**REV:0**

**SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Date: December 15, 2020 Time:6:00PM Place: Remote Only,**

**Zoom and You Tube Channel**

Select Board Members Present: Jan Gaudio, Walter Reitz and John Spear

Others: Town Administrator Casas, Library Director Pennie Alley, Fire Chief Bryan Calderwood, Ambulance Director Amy Drinkwater, David Elwell, Susan Stetz, Sarah Bullitt, Julia Obrien, Sondra Wallace, Wes Pratt and Theo Pratt

Note: A listing as present does not denote attendance for the entire meeting.

Note: This meeting, which was conducted remotely, was plagued with technical problems. Spear and Gaudio lost ZOOM connections twice. After the 1st episode Spear and Gaudio reconnected after approximately 10 minutes and the meeting resumed. After the 2nd episode reconnection was not established. Consequently Casas, as Town Clerk, announced that the meeting would recess until 9:00 AM, December 16, 2020. Additionally, Reitz experienced an unstable connection for most of the portion of the meeting held on December 15, 2020.

1. **Call to Order**

As Chair Reitz was having technical difficulties with ZOOM Spear called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

1. **Adjustments to Agenda**

Without objection the following adjustments were made to the agenda:

* Add as VII, k, Consideration of 2020 audit engagement letter
* Add as VII, i, Consideration of granting a grace period for expiring demo debris facility stickers
* Add Consideration of an Executive session to discuss a personnel matter after XI prior to adjournment

Note: Reitz assumed the duty of chairing the meeting.

Upon inquiry from Spear, Reitz stated the Demo Debris Facility Manager Grierson had yet to recommend a performance bonus.

1. **Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda**

There was no public comment for items not on the agenda.

1. **Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

No action was taken as there were no draft minutes available.

1. **Treasurers Report/ Financials**

Casas provided an overview of the town’s financial position as of December 10, 2020 stating that in general the town’s revenues and expenses to date were relatively close to budget. He did note that ambulance revenues continued to significantly deviate from budget due to reduced call outs resulting from the pandemic. There were several questions from Board members regarding particular line items.

1. **Department Heads/ Committee Members-**

* Pennie Alley- Library and Cemetery

Alley reported that:

* the library had been experiencing circuit break problems that she thought had been solved and that the building still had heat.
* due to the Covid 19 surge many libraries in the State were instituting curbside pick only, but the South Thomaston’s library was still open by appointment and she was closely monitoring the situation.
* conducting exercise class by ZOOM was going well.

1. **New Business:** 
   1. **Conservation Commission**

No action was taken on this item. Board members indicated their continued intent to put the question, in the form of an Ordinance, regarding whether or not to create a Conservation Commission to the annual town meeting in June of 2021. The matter was on the agenda as it recently come to light that the Town had created a Conservation Commission in 1974, but it has been inactive for approximately 40 years. An opinion provided by MMA Attorney Breanna Gersen, dated December 8, 2020, indicated that the “cleanest” way forward would be for town meeting to vote to establish or re-establish a Conservation Commission.

* 1. **Consideration of Town Point of Contact for Maine Aquaculture Hub**

An email invitation from Heather Sandusky from the Maine Aquaculture Hub, Maine Sea Grant, University of Maine to join a ZOOM meeting on June 16, 2020 was reviewed. No Board member volunteered to attend, but it was agreed to think about who could serve as a contact point in the future. Casas stated he would reach out to some folks in the fishing community who might be interested.

* 1. **Update on** **Access to Areas within Town Office, Key Custody**

A lengthy discussion regarding access to areas/rooms within the Town Office and key custody procedures transpired. As the basement kitchen houses the water service entrance, pressure tank and other plumbing fixtures it was deemed important that the fire and ambulance departments have a key to that room and that other staff who are frequently in the building know where a key is located. Casas will look into updating the Town’s key distribution process/records for all town keys.

Additionally, Casas will contact Haskell’s to investigate the water pressure concern raised by Chief Calderwood a few weeks ago.

* 1. **Review and Guidance from LWCF Grant Approval**

No action was taken on this item as Casas noted that a ZOOM meeting with Doug Beck from the State Office the Land and Water Conservation Fund and others was scheduled for December 17, 2020 at 10:00 AM.

