

**Regular Meeting of Flood & Erosion Control Board**  
**Tuesday January 21, 2020, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Sullivan Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**

**Minutes**

**Attendees:** B. Bunnell, R. Dmochowski, D. Lamberty, L. Pulie, P. Wiswell, Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey

Meeting started at 7:00pm.

**ITEM 1: Approval of 12/18/19 DRAFT Minutes**

- D. Lamberty suggested to adjust the language in item 4 regarding the Resiliency Fund, because Fairfield doesn't yet have a Resiliency Fund. The item will be changed to read: "A potential plan for a Fairfield Resiliency Fund would cover the coastline and the Rooster River". *R. Dmochowski made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. D. Lamberty seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.*

**ITEM 2: Conversation with Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey on the Connecticut Coastal Caucus**

- B. Bunnell thanked Rep. McCarthy-Vahey for attending the meeting. It was explained to her that this board has a master project list. The board is a group of 5 and plans on asking to add 3 more members to the board. There are over 3000 houses and commercial properties in a flood zone in Fairfield. Over 15% of residents are at high risk for flooding. Because many of these property locations, if they were to decrease in value, it would effect the town's tax Grand List significantly. The rest of the town would need to make up for the loss. Category 3 surge and Sea Level rise has spread to south of I-95 with the exception of Sasco Hill. ACOE came and did a master plan and determined it would cost \$546 million of which Fairfield would have to pay one third. The board is looking to build a series of hard structures to protect the properties but CT DEEP will likely not allow it. The state is looking far ahead to the erosion of the shoreline and the board is looking to do something now. B. Bunnell said she is hoping the Coastal Caucus will help them and other towns at risk to work with CT DEEP to do something now. Other coastal towns have rocky shores which helps with blocking water, Fairfield does not. D. Lamberty handed out an article on research for a sea wall in NY. DEEP wants a living shoreline. There was a lengthy discussion about tide levels, hurricanes and the FBR/Pine Creek bulk head elevations that DEEP will permit, which are lower now than before creating flooding when tides are higher than normal. Studies and plans for some locations were shown and explained to Rep. McCarthy-Vahey. Fairfield FECB is working with the town DPW to replicate our Master/ACOE plan. There are several

parts....Riverside Drive tide gate...protection to 12 ft with provisions for sea level rise...pump station at Jennings Beach to drain out the flood waters in a day or two instead of a week. It will cost money and if the town supports it, money could be designated through a town Resiliency Fund. It could be supported by a percentage of Real Estate tax and/or a flood and storm water tax. It could go toward those flood risk areas including the Rooster River. The bigger projects would be funded through the Capital Funds and grants. Grants have to be approved by several boards and can take time for approval the Resiliency Fund could make that process faster. R. Dmochowski said that the State statute established FECB if it's adopted by the local government. Our town charter says in accordance with the state statute 25-84, the state in 25-85 through 25-94 says the FECB can have certain rights and duties, but our town charter has to give the board the right to enforce those state statutes. Rep. McCarthy-Fahey said her office might be able to help with the statutes and how to read them. She also suggested the FECB invite people who would be involved in the Resiliency Fund to the meetings. This could open different ideas and discussions. She also said that as a representative, she hears from people in the town and they don't want to use their tax money to rebuild homes in the flood zones or rescue residents who refuse to evacuate. She also said some people's perspectives changed after the Rooster River flooded. B. Bunnell asked Rep. McCarthy-Vahey if the Coastal Caucus could work with the towns and CT DEEP to help protect the flood zones or re-write regulations. She stated that the board needs to have an open discussion and negotiation with CT DEEP and invite them to meetings as well have members of the board go to Hartford with the Environmental Committee with Co-Chair, Sen. Cohen. She also said the CT Coastal Caucus is to make people aware of issues and provide education.

**ITEM 3: Update and discussion of all Activity Summary items**

- L. Pulie handed out the preliminary schedule for the Wastewater Hardening Project. Notice of award went out in November, contract signed January 8, pre-construction meeting was a couple of weeks ago, will start mobilizing at the end of the month and it will be complete in August. R. Dmochowski asked to be notified of meetings.
- Penfield Pavilion FEMA reimbursement: Appeal 1 was denied. Appeal 2 has not been decided yet. The issue is regarding the elevation of the grade beam.
- 1350 Fairfield Beach Road: check valve will be put in behind the catch basin. It will be done in February/March.
- Rooster River watershed recommendations on detention:\$320K to take the design on 6 areas to the next step was approved by the BOS. Now it needs to go to both the BOF and RTM for approval. The full report is on the FECB webpage.

**ITEM 4: Discussion of future funding mechanisms for Fairfield Resiliency Measures; Annual and Long Term**

Will be presented at the next meeting.

**ITEM 5: Discussion on adding members to the FECB**

Will be presented at the next meeting.

**ITEM 6: New business as may properly come before the board**

- Public work sessions through the town POCD. There are 3 sessions scheduled late January and early February. B. Bunnell encouraged sign up.
- Budget line item request in the DPW operating budget. Budget process started already and budgets are being reviewed. B. Bunnell will speak with Brian Carey, interim DPW Director. R. Dmochowski suggested requesting a line item for \$60K for minor studies for potential flood control projects. B. Bunnell suggested adding a second line item for \$2K for communication and outreach. R. Dmochowski motioned to have B. Bunnell go to Brian Carey and request the 2 line items for FEC; \$60K for minor studies and \$2K for communication and outreach, as part of the town DPW operating budget. D. Lamberty seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.
- R. Dmochowski handed out possible changes to request to the Town Charter; whether to continue as a FECB or a Resiliency Board, how many members and from what town departments to add members. B. Bunnell said that will be discussed at the next meeting.

**ITEM 7: Adjourn**

- Meeting adjourned at 9:21pm.