



Town of South Thomaston, Maine
125 Spruce Head Road
P.O. Box 147
South Thomaston, ME 04858-0147

Tel: 207-596-6584
Fax: 207-596-7529
E-mail: terri@souththomaston.me

Selectboard:
John Spear
Jeff Northgraves
Sue Snow

Selectboard Minutes
Date: March 21, 2023, 6:00 PM at the Municipal Building
Items Are Often Taken Out of Order to Accommodate Schedules

Rev 0

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

South Thomaston Selectboard Present: John Spear (via zoom), Jeff Northgraves, Sue Snow
Others Present: Terri-Lynn Baines, Ronnie Russell, Catherine Lerme, Jeff Smith, Pennie Alley, Maureen Spencer
Via Zoom: Assessor's Agent Kevin McCormick, Fire Chief David Elwell, Walter Reitz, Jessica Pooley

I. Call to Order

Northgraves called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Northgraves led the Pledge of Allegiance

III. Adjustments to Agenda

Fire Chief Elwell would like permission to submit two grants. Add under new business.

Spear will give a brief update on tennis/basketball courts. Add under old business.

IV. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

Catherine Lerme would like to be put on the agenda in May, She will be walking the town property with a forester and will report back with his findings.

Northgraves took this time to remind the public that committees and the public should be requesting to be put requests or items on the agenda for a meeting two weeks to 10 days prior to the meeting. Spear also supports this comment.

Jeff Smith supports the town putting land in conservation, maybe a town forest.

V. Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (March 9, 2023)

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 9, 2023.

Motion passed 3-0.

V. Old Business

a. Update Regarding Possible Land Acquisition (Executive Session Possible)

Land Acquisition discussed under correspondence, in part in executive session.

b. Consider Appointments to the South Thomaston Community Resilience Committee

6 residents expressed interest. There was a discussion on some residents that it was thought would be interested but had not expressed interest. There was a discussion on extending the deadline.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to table until the 25th of April.

Motion passed 3-0.

c. Update on Tennis and Basketball Courts

No bids were received. The deadline for receiving bids was March 14th. Spear will reach out to Doug Beck to see if the town can negotiate with one of the local contractors or what the path forward should be. Because this is federal money the town was required to put the project out to bid.

VI. New Business

a. Request of Fire Chief Elwell to Submit Two Grants

Chief Elwell would like to put in for two grants. One is the MMA Safety Grant. The grant, if awarded, would be to purchase air bottles. The second grant is the Department of Administrative and Financial Services Safety Grant. The Fire Department is in the process of rewriting their SOPs. There is a company that would type the SOPs up and put them on line with a hyperlink then the SOP would be available in the trucks. If awarded the grant would cover this cost. Both grants are non-matching grants. The amount of each grant is \$3000.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to authorize the chair to execute two grant application for the fire department, the MMA Safety Grant and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services Safety Grant

Motion passed 3-0.

b. Discussion on Certified Ratio

McCormick introduced himself. He is the Assessor's Agent for the Town of South Thomaston. He is going to speak today on the certified ration and the effect it has on the town and the taxpayers of the town and what we may be able to do about it for the coming year.

Last year the certified ratio was 94%. This means the State feels that the valuation the town is carrying on the books is 94% of what the State feels the Town's valuation is. The Homestead Exemption, Veteran Exemption and other exemptions are affected by the 94% ratio. Instead of residents receiving 100 percent of the exemption last year 94% of the exemption was received. Last year the homestead exemption was \$25,000. Because our certified ratio was 94% the homestead exemption in South Thomaston was \$23,500.

The state sends a representative once a year to the town office to review sales. They do a sales ratio study. The State then sends a Certified Ratio Declaration form that must be filed by June 1st each year. The State gives a range to choose from or you can go outside those parameters. One option to go outside the parameters is a revaluation, which is very costly. South Thomaston has not had a revaluation since 2005. McCormick recommends the town seriously considering having a revaluation done. The State recommends a revaluation be done every ten years. An option for the coming year is a factoring. This would have to start very soon. McCormick would look at data of sales and try to do what the state has done but use the most current information also. He would try to create a factor that would allow the town to commit taxes at a 100% ratio. That factor would then be applied to every real estate account in Trio. This would allow for exemptions to be at 100%. Currently this year's certified ratio is projected to be 87%.

