like to see improvements and for it to be discussed at the Deliberative Session. Selectman Moran said he believes they cannot have zoom at the Deliberative Session. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Warrant Article – Elderly Exemption Increase: Selectman Chivers said Selectman Young mentioned at their last meeting regarding the Elderly Exemption. He has looked at the records and found out the last time they adjusted the amounts for the Elderly Exemptions was in 2020. The value of the exemptions of the real estate has declined due to inflation. The current Elderly Exemption for ages 65-74 is a \$45,000 exemption. For ages 75-79 is a \$70,000 exemption and ages 80 and over is a \$90,000 exemption from the assessed value. He said they should increase the brackets, and that is why he has prepared a warrant article that proposes to increase each bracket by \$10,000. Ages 65-74 for a \$55,000 exemption. Ages 75-79 for a \$80,000 exemption and the age of 80 and over a \$100,000 exemption. That will help to compensate the elderly, by giving a little assistance on their property taxes, considering what inflation has done to them with the cost of living. The cost of this is negligible and it will have a 1/10th of 1% increase on the tax rate. There are 67 residents in this town that claim the Elderly Exemption, and that would be a total increase of exemption valuation for \$670,000, and the tax on it \$14,000.

Selectman Chivers has prepared the warrant article at this time, because the deadline for warrants is November 15th, 2024, and he was not sure if this Board was going to convene before November 15th. The last time it was passed was in 2019. He presented the warrant article to the Board and urged them to support it and asked for it to be added to the Warrant. Selectman Young said this is not for everyone that is over 65. In order to be eligible, a person would need to have a certain economic bracket and there are criteria's that need to be met. It is for the Candia residents that do not have a high income.

Motion: Selectmen Chivers made a motion to add a warrant article for an increase on the brackets for the Elderly Exemption. Selectman Young seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Highway Department Projects: Road Agent Wuebbolt said he is looking at a few projects to use the Moore Highway Fund on this year. On one of the projects, he wants to put in a ditch on Currier Road as it always washes out that they want to complete. He would like to add another ditch on a portion of Podunk Road, as that road usually washes out badly on every rainstorm, and they always need to grade it afterwards. The other project that will not be completely paid for by the Moore Highway Fund and the balance would need to come out of the budget, is to dig up and create an apron on Donovan Road. He wants to get the Boards approval so he can move forward with his projects. Selectman Chivers asked how much money is available. The Road Agent said a little over \$20,000 is available, and he does not plan to use it all. He said he likes to leave a little money in it each year.

Motion: Selectmen Chivers made a motion to accept the Road Agents proposal and authorize the project and to proceed accordingly. Selectman Dann seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Landing Way-bond reduction and road acceptance: Road Agent Wuebbolt said now that Land Way Road is complete, the only thing it needs now is to shoulder gravel it and to have the catch-basins cleaned out. They would like to move forward with the bond reduction which is similar to what they use for every other project. If they could hold 10% which is about \$150,000 in assurity. That is typical of what they do for any defects if something happens within the first year and they need to re-pave. They normally hold the money for a year. He agreed to recommend and accept Landing Way as a Class VI Road and has talked to Tom Severino about whatever else needs to be done and they are only waiting for the pavement to harden, and they will be working on it in order to complete it. He does not see a reason why they cannot take it over. Chair Brock asked T. Severino if he was in agreement with it. T. Severino said he agreed and would just need a letter from the Town Administrator to get the Bond released so they can change it and reissue the 10%.

Motion: Selectmen Chivers made a motion to accept Landing Way as a Class V Road and to accept responsibility of its maintenance subject to T. Severino's putting up a \$150,000 Bond that has a 12 month expiration on it. Selectman Young seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Selectman Dann asked the Road Agent when they will be paving Chester Turnpike. Road Agent Wuebbolt said he has not heard anything, and he does not have any good contacts with Hooksett to reach out to.

ACO Resignation: Selectman Moran read a letter from ACO Deb Martel in giving her resignation immediately. See attached.

