



Town of South Thomaston, Maine
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Selectboard:
Jan Gaudio
Walter Reitz
John Spear

Selectboard Minutes

Date: January 5, 2021, 6:00PM

Place: Remote Only, Zoom and YouTube Channel

REV:1

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Walter Reitz at 6:00PM. Members present were Walter Reitz, Jan Gaudio, John Spear. Also in attendance were Town Administrator Owen Casas, Pennie Alley, Fire Chief Bryan Calderwood, Fallyn O’Hare, Ralph Demmons, David Elwell, Amy Dyer-Drinkwater.
- II. **Adjustments to Agenda** – Gaudio would like to add ‘Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement’ to Old Business.
- III. **Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda** – No public comment.
- IV. **Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes** – Spear moved and Gaudio seconded a motion to accept the meeting minutes of November 9th's 6PM meeting, November 10th's 9AM and 6PM meeting, and November 24th's 6PM meeting as submitted. Vote approved 3-0.
- V. **Treasurers Report/ Financials- Year-End Close-Out Update** – Town Administrator Casas gives brief update. Revenues came in over projection, expenses on balance were below budget. These are pre-audit numbers. There are still some expenses coming in that will allocate to 2020. Casas says he feels good about the current position the town is in especially considering the year. First audit process meeting is scheduled with Mindy, town auditor, on January 14th.
Spear inquired about the assessors’ account being underspent by \$5,258. Casas says this is because the town has not received a final invoice for the town’s contract with RJD, but the funds will be appropriately allocated. Gaudio then inquired about the monthly Assessors’ report for December. The December Assessor’s report claims that 40+ deeds were processed and 50+ property reviews were conducted throughout the month, which Gaudio feels may be inaccurate and an attempt to pad the numbers for next year’s budget as these numbers are significantly higher than usual. Casas says this is due to a usual end-of-year scramble from the assessors to complete their tasks. Chair Reitz requests that the questions about the assessors’ report be forwarded to town assessor Kevin McCormick to submit a response in writing. Casas will do this.

Spear then inquired about the Town Landing budget. There is \$5,700 left in the budget out of an original \$8000 budget. Casas says this is because of a budgeted project that the town did not get to in 2020. The board briefly discussed different budget figures and plan on continuing budget discussion after obtaining some additional figures at the next selectboard meeting.

VI. Department Heads:

- Fire Chief Calderwood- Fire Pond maintenance

Chief Calderwood took the floor to discuss the fire pond. Fire pond project was in the budget for 2020 but was not completed due to the pond being overfull by the time the expenses were available to start the project. There has also been lack of communication from the company hired to do the work which has caused delays. Calderwood asked what the best motion would be to try to complete the Fire Pond Project in 2021. Reitz asked what has been transferred out of the reserve account. Calderwood guesses around \$600-700 has been taken out of the account for materials or items needed for the project. Spear asks roughly what the total project was, Chief Calderwood says around \$7000, and was all being funded out of the Fire Pond Reserve Account. Spear and Gaudio agree that the Fire Pond Maintenance was approved at the Town Meeting, it would not make sense to send it back to vote as the town has already approved. The board and Chief Calderwood briefly discussed the budget and the best way to forward the funds into the 2021 year. Spear asked who the contractor is, Chief Calderwood said Wilson Landscaping. Calderwood also reached out to Kalloch to get an estimate for the work.

Chief Calderwood also brought up radio communications for the fire department. Right now, it is not possible to use the 2-way radios throughout the town to converse with the fire station. Calderwood talked with the Communications Director for the town and discussed putting in a repeater for the fire department's tactical channel. He then spoke with Radio Communications of Brunswick/Portland to find the out the process to fix this issue. The first step would be to map the town and see what frequencies work and where the antennae for the repeater could be placed. It will be around \$250-\$300 just to do the mapping. The additional antennae would be best placed on another town building, but Chief Calderwood feels the only town building is the Gilford Butler School, which is too close to the fire department to be of any use. Calderwood would like to continue to pursue this in 2021 and factor in the mapping fee to his 2021 budget. Gaudio suggested looking into the airport to see if the town could work with their existing antennae towers. TA Casas also offered to look into opportunities to place the antennae on the town's smart streetlights at his next training session to control the lights.

- Pennie Alley- Library and Cemetery

Pennie began by discussing the Cemetery getting approved for a Maine Old Cemetery Association Preservation Workshop July 30th – August 2nd. They fund this up to a rate of \$1000/day. They will work in the Village Cemetery, and the workshop is offered at no charge to anyone interested in participating.