Every property would be factored by the same number so all values raise the same.

The Selectboard and McCormick discussed if this would be in excess of the duties for McCormick. McCormick didn't feel it would be a lengthy project, 3 or 4 days, but it could add an additional cost to the town.

McCormick briefly explained the process to get to the factor number. Also discussed was revals, either a total reval or target certain land types.

McCormick feels the town's quality rating is in the vicinity of 18, which is relatively good. The factoring concept was discussed at length.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to instruct our assessor's agent to begin working on adjusting our certified ration to 100% using an equal factor on all parcels.

Motion passed 3-0.

c. Application for Catered Function- On the Rocks Bartending Services

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the Catered Function for On the Rocks Bartending Services.

Motion passed 3-0.

d. Execute the Septic Waste Disposal Facility Agreement with Interstate Septic

Spear moved Snow seconded a motion to execute the agreement with the Interstate Septic.

Motion passed 3-0.

e. Consider Alley Electric's Estimate to Replace Lights in Municipal Building

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to accept Alley's estimate and include lights downstairs up to \$5000.

Motion passed 3-0.

f. Discuss Designating Village Cemetery as a Wreaths Across America Site

Northgraves presented information on having the South Thomaston Village Cemetery designated as a Wreaths Across America site.

There was a brief discussion on what would happen to the wreaths when they are taken out of the cemetery. Also discussed was how the wreaths lay on the graves and leaving flag makers up until the wreaths come.

g. Discussion on Town Report, Town Report Cover, Draft Town Warrant

The draft town warrant was reviewed. Article 5 will be edited and put on the warrant as an advisory article. Similar to the advisory article from last year's warrant.

Article 4 remove last paragraph.

Article 6 there was a discussion on specifying the equipment and the name of the formal name of the South Thomaston Auxiliary.

Also discussed was the tax levy limit.

h. Consider Approving Town Administrator Applying for MMA Safety Grant

This was withdrawn by the Town Administrator.

i. Discussion on Light Outside of Gilford Butler

The installation of this light has been pushed off by Hedstrom Electric many times. Alley has been rethinking the community center would be better served by a light that has a switch inside the building. This could also eliminate the Ubiquia software that can control the hours the light would operate.

Alley will talk with BC Electric. He is currently working on the generator at the GB Community Center. More information is needed to move ahead. Alley will contact BC Electric. Baines will contact Hedstrom to see if the arm that was ordered for the light can be cancelled.

j. Review Revenues for FY 24 Budget

There was a discussion on State Revenue Sharing and the Tax Levy Limit. Ambulance Revenues were also discussed.
The Selectboard reviewed Revenues.

VI. Correspondence

The Selectboard received a letter from William Raveis Real estate offering a parcel of land for sale. The property is owned by Ralph Cline III. It has old growth and is a 10 acre lot. The property is land locked.

Jessica Pooley is the realtor representing Mr. Cline. She thinks there may be a right of way that has since grown up but can be reconstituted. All abutters have been notified of the offer to sell the property. If no abutters are interested his plan is to have the right of way reconstituted. The Town values the property at \$12,500. If the Selectboard wanted to pursue it, Mr. Cline would be willing to wait until the purchase could be approved by the town.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to go into executive session pursuant to Title 1 Chapter 3.1 paragraph 405 C for property and A for personnel.

Motion passed 3-0.

The Selectboard entered executive session at 7:26.

The Selectboard exited executive session at 7:48

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to refer the request of Ralph E Cline III regarding a parcel of land that abuts town property to the Conservation Commission for review and consideration.

Motion passed 3-0.

VII. Warrants Review and Approval

The Selectboard signed the Warrants.

VIII. Schedule Future Meetings

Meetings scheduled with the budget committee April 10th to the 13th at 4:00 pm.

Regular Selectboard meeting scheduled for April 25th.

May Meeting tentatively scheduled for May 10th or 11th with the Owls Head Selectboard.

Regular May meetings will be 10th or 11th and May 23rd.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85642214645?pwd=Uy9aQjVDaWtFVnUvVlRQSnpSbG56Zz09>

Selectboard Approved April 25, 2023