

Approved Minutes
MAIDSTONE SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING

Monday, January 29, 2024

7:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting, both in person at Town Hall and by Zoom Video Conference

Members Present in Town Hall (in-person): Scott Lovell, Chair; Brad McVetty; Bruno McKenzie

Staff Present in Town Hall (in-person): Selectboard Administrative Assistant Mary von Alt

Town Officials and Staff Present via Zoom: Town Clerk and Lister Amy Pear; Treasurer, Delinquent Tax Collector, Lister, Zoning Board and Planning Commission member Bob Champagne-Willis; Zoning Board and Planning Commission Chair Chris von Alt; Zoning Board and Planning Commission Member Bruce Barker; Lister, Auditor, and Health Officer Sandra Gray

Also Present via Zoom: Lin Mixer, Andy Champagne-Willis, Burt and Carol Kline, Sam and Carol Gorham; Suzy Irwin; Jan Barker

Chairman Scott Lovell called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Brad pointed out that the spelling of "Peaslee" was incorrect in the January 8, 2024 Selectboard meeting minutes as well as on the Town website. Mary will correct that. Bruno made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 8, 2024 meeting with that correction; Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Bruno made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 15, 2024 Selectboard meeting; Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

DISCUSS AND SET THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2024:

Bob Champagne-Willis began the discussion by saying that there were only a few lines on the 2024 Budget Worksheet that needed completion, as most of the line items in the proposed budget had been decided upon at previous Selectboard meetings. He then reported that the Town Auditors had decided on a total of \$3,800 for the Selectboard 2024 compensation, \$1,200 for each member of the Selectboard with an additional \$200 for the Chair. Next he provided the information for the Unemployment Taxes (\$350) and the Employment Taxes (\$4,600). He then reported that the North Stratford Fire Department had phoned to say that they would be sending a contract that would remain at the level of \$3,000. The County has not yet finalized its budget as the meeting to do so is not scheduled until later this week, but Maidstone has been given a range for the anticipated amount due, with a low of \$32,936.77 and a high of \$33,955.46. Bob, who attended the initial meeting, believes that the County will probably decide to stick to the lower end of that range, but that decision has not yet been made. The Selectboard decided to use the number at the high end of the range, rounding to the nearest dollar, for the 2024 Maidstone Proposed Budget, as was done last year.

With the Budget Worksheet completed, Bob declared that the grand total for the proposed 2024 Budget was \$311,430 with all appropriations included, and \$281,430 without the appropriations included. He said that the total of the proposed 2024 Budget, including the appropriations, is less than \$1,000 more than the 2023 Budget including the appropriations; without the appropriations, the proposed 2024 Budget is \$1,300 less than the 2023 Budget minus the appropriations. Mary verified with Bob that Article 7 should read: "Shall the Town vote to raise \$ 281,430 to pay current expenses as requested in the proposed 2024 Budget plus the amounts raised in Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6?" Bruno asked if the website maintenance charges were included for GreenLight Websites, the company that designed and will maintain the new Town website. Bob assured him that they were and specified where. Bruno then made a motion to accept the 2024 Town Budget; Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE 2024 TOWN WARNING:

Bob explained that he had learned in his recent VLCT training that the new wording in Article 1 was the type of language needed. In response to Scott's question, Bob said that in the past, the article about authorizing payment of property taxes just stated the due dates without referring to the two installments for payment of property taxes that voters approved in 2019; we also did not include the time of day by which the payments

must be received. In 2024, Town Hall is not scheduled to be open on the due dates, but Bob will be at Town Hall to receive tax payments; he will keep Town Hall open for the usual hours, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, on those dates. Bruno asked if it were mandatory to pay in two installments; Bob said it is not; some people do pay the entire amount in the first installment.

The rest of the Articles on the Town Warning have been approved in the 2024 Budget, specifically the \$20,00 for the Town Road Rebuild Account; the \$2,000 for Maidstone Lake Association for the Aquatic Nuisance Prevention Program at Maidstone Lake; the \$3,000 for the Reappraisal and Maintenance of the Grand List Fund; the \$1,000 for the Cemetery Fund; and the \$4,000 to set aside for the biannual purchase of Maidstone Trash Bags. Article 7 is for the money approved to pay current expenses as well as the money approved in the previous Articles. There is no need to include an article setting the date for the next year's Town Meeting as has been done in the past, unless the Town wishes to hold that meeting on a day other than the day set by Vermont Statute; Bob learned this in his VLCT training.

Brad made a motion to accept the annual 2024 Town Meeting Warning as printed; Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

According to an email received by the Town Clerk, Essex County Sheriff Trevor Colby would like to attend the Selectboard meeting on Monday, February 5, 2024 to discuss an addendum that is needed to the Town's contract in order to meet statutory requirements. Brad will contact Sheriff Colby to verify that he will be attending the meeting.

A discussion and action about the need to appoint a Town Moderator before the Town Meeting in March must be added to the February 5 Selectboard meeting agenda.

Scott said that Corey Parent would like to attend a Selectboard meeting to address the Twin States Clean Energy Link proposed project and answer any questions the Selectboard might have. The consensus was to wait until after the proposed March 11, 2024 meeting with the area Selectboards. The topic of that proposed meeting with the Selectboards of the towns that will be directly impacted by the construction of the proposed Energy Link will be addressed at the Selectboard meeting on February 5, 2024.

ADJOURN:

The business of the meeting concluded, Brad made a motion to adjourn; Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary von Alt