For the library, Pennie says the Zoom exercise classes are going very well and she would like to continue to use the town's Zoom credentials to facilitate these. She would also like pre-approval to spend up to \$750 from book sale revenue should she need a new circulation desk computer or barcode scanner for the library. Spear made a motion to authorize up to \$750 for the purchase of a computer and/or a barcode scanner with revenue from the book sale fund. Gaudio seconded the motion. Vote approved 3-0.

VII. New Business: NV- No Vote, RV- Requires Vote

- a. Proposed new hire: Fallyn O'Hare, Driver EMS. (RV)

O'Hare briefly introduced herself. She is currently an EMS driver for Thomaston and just finished an EMT course with Ambulance Director Amy Drinkwater and will be pursuing her advanced license, she just needs to test out for her EMT. She currently resides in Rockland and is also an ED (emergency department) technician at the Waldo Hospital and has her CAN license. O'Hare would like to pursue being a flight nurse, and needs more ambulance experience, which she is hoping to obtain through South Thomaston. Gaudio moved and Spear seconded the motion to hire Fallyn O'Hare as a driver. Vote approved 3-0.

- b. Consideration of Pope Memorial "Animal Care Facility Agreement" (RV)

Casas briefed the board on the 3-year contract proposal for Pope Memorial. The town currently does not charge residents a fee when they pick up their dog from the shelter, however some surrounding towns charge a small fee in addition to Pope Memorial's fee. Gaudio moved and Spear seconded a motion to accept the 3-year contract with the Pope Memorial Humane Society. Spear asked what the fee was that Pope charged, to which Owen said he wasn't sure, but believed it was around \$12/day. Gaudio then asked Animal Control Officer Ralph Demmons roughly how many dogs South Thomaston brought to the shelter in the last year. Demmons said a very small amount, he has transported 3 dogs to the shelter since he began as ACO in March of 2020. The board approved a 3-year Animal Care Facility Agreement with Pope Memorial by a vote of 3-0. The board also agreed that it was not worth the time or frustration of charging a small fee to residents, the end goal remains returning pets to their owners.

- c. Consideration of appointments to Ad Hoc Technology Committee (RV)

- Applicant- Clifford Dasco

Clifford was unable to attend the meeting, but TA Casas and the board briefly discussed the status of the Technology Committee. Currently, Dasco is the only (interested) member. Spear made a motion to appoint Clifford Dasco and to continue to recruit members to join him. Gaudio seconded the motion.

Casas asked if there should be a term limit, and Spear said with it being ad-hoc, there was no need for a term limit. The board approved appointing Clifford Dasco to the town's Technology Committee by a vote of 3-0. Spear requests that Owen explain to Dasco that the town is still trying to recruit more people for the committee and his appointment was to continue to keep the ball rolling. Spear also suggests posting an advertisement on the website or perhaps in the library. Casas offers to write up an ad or poster to post around the town and give to Pennie to post at the library.

d. Discussion on budget guidance for Department Heads (NV)

Reitz asked for opinions from the board. The budget will be an 18-month budget this time. Gaudio says what the town has sent out in prior years as guidance should be sufficient as there are really no changes besides the change from a 12-month budget to an 18-month budget. Spear asks to see a memo from last year as he could not recall seeing it. He also requests that department heads speak out for things they need during the upcoming budget process. The board also discussed cost-of-living raises for the town. Reitz said the state starting point for COLA raises are 2%. Per Reitz, last year the town did a 2% COLA increase and another 1% or 1.5% in performance-based raises, of which not every employee is guaranteed. The board discussed opinions on performance raises and the fairness of them. The board also discussed options for department heads to budget future raises. Spear made a motion for the guidance provided to department heads to submit initial budget requests that should include a 2% COLA adjustment and a 1% performance raise for the period of January 1st, 2021 to December 31st, 2021 and an additional 3% for the 6-month period January 1st, 2022 to June 30th, 2022. Gaudio seconds this motion. Vote approved 3-0. The board also discussed having budget committee members act as personal liaisons for larger departments to work on the budget.

e. Discussion on LWCF grant revisions for tennis and basketball courts (NV)

Spear has been working on this. It is believed that 8 or 9 parking spaces will be needed. Spear took some measurements of the court area to work on some sketches and minimum and maximum options. The revised grant application needs to be submitted by February. Goods and services donated will contribute towards our match for the grant. There has been discussion about including lighting costs into the grant as it will be a large financial increase which will make matching more of a challenge. It is possible, if match is not met, to withdraw the light plans to lower the cost estimate. The costs for the lighting, parking construction, and gate need to be factored into the grant. TA Casas mentioned working on donations to meet the match from the town, including in-kind material like landfill or crushed rock. Chair Reitz asked if the lights were absolute necessity, to which TA Casas replied no, but if the grant will cover half the costs, it may be worth trying to include it in the grant. Reitz said taxpayer money should not be used to fund extras like lights, the money should come from fundraising.