Motion: Selectmen Young made a motion to accept ACO Deb Martel's resignation with regret. Selectman Moran seconded. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

OLD BUSINESS:

Fire Department assessment: Selectman Dann said Primex (our Insurance Company) went through the Fire Department and observed there were a number of items that they ran into. One of the items was the diesel fumes in that building that are not exhausting out and that it causes cancer. Nowadays, it is important with Fire Departments to make sure that exhaust fumes going through the entire building is not in contact with clothing or in breathing it, as there are EMT's working there during the days. There were a number of items that came up that were also brought up in 2021, and he is wondering what the plans are to take of them. He said they talked about not having water at the Fire Department earlier in the year, and that we were told the well was fracked, but he is curious about the quality of the water, because they are talking about safety of their employees. The Police and Fire are safety, and if we cannot take care of employees in a safe environment, we need to take a look at that, because we have a liability issue down the road that could happen, and that is the biggest thing. According to Primex the showers and dressing areas were not adequate in May of 2021, and now they are still listed, so he is wondering if they have been corrected or not.

Fire Chief Young said if there was not a plan over there for the future, he would be worried about that. They have been putting money away every year to add to the Fire Station Building. Along with that, there were other things they were going to do, they just have not done any of it yet. There is water now and the water test came back. He said believe it or not there is a dug well inside the building behind the tanker and the water is absolutely great. The water in the dug well has a little bacteria in it, however Smith Pump said it is probably from putting in the new pump. They will come back to retest soon, and it might need to be chlorinated, but both wells have pretty good water. Will they drink it? Probably not because he does not think anyone drinks their well water anymore. He said the well water is okay. Selectman Dann said, do you have a quality test on the well that he can submit to keep in the records here. Basically, the letter of 2021 said that it was inadequate. The Fire Chief said when that was written in 2021 they were trying to get a grant, you write every possible thing that you can to get it, because that is what they want to see. So that is a little deceiving to the government, but you embellish. There were not any things that were earth shattering. The exhaust is something that will be addressed when they add on. They do not have to wait to add on in order to fix the exhaust system, and they can put some vents in that building tomorrow if they want to. He just thought it would be better to do it all at once. Selectman Dann said, we are talking safety, and they are breathing in fumes and that is the question. Fire Chief Young said the whole dynamics of change since people are there, it is a catch-up thing. There was no one in that building for days on end years ago, now with the ambulance crews there are people. I'm not sticking my head in the sand in saying some things that don't have to be done. Selectman Dann said also the clothing should not be hung in that area. These are things that Primex our Insurance Company, has brought up, I'm just asking what the time schedule is on these things and not putting it off another 3 years. Fire Chief Young said they can work on that now, he had hoped they could do it all at once. However, he has been thinking that he really does not need to do that because our Capital Reserve says for the building and facilities there is not a time for an addition, it is just to improve it. They do not have to

wait to do these items. He has been trying to get air conditioning for them, but his plumber has been very busy this year, but it will get done eventually. Selectman Dann said but eventually, when we are talking that this could cause problems for personnel, that is where he is at. We take care of the people here and it is something we can get in liability, now we are talking a cost factor. That is all he is asking is basically asking these questions that Primex has come up with. What are your plans to do these? Do you have a date? Chair Brock said, sooner than later, right? Selectman Dann said no, that is not going to work. Chair Brock said it is for me.

Selectman Young said there was a report in 2021 for the grant that they wanted, and it was very detailed. She has one in front of her from September of 2024. She would like to know who requested it, and what was the purpose of the request? Was it just done for at the Fire Department. It was not done at the Recycling Center, and we don't know what they're drinking. It was not done at the library or a number of places. With all due respect she thinks some of it is a little political as far as the Police and Fire Departments for a Safety Complex on why this is being addressed and no other building are. Now correct her if she is wrong?

