

**TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE**

CARL P. FORTUNA JR., FIRST SELECTMAN

SCOTT M. GIEGERICH, SELECTMAN

MATTHEW PUGLIESE, SELECTMAN

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Direct link to the recording: <https://youtu.be/u6-Sk4GocXE>

It is also included in the following playlists:

Board of Selectmen Meetings:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKX0JMf1KPp9SQAHOQUQCR3yLtNYxKOWK>

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – All members present.
- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Recited
- III. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** – Officer Ryan Walsh gave an update on where the police officers stand with choosing a new union. He feels the last decade the union has had bad relations with the town and is hoping for better with the new union. They want to focus more on the workers. He stated that if an Old Saybrook Police Department (OSPD) study is conducted to really focus on attraction and retention of officers. A vote should take place in early November. Chief Spera read a statement (for several minutes) critical of any proposed executive session and study. He believes he has performed at a very high standard in difficult times. He believes the study would be reckless and is retaliation against him and the officers of the department because of the “poor compensation, substandard employee benefits and insufficient post-employment benefits.” He believes the solicitation of the vendors was not transparent and cited conversation and one meeting that took place. He stated that his presentation in July followed a process and is concerned that this proposed study does not. He then proceeded to defend the employee turnover issues in the department that have been highlighted in March 2021 and more recently by stating that it is due to the high standards that he demands more than anything else. He stated that the OSPD is an employee-centric workplace that values input from its members. He believes a consultant is being sought to prove a false narrative that Old Saybrook is unique with its issues rather than addressing the staffing issue directly. He does not feel that the officers that have left should have input at all over current members and cited departed town and education department employees. He feels that this approach encourages the wrong supervisor/employee relationship and encourages poor employee work standards. He stated that he believes the purpose of the proposal is to seek a leadership change, but stated the staffing issue will continue and reiterated that his “contract” can be bought out. He does not believe the Executive Session (ES) is appropriate because the 3 proposals are public documents, and that the ES may involve an employee of the town. He asked the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to pause and form a committee to meet, define a scope and do an RFP, which he feels has always been the best way to go about selecting a vendor. Carol Manning stated she was in favor of the study because negotiations are here, the chief has made large financial proposals and that a study may reveal more facts helpful to negotiations and will be best for the department and the

town. Chairman Wilcox stated the police commission recommended substantial pay and benefit proposals and understands why the BOS may want to perform its due diligence. Getting help on how to do attract and retain officers would be a good thing. Jill Notar-Francesco was pleased that this is moving along and believes the study will help us get a bang for the buck and prefers the PERF proposal as being the most objective and complete. She believes a study will be important guidance and information gathering. She stated it is important to be respectful to the officers in the department. On line, Eric Forsey went on about how he believes no one holds the Chief accountable, he raised lawsuits and other incidents, including an ICE arrest, talked about officers going to other departments for less money, believes exit interviews and ex-officers' opinions do matter, and that the study should be done. Mr. Forsey was then muted.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE FIRST SELECTMAN Mr. Fortuna stated that he believes he and the Chief mostly agree on day to day matters but disagree on whether a study should be done. He cited the turnover report from March, 2021, when there was no officer shortage, which was requested due to turnover in the department for the decade before that, and then cited that 12 or so officers had left the department from July 1, 2022 to August, 2023. He feels that losing nearly half the authorized staff in one year requires a closer look and that he would not be doing his job if something was not done. In addition, the request by the chief for substantial pay raises, increased pension, post-retirement health benefits and other enhancement, requires due diligence by the town to make certain that any investments made in the force (that could total 7 figures easily) will in fact solve the attraction/retention issues that are apparent. Mr. Fortuna stated that the town just hired a consultant to study town operations without an RFP using the charter provision that allows consultant selection. He also justified the executive session under Section 1-200 (6) (E) which refers to subsection (b) of section 1-210 (b)(24) for further reasons under said subsection 6. He referenced the two previous RFP's that have failed for an OSPD study. Mr. Fortuna also believes that this study is more of a human relations study and can be done by any of the consultants: we are not studying the management of the department, how many officers is the right number, etc: this is more focused on how we better attract candidates and keep them as it relates to the chief's July 13 request. Mr. Fortuna then changed the subject to recognize a few folks who were waiting in the audience: He recognized Lynette Wacker and her effort, with Sarah Makowicki, in getting the town to a Sustainable CT Silver Certification. Lynette stated that she felt the town had done a lot of good things towards sustainability and it was about gathering information from the various departments. A hearty round of applause was given for this achievement. Mr. Fortuna then recognized Larry Bonin, who retires October 25 with a statement (included). Mr. Bonin was given a round of applause. Mr. Fortuna then mentioned how proud he is to have a Blue Star Memorial across the street near the Main Street Connection Park.