VIII. Old Business

a. Delinquent Personal Property Taxes (NV)

There are two delinquent personal properties; Spruce Head Pizza and Hoggy's Store (owned by Russell Montgomery). Maine Coast Seafood taxes are still outstanding, but TA Casas does not recommend pursuing small claims as he is actively working with ME Coast Seafood right now to receive payment. Spear says it may be worth pursuing Maine Coast Seafood as they still have not paid, and Maine Coast Seafood is claiming the tenant needs to pay the bill. TA Casas said he has spoken with the tenant's and they intend to pay within the next week. A certified letter has been mailed to Spruce Head Pizza, but Casas is concerned the statute of limitations is up for Russell Montgomery, so he had not mailed a certified letter to him. Spear believes sending a certified letter to Montgomery is worth it, even if the small claims statute of limitations is up, as the town can still take him to collections. Casas says it has been hard to find an address for Montgomery, but he will work on sending one to his last known address.

b. Review and approval of Department Banking policy (RV)

Spear moves to approve the banking policy presented January 5th written by Gaudio. Reitz seconded the motion. Vote approved 3-0.

c. Streetlight update (NV)

Casas says there is not much to update, he has still been trying to schedule things and will have a better update next time. Casas says the town has saved around \$2000 from the 2020 budgeted amount of \$9000. The town has also not had a CMP streetlight bill as the town has had a credit with Central Maine Power.

d. Maintenance Priorities (NV)

TA Casas says Haskell Well will be coming Thursday. He says he feels like in the last few weeks, there has been more conversation on budget and maintenance priorities with the department heads. Reitz would like to have an exhaust issue Casas had mentioned added to the next meeting agenda.

e. Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement

Gaudio requested this item be added to the agenda tonight. Gaudio feels the agreement does not seem to apply to the town. South Thomaston does not have a public works department or personnel. The agreement is for multiple towns' Public Works departments to help other towns out. Spear moved to table the item indefinitely. Gaudio seconds this motion. Vote approved 3-0.

IX. Communications:

- Waldo Community Action Partners

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- Drone delivery of packages
 - Midcoast Maine Community Action

The board reviewed Communications. Reitz heard from a resident informally that drone delivery of packages may be coming soon to the town. The board has not heard any other news regarding this and believes the county and FAA will have most likely deal with a lot of drone deliveries and prepare ordinances and guidance. The board feels currently this is not a pressing matter but appreciates input and notifications from residents. Reitz will notify the resident that the board will continue to monitor progress.

X. Department Head Reports

Casas briefly discussed the town office and business as usual, except for a new receipt printer. Spear commented that the CEO report is not included in this month's reports again. The ambulance report included a reminder given to Per Diem's to shovel and sand the walkways at the town office, which Spear was concerned about when he stopped into the town office on a snowy day. Reitz discussed the transfer station renovation report. On behalf of the transfer station committee, Reitz said he, as treasurer of the committee, requested the three towns involved with the transfer station transfer their reserve funds to the transfer station for the renovations. There were some issues with Thomaston as they did not have a reserve fund established, but it is being worked on.

XI. Warrants Review and Approval

The board did not review or approve any warrants.

XII. Schedule Future Meetings

The board discussed having budget committee meetings the first week of April or end of March. Budget Committee / Selectboard meetings are scheduled for the week of March 29th. Between the 22nd of February and the first week or March the Select board, the town administrator, and department heads will be meeting to work on department budgets. The next Selectboard meeting is scheduled for January 26th. February Selectboard meetings are scheduled on the 9th and the 23rd. Jan will not be here for the February 9th meeting. Spear suggested moving the meeting to a day where Jan will be able to attend. The board agreed to move the meeting to the 16th of February, and keep the meeting scheduled for the 23rd if necessary.

XIII. Adjourn

Gaudio moved and Spear seconded motion to adjourn meeting at 9:19PM. Vote approved 3-0.

Selectboard Approved
5/25/2021