* 1. **Discussion on “Carry Forward” Options for Specific Items, Funded in the 2020 Budget and Binding in Nature, to be Held for Expenses in 2021.**
* **Island Rd. Project**

***Spear moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to carry forward as an assigned fund balance the balance remaining as of December 31, 2020 of the $91,000 approved at the 2020 annual town meeting for the Island Road project. Motion passed 3-0.***

* **Tennis and Basketball Courts Improvements**

***Spear moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to carry forward as an assigned fund balance the $10,000 approved at the 2020 annual town meeting for tennis and basketball resurfacing. Motion passed 3-0.***

Note: As Reitz’s ZOOM connection was unstable Spear again assumed the duty of Chairing the meeting.

* 1. **Discussion and Review of Timelines**
* **Financial Year Change and 18-Month Transitional Budget**

A draft revised timeline, dated 12/6/20 and labeled Rev 1, for implementing the Town’s change to a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year, having taxes due in two equal installments on April 1 and October 1 and holding the annual town meeting in June was reviewed. No changes to the draft were suggested. A few key milestones depicted on the timeline over the next 4 months include:

* February: Department Heads, Town Administrator and Selectboard initiate development of proposed 18 month transitional budget.
* Late March: Selectboard finalizes proposed18 month transitional budget.
* Early April: Budget Committee reviews proposed18 month transitional budget.
* **Budgetary Process and Department Head Guidance**

No action was taken regarding this item

* 1. **Review and Discussion of Personnel Policy**
* **Approval of Language Related to Dental Policy**

Proposed changes to amend Article XII, i, of the Town’s personnel policy which would have the town pay 80% of dental insurance for eligible employees were discussed. Spear, who drafted the proposed amendment, pointed out that the language purposely only applied to the employee, and not to family members of employees even when the employee has 5 or more years of service; as is currently the case with the health insurance plan. He stated this had been the intent of his motion when he made it at the previous meeting. Reitz and Gaudio were in agreement that the 80% town contribution was only for the employee and not family members.

Discussion of this matter spilled into a general discussion of the personnel policy and the new employee leave law which were subsequent agenda items. Questions arose regarding which version of the Town’s Personnel Policy was the most current and if the policy needed other amendments including the new leave law.

Note: At this point in time Spear and Gaudio both lost their ZOOM connections. The meeting resumed approximately ten minutes later when Spear and Gaudio were able to reconnect. As the connections seemed unstable it was suggested items not time sensitive be tabled.

***Gaudio moved and Reitz seconded a motion to amend Article X11, i, of the Town’s personnel policy regarding employee dental in accordance with the draft language presented to the meeting. Motion passed 3-0.***

* **General discussion about other proposed changes**

***Reitz moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to table this item. Motion passed 3-0.***

This item was taken off the table at the portion of the meeting held on January 16th.

It was agreed that a general discussion regarding the personnel policy was a complicated matter and should be addressed in a “workshop” meeting dedicated to this purpose.

* 1. **Review of law change related to “Leave Time”**

***Reitz moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to table this item. Motion passed 3-0.***

This item was taken off the table at the portion of the meeting held on January 16th.

Casas stated that TRIO was working on a software update to enable towns to implement tracking required by the new law. Spear stated there was another article regarding this matter on the MMA website. It was noted this law will have budget implications.

* 1. **Update on OHSTT Transfer Station**

***Reitz moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to table this item.*** ***Motion passed 3-0.***

This item was taken off the table at the portion of the meeting held on January 16th.

Reitz reported that he anticipated that on December 17, 2020 the OHSTT Transfer Station Board would authorize a 20-year, $400,000 bond, the amount needed in addition to the $576,000 on hand, to fund the station’s reconstruction project. He stated the original thinking was that each member town would be required to approve the bond, but it has now been determined that the interlocal agreement authorizes the OHSTT Board to borrow up to $400,000. Bond counsel is in the process of confirming the Board’s authority in that regard. The annual debt service for all three towns combined would be approximately $22,000.South Thomaston share based on the sharing formula. He felt all three towns should undertake a plan to better communicate this information.

