

Minutes

MAIDSTONE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Monday, October 7, 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, Bruno McKenzie, Brad McVetty and John Kascenska

Town Officials and Staff Present via Zoom: Town Clerk Amy Pear; Treasurer, Delinquent Tax Collector, Lister, Zoning Board and Planning Commission member Bob Champagne-Willis; Assistant Town Clerk Sam Graham; Lister, Auditor and Health Officer Sandra Gray

Also Present via Zoom: Susan Irwin, Mary Von Alt, Linwood Mixer, Sam and Carol Gorham, Laurie Snowman, Bonnie Lovell, Jan Barker and Burt Kline.

Chairman Scott Lovell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

APPROVE MINUTES

Bruno made a motion to accept the September 9, 2024, Selectboard Meeting Minutes. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

SELECTBOARD:

- John Kascenska, State Representative, encourages people to vote on election day. John discussed the budgets that were submitted with some of the hospital budget reductions which could be difficult for services provided and wanted to give people a heads up on that. He stated it's a process to get the budget done and had to cut back significantly.
- **Discuss and act upon Selectboard Assistant or other alternatives** – Still no interest. Amy discussed the AI transcription on zoom and asked about it in her training. Most are not using it for minutes but the lawyers did state that they would not hold for minutes.

REPORT FROM THE ROAD COMMISSIONER

The Grants in Aid gravel and ditch work has been completed on the North Road and Tamarack Lane. The Lake Road Class 2 Gravel Grant needs to be done December 31, 2024. The Westside Lake Road box culvert is not going to be installed. Waiting to see if there will be an extension on the grant before it's done and we haven't heard back from Logan to see if there will be. Also getting ready for the winter season. Brad may be leaving for 2 months but everything is all covered while he is gone if he leaves.

REPORT FROM TOWN CLERK

Update about activities of the Town Clerk's Office

- Update about activities of the Town Clerk's Office – It's a busy time for the Town Office. Amy tried to follow up on the traffic study with Doug Morton but hasn't heard back from him and the study is not on their site yet.

- The MERP Grant was put in prior to the deadline for \$106,100 which includes minor insulating, spray foam, sealing windows and doors, solar and battery back up system, furnace replacement, replacing baseboard and other energy efficient repairs. The Town can be approved for all of the grant to none of it. We were originally rejected for this grant but Amy did a lot of work with the legislation to be considered.
- Amy received an email from Trevor Colby from the Essex County Sheriff's Department on a signed contract. It is on the signing desk with a place to put the amount on it and to be signed.
- We are in full swing for elections and encourages everyone to be sure they received it and to flip it over for the Justice of the Peace candidates. We had 11 ballots returned from the Post Office. Some of which that lived in town and addresses needed to be updates. Amy is asking everyone to go on My Voters Page at mvp.vermont.gov to verify your address is correct. The Town only can confirm that people are a resident not the mailing address.
- We are now being issued Narcan to be made available to Town Officials. There's mail that is going around with fentanyl in them so be aware.
- The election security CISA is doing an assessment for our workstations as a safety perspective. This is to ensure the office is safe in the event we had a disgruntled person during election or tax season.
- Amy questioned on when the septic system was pumped last and thought it needed to be done. It has been since the new system was put in around 2008. Amy will call Rexford to schedule that and use the town hall maintenance fund.
- Amy reached out to Fidium because the internet is horrible. Since we are a business account, we would have to increase the Town's monthly cost. Amy will write something up and submit it at next meeting for Selectboard to consider the fiber internet. Amy will contact Lufkin's Security to inquire about some issues that may need to be addressed.