Selectman Dann asked if this building safe to drink the water? Chair Brock said they have bubbler. He thinks to answer Selectman Youngs question is because discussion did come up about the concerns with the Fire Department and the facility there. At that time, he believes it was at a BOS meeting that they suggested in having Primex check it. Selectman Young said she does not remember that, maybe. Chair Brock said he is almost positive. Town Administrator Hansen said there was also talk about it at the Safety Facility Committee meeting. Chair Brock said it was because they had a conversation at the Safety Facility Committee meeting and that it came back as they had a short discussion with the BOS on why don't they have them do a study. Selectman Dann said he was in favor of an inspection. He had heard they would not drink the water and basically checking with our Fire Departments, diesel fumes are one of the worst things and Primex even says it is in their letter and stating that it causes cancer. That is something that you do not fool around with. Now you are talking about putting on an addition to the building? Is that something that is coming to the Board to let us know? Selectman Young said that is not new. Selectman Dann said it has not come before the Board and for them to know about it. Chair Brock said they have a warrant added each year. Selectman Dann said no, he said he is adding an addition on? Chair Brock said that is what the warrant article is definitely for. Selectman Dann said what does that entail. These things in front of us should be addressed first and if it's going to be taken care of in a new addition that's fine. But he wants to know, the Board might not want to know and that is up to the Board at this point, but on how they are addressing these deficiencies? He doesn't need the answers tonight, he is just putting it out on the table, and to receive an answer.

Fire Chief Young said he just told him that he was going to wait and do the addition for some of the upgrades and would do it all at once, but he just said they will probably do some ahead of time. They have already put a shower in. They have a shower over there. Selectman Dann said it is not too big. Selectman Young said, how much room do you need? Fire Chief Young said the whole idea, and he thinks everybody in this town knows that he is going to put an addition on the building, that his whole idea with the Police Station and the Fire Station and everything was to get the Police Station built, was to get it paid for and then add on to it. It was going to be able to be designed to be added on to. The taxpayers are not going to build a safety complex, he guarantees them that, unless they can get a grant to pay for most of it. For them to put a little bit of money in that building over there to make it last another 20 years or however long the note for the Police Station is. It's not wasted money because they are improving the building, and the Town still owns the building, and it will be worth that much more when it is turned over to something or used for something else someday. He told Selectman Dann he will work on this and he does not know what else to tell him and that he doesn't need to lose any sleep at night about this. They are going to work on this. He is trying. He had thought in his own mind that he wouldn't do this stuff, that he couldn't use the money out of the Capital Reserve Fund, but he can. A light went off in his head and he said, heck I can start using that now. In fact they did use some of that money, because there wasn't enough money in the Operating Budget to support what they spent on fracking the well and had a new pump put in there. He just didn't have that kind of money,

so that is one right there, that they spent to improve. Selectman Dann said that is what he is just asking. You have certain things that are done already, and what are your plans for the rest of it at that point. Fire Chief Young said, Russ you have my phone number, so just call me. You don't have to do it like this. Just give me a call and I'll meet you anytime and I can tell you what we're doing. That's all you've got to do, or if you have questions about the Fire Department ask my liaison the questions and then he will talk to me. You are welcome to talk to me anytime. Selectman Dann said he has been through there, and that is what he saying that he has been looking at some other Fire Stations also and have talked to them about the cancer situation and all of that just lights up and that they won't take the chance because it's liability. That is where the Town should be in a more cost involvement of liability, and we don't even have a building at that point. Fire Chief Young said he appreciates his concern. Selectman Dann said this has been presented to the Board and this is why it should be talked about at this Board. Fire Chief Young said, okay. Selectman Moran said it's a major adjustment of changing times with the ambulance service there now, you actually have people occupying the building. Fire Chief Young said, and that is why they run out of water. Selectman Moran said it's just catching up to the times now, that's all, but it can't happen tomorrow.

East Candia Depot Sign: Selectmen Chivers reported they replaced the sign at the East Candia Train Depot. Bill Holbrook owner of Bilsign Company, was recognized for the good work on the new sign. Recognition was given to Severino Trucking for providing the equipment and to Zack Osborn for welding the nuts on to the bolts supporting the new East Candia Depot Sign.

Paving: Selectmen Chivers said Continental Paving has just paved Depot Road and it looks good and commented on how they did very nice work.

Public Input: None noted.

Calendar:

- The next Board of Selectman Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12th, 2024 @ 6:30pm

7:36 pm - Selectman Chivers made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Dann. All in favor. Motion carried by a vote of (5-0-0).

Linda Chandonnet
Recording Secretary