**Consideration of Granting a Grace Period for Expiring** **Demolition Debris Facility Stickers** (This item was added under Adjustments to the Agenda)

***Spear moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to grant a grace period until January 31, 2021 for Demolition Debris Facility stickers******that are expiring at the end of the year****.*  ***Motion passed 3-0.***

* 1. **Acceptance of Letter of Resignation, Town Administrator**

Reitz highlighted Casas achievements during his tenure as Town Administrator and Gaudio and Spear wished him well in his future endeavors.

***Gaudio moved and Reitz seconded a motion to accept Owen Casas’ letter of resignation. Motion passed 3-0.***

* 1. **Consideration of Audit Engagement Letter** (This item was added under Adjustments to the Agenda)

***Gaudio moved and Reitz seconded a motion to approved audit engagement letter from Maine Municipal Audit Services******. Motion passed 3-0.***

***Gaudio moved and Reitz seconded a motion to authorize Reitz to sign the audit engagement letter. Motion passed 3-0.***

***Reitz moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to table all items under VIII, Old Business. Motion passed 3-0.***

All Old Business items were taken off the table at the portion of the meeting held on January 16th.

1. **Old Business** 
   1. **Review of recommitted taxes to new Tax Collector, Owen Casas**

No action was taken on this item as Casas had determined that the fact that the dollar amounts listed on the Certificate of Recommitment and the Certificate of Settlement were not equal was not an error.

* 1. **Delinquent Personnel Property Taxes**

Casas reported that all delinquent personal property taxes had now been paid with the exception of Maine Coast Seafood for 2015-2019, Russell Montgomery for 2013 and Spruce Head Pizza for 2015. Casas indicated he anticipated Maine Coast Seafood would remit payment forthwith. In response to an inquiry, Casas indicated he would need to check to determine if and when, Russell Montgomery and Spruce Head Pizza had signed for the return receipt letters recently mailed by the Town seeking remittance.

* 1. **Review and Approval of Department Banking Policy**

A draft of this policy was reviewed and it was agreed to increase the purchase limit amount at the discretion of department heads to $500 and to strike the words “Copies of” from the last sentence. Formal approval to be considered at the next meeting.

* 1. **Streetlight Update**

Casas reported there were only a couple of open items under the LED upgrade contract and that he was working on getting a price to fix the lighting at the sand and salt shed.

* 1. **Maintenance Priorities**

Spear stated that it appeared to him that replacing the roof on the dog house entrance to the basement should be added to the list. Reitz stated that he would like to ensure that all appropriate department heads has a chance for input. It was agreed the items would be discussed and prioritized through the budget process.

1. **Department Head Reports**

It was noted that some department head reports, notably a report from the CEO, had not been submitted.

1. **Warrants Review and Approval**

Casas stated that there were warrants that needed to be signed.

1. **Schedule Future Meetings**

Meetings were scheduled for December 28, 2020 at 10:00 AM and February 9 and 23 ,2021 at 6:00 PM. Reitz stated he would schedule a meeting during the first week of February to review proposed Fire, Ambulance and Admin budgets.

**Consideration of Executive Session to Discuss a Personnel Matter** (This item was added under Adjustments to the Agenda)

***Reitz moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to Title 1 MRSA 405, (6), (A), (1). Motion passed 3-0.*** *Entered* ***7:56*** PM.

Note: Approximately 15 minutes into the executive session Spear and Gaudio lost their ZOOM connections for the second time. When reconnection was not realized after approximately 10 minutes Casas, as Town Clerk, announced that the meeting would recess until 9:00 AM, December 16, 2020.

Reitz called the meeting back into order at 9:03 AM on December 16, 2020 and briefly explained the technical problems that led to the previous night’s meeting being recessed until the following morning.

The meeting proceeded by taking up items that had been tabled or otherwise not considered from the previous evening. Once those items were dealt with the Board considered a motion to again enter into executive session.

***Spear moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to Title 1 MRSA 405, (6), (A), (1). Motion passed 3-0. Entered*** 10:32 AM***.*** *E*xited 10:44 AM

1. **Adjourn**

***Spear moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion passed 3-0.***