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

- **Budget to Actual** – Things are progressing as normal, reaching the end of the calendar year. Some line items are close to being exhausted but nothing extraordinary so we are in line with expenses. Pumping the septic will put us over a few hundred dollars but it needs to be done. Nothing to report that needs to be addressed.
- **Selectboard Warrant** – Warrant is on the signing desk to be signed.
- On August 29th tax bills were mailed out to 110 people with the 05905 address. They were separated from other bills so they would be distributed directly. Approximately 250 other envelopes were put on a truck and to our knowledge have never been seen from since. It is a mystery but we can determine they are lost in the mail. Bob reached out to Legislative Office to report this. Amy reached out to the local postmaster and basically a case was opened and closed. This past month the Town has communicated by phone and email to those who don't receive their mail in 05905 area to get them their tax bill. The question of why they didn't remail the lost tax bills out and Bob stated he did everything he was required to do by law. There was only 1 response that was very negative but not related to this matter. On October 16th unpaid tax bills are subject to interest charges. This was voted in by registered voters and when the voters act, there is nothing we can do to counter this without having a Special Town Meeting so late notices will go out on the 16th of October. People tend to be paying the 1st installment versus the whole tax bill. The homestead tax bills are less than last year while the non-homestead is higher. The situation with interest, there is anticipation that there will be a lot of disgruntled people on this issue. We do have record of how we've tried reaching out. The postal service lost 250 something pieces of mail so it's not a fault of the Town. It's a long process to have a Special Town Meeting to counter the

interest charges and cannot be done before the 16th with the posting guidelines and the election coming up. Amy will have the timeline for the next sb meeting on having a special town meeting.

REPORT OF THE DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR

We continue to make good progress on our tax bills and as of today, we have reduced the delinquent taxes to just over \$12,000. The delinquent tax report will change dramatically on October 16th and one taxpayer that is potentially going to be on a tax sale in April 2025.

REPORT FROM LISTERS

Nothing to report from Listers

OLD BUSINESS

- **Discuss and act upon maintenance and paying from ARPA funds** – Dennis Bacon is doing maintenance to the town hall and should be paid from the ARPA funds. By the end of the year, we need to have allocated the ARPA funds which means we are under a contract or agreement for certain things to be done or we can sign a document that will transfer funds to the General Fund. If it goes to the General Fund, the Town Voters vote on how the funds are used instead of the Selectboard. There is \$23,500 left in ARPA that needs to be expended or allocated by year end. Bruno motioned to pay Dennis Bacon from the ARPA Funds. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Amy requested a new desk be taken out of the ARPA funds if there is money left after flooring.
- **Discuss and act upon flooring** – Bruno spoke to Pete Gray along with Amy. There was discussion on 2 different options. Pete will provide quotes on both options. Amy requested that the floor stay as level as possible by the vault. According to the purchasing policy, we can post it in the paper or send out specifications to 3 to 5 chosen companies. The Selectboard will provide specifications and submit to companies they choose.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Approval to Service for the vault. (Incidental Purchase)** – The combination lock on the vault has not been serviced since 2008 so it's come up that they should be serviced on a regular basis. There is concern that the tumblers can shift. Amy called around and \$2500 was the quote she received from the only person that was willing to do it. Amy did receive one more person that will be submitting a quote and expects it to be under \$800. Amy believes paying \$2500 is extremely high but also doesn't know what it would cost if we were locked out of our vault. She will submit quotes at the next Selectboard meeting.
- **Discuss and act upon contract to sign for Trevor Colby (Essex County Sheriff's Dept)** – We've historically budgeted up to \$5,000 a year. Brad motioned to pay the Essex County Sheriff's Department up to the amount of \$5,000. Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS –

Bob thanked the Town for sending Amy, Sam and himself to the training sessions in September and October. The information was amazing and still digesting all the workshops. One of the areas of concerns that the town needs to be more proactive is safe management. They received a lot of information and have been lucky up to this point but believes we should be more proactive in an emergency situation such as flooding. We have residents that only have one access road and would be an issue. With the recent flooding in very close surrounding towns, Bob suggests that we come up with some type of plan for emergency situations. John Kascenska added some discussion with the flooding situations and what a town should think about for immediate response, short term response and long term response and thinks it's a good idea to start thinking about what needs to be done in case of flooding or other emergency and natural disaster situations. There was some discussion on flood insurance and needing to make sure the map was updated. Amy will follow up on that for the next Selectboard Meeting.

Bob wanted to point out that the next meeting is November 4th which is the day before the election so just letting people know it will be busy and crazy.

ADJOURN: The business of the meeting concluded. Brad made a motion to adjourn the meeting for October 7, 2024; Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 pm.