V. COMMENTS FROM THE SELECTMEN – Mr. Giegerich talked about monument way and how he hopes to have that undertaken in the next two weeks. Mr. Pugliese stated that he enjoyed representing the BOS at the Blue Star presentation and was impressed with the turnout and how much we celebrate our armed forces. He also mentioned that he would like to see some coordination with the Board of Education,

particularly Julie Pendleton on the facilities front, as well as the financial front with all the retirements. Mr. Fortuna said we are looking at this.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Board of Selectmen Meeting September 26, 2023

A MOTION was made to approve the September 26, 2023 minutes.

FORTUNA/GIEGERICH

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

VII. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

A. Call of Annual Town Meeting - Mr. Fortuna reviewed the items on the agenda. He believes that the ARPA recommendations that may yet come at the meeting today will not be able to be on this agenda because the Finance Board does not meet again until November 21 and there will not be time to advertise the call. *A MOTION was made to approve the Call of Annual Town Meeting.*

FORTUNA/PUGLIESE

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

B. Encroachment Permit Bond Release: 11 Fenwick Street. *A MOTION was made to approve the Encroachment Bond release.*

FORTUNA/GIEGERICH

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

C. Sustainable Saybrook Silver Certification – Recognized.

D. Larry Bonin Retirement - Recognized.

E. Appointments

1. Public Health Nursing Board. Regular member vacancy. Elevation alternate member Mary Briscoe. This appointment is for the unexpired portion of a 3-year term due to end 11/2024. *A MOTION was made to approve the elevation appointment.*

FORTUNA/GIEGERICH

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

VIII. Executive Session to discuss: Consultant proposals to perform an organizational climate study for the Old Saybrook Department of Police Services. *A MOTION*

was made to approve moving to Executive Session at 4:58 p.m.

FORTUNA/GIEGERICH

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

IX. (At 5:21 p.m.) Discussion and possible action on recommending to the Police Commission the hiring of a consultant to perform an organizational climate study for the Old Saybrook Department of Police Services. Moved that CLA-Connect be recommended to the Police Commission to perform a study as outlined in their proposal. *A MOTION was made by Mr. Giegerich, seconded by Mr. Pugliese.* Mr. Pugliese stated that he supports organized labor and that he said to the chief last year that improving pay and benefits and that it is important as we head in to negotiations that this information will be useful; that it is not retaliatory, that consultants frequently useful for boards and he supports the proposal.

GIEGERICH/PUGLIESE

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

X. BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING WITH ARPA ADHOC COMMITTEE

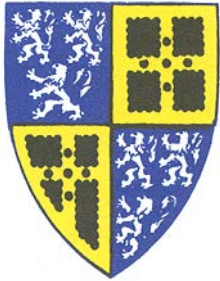
Direct link to the recording: <https://youtu.be/3Q6lYLEIhf0>

XI. ADJOURNMENT - A MOTION was made to adjourn at 6:07 p.m.
FORTUNA/GIEGERICH
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl P. Fortuna Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carl P. Fortuna Jr.
First Selectman



**Town of Old Saybrook
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Old Saybrook, CT 06475**

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PRESS RELEASE

October 19, 2023

Old Saybrook public works director Lawrence “Larry” Bonin will retire effective October 25th, 2023, after nearly 25 years with the Town of Old Saybrook.

Mr. Bonin performed exemplary service to the town during all seasons. It was never too hot, and never too cold. Larry Bonin was the guy with a shovel in his hand and led his crew by example. He was diligent about “getting to the blacktop” in the worst of snowstorms and always worked closely with the Education Department to make certain our kids got where they needed to. He is a construction specialist and a concrete artist, bar none. While Larry was out most of the past year on a personal matter, he continued to work in our community making improvements for his clients. Larry Bonin was frequently willing to share his opinion, never sugar coated. He was a leader amongst men and will be missed.

The Town of Old Saybrook wishes to thank Larry Bonin for giving most of his adult life to the town in which he lives. We also know that, as a friend of the town, we can always call on Larry when we need his expertise. Best wishes to Larry and his family on this happy occasion.

Carl P. Fortuna Jr.
First Selectman