



Town of South Thomaston, Maine
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Selectboard:
John Spear
Jeff Northgraves
Sue Snow

Selectboard Minutes
Date April 25, 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, Jeff Northgraves, Sue Snow (via zoom)
Others Present: Terri-Lynn Baines, Jeff Smith, Pennie Alley, Don Protheroe, Ron Russell, Kate and John Clark, Ray Martin, Jeff Smith, Maureen Spencer
Via Zoom: Assessor's Agent Kevin McCormick, Theo Pratt, Walter Reitz, Lee Karker

I. Call to Order

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Spear led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Adjustments to Agenda

Accept a donation to the library
Letter from Lee Karker regarding speed limit on 131.
Email from Ray Martin

IV. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

V. Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (March 21st, April 10th -13th)

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 21st and April 10th, April 11th, April 12th and April 13th.

Motion passed 3-0.

VI. Old Business

a. Consider Appointments to the South Thomaston Community Resilience Committee

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to appoint Penelope Alley, Neil Cambridge, Nancy Goslin, Ray Martin, Sally Merchant, Linc Oliver O'Neil, Theo Pratt, Denise Rzeknikiewicz, Krista Tripp, Kathleen Florence, and Carla White to the South Thomaston Community Resilience Committee.

Motion passed 3-0.

b. Consider Appointments to the Library/Community Center Facility Committee

Jan Gaudio and Kate Clark have expressed interest in being appointed to the Library/Community Center Facility Committee. The committee seems to be dividing into two parts, design and fund raising. Sandy Weisman would like the committee to be expanded to 8 members to accommodate appointing both Gaudio and Clark. The Selectboard discussed expanding the committee to 9 members.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to expand the committee to 9 members and appoint Kate Clark and Jan Gaudio.

Motion passed 3-0.

Kate Clark introduced herself to the Selectboard.

c. Update from Assessor's Agent Kevin McCormick on the Certified Ratio

McCormick has been trying to reach Vision tech support to see how to factor in the Vision program. He has been told a technician would have to go into every account and do a manipulation of the land module and the building module. The process would be time consuming and would incur an additional charge to the town. McCormick was told someone would get back to the town office or McCormick with a quote and a time when they could start and how long it would take to do, but there has been no response from Vision. Factoring needs to be done quickly, the information needs to be reported to the state by June 1st.

A possible solution is to just factor in TRIO. This would result in the numbers in Trio and Vision being out of sync. McCormick and the Selectboard discussed Vision and Trio and the possibility of office staff editing the numbers in Vision. They also discussed how data is computed in Vision. A value isn't entered, information is supplied to Vision and the program computes the value.

A short term solution is to apply the factor in TRIO and have inconsistent information in Vision or Vision could be taken off the website. If Vision is left on the website, there would have to be a very visible notice letting whoever accesses the data base, that the values are off by a factor of 15%.

McCormick has determined a factor of a 15% increase, applied uniformly throughout the town would put our certified ratio at 91%. The state allows a 10% fluctuation which would allow the town to certify at 100%. This allows for the full exemption amount of homestead and veteran exemptions. It will also affect other reimbursements from the state. The maximum certified ration for the year if we do not factor would be 87%. This would mean residents would receive 87% of the exemption amounts.

The Selectboard will discuss this further at the Selectboard meeting on the 9th.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the 15% increase and authorize McCormick to do anything he can do in Trio to make it work.

The Selectboard discussed with McCormick how the factoring and market would affect the timing of a reval. Also discussed was the Town's quality ratio.

Motion passed 3-0.

d. Discussion on Property Offered for Sale by Ralph Cline M 8 L 2

Mr. Cline offered this property for sale to the town and other abutters. The property consists of 10 acres and there are no conditions. The sale price is \$25,000. The town has the property assessed at \$12,500.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to include on the Town Meeting Warrant an article to purchase the property plus the one acre lot at \$12,500.

Motion passed 3-0.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to recommend the Town purchase the property.

There is no amount recommended in the motion so as not to influence the Town.

The Selectboard answered several questions asked by Walter Reitz.

Motion passed 3-0.

e. Review updated Town Warrant

The Selectboard discussed the draft warrant articles for purchasing the Cline and Smith properties.

VII. New Business

a. Discussion on Property Offered for Sale by Jeff Smith M 8 L 5, M 9 L 6, M 13 L 6

Spear read the letter Smith sent to the Selectboard offering to sell his properties to the Town. Smith offered the 118 acres for sale with the stipulation that the acres are preserved in forever wild conservation protection with the exception of the construction and maintenance of walking trails. Hunting and snowmobiling would be acceptable, but ATVs would not be.

It was discussed putting this on as an article on the town warrant. The article would authorize the board to negotiate the sale.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to include this purchase on the town warrant.

There was a discussion on the right of way across the Protheroe property

There was a discussion on the difficulty of enforcing no ATVs allowed on the property.

Concerns were raised that by saying yes to this, what are we saying no to in this or the next budget cycle.

The purchase is a decision the town should have the opportunity to decide on. A public informational meeting will be held in order to get information out to the town's people on this and a couple of other warrant articles.

It was questioned why buy the property now? Simply, it was offered now. The Selectboard feels this is a great opportunity, but it is a town decision, not a Selectboard decision. The Selectboard isn't voting to buy the property, only voting to put it on the warrant for the town to vote to buy or not buy the property.

An article will be drafted for the town meeting warrant.

Motion passed 3-0.

The Selectboard discussed recommending or not recommending the purchase. The Selectboard can recommend the purchase or recommend the purchase with a price.

The Budget Committee will also offer a recommendation.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to recommend the purchase at \$50,000.

Motion passed 3-0.

b. Consideration of Don Protheroe's Request to Use the Stump Dump Road

Protheroe would like to use the stump dump road to access his property that is in Tree Growth for the purpose of getting wood out. He would not be using a logging company, it will only be himself, a chainsaw and tractor. His forester has suggested he cut some of his wood in accordance with his forestry plan. If he can't use the Stump Dump Road, the alternative is to drag the trees to route 73.

He had an agreement with a prior Selectboard that ran from June 19, 2012, to June 19, 2017.

The Town currently has a lease with Jeff Smith to use the road to access his property. He is required to have insurance and pays a fee. There was a discussion on why the leases were different.

This will be revisited at the May 9th meeting.

c. Consideration of Liquor Permit for an Event at Saltwater Fields

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to table until the next regular meeting, and to invite the cater to come in.

Motion passed 3-0.

d. Discussion on Town Administrator Approving Catering Permit Applications

The Selectboard will approve the first application from a catering company. As long as there are no issues, the second application from the same catering company could be designated to the Town Administrator.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion that a second and subsequent applications from the same catering company can be handled by Town Administrator as long as the first application, to be handled by the Selectboard, was met without any issues or complaints.

Motion passed 3-0.

e. Community Resilience Solar Grant

Spear gave a brief update on the RFP that has been sent out. There is a newly appointed committee working on the actual grant process.

f. Accept a Donation to the Conservation Commission

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to accept a donation from Leslie Spear in the amount of \$15.

Motion passed 3-0.

g. Accept a Donation to the Library

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to accept a donation from the Rock City Co-op in the amount of \$200.

Motion passed 3-0.

h. Email from Lee Karker Regarding Speed Limit on 131

Karker's email requested the Selectboard consider reducing the speed limit on Route 131. Spear explained the State would need to do a speed limit study to reduce the speed limit.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to request DOT do a speed limit study from the Town line to past Westbrook Street.

Motion passed 3-0.

i. Food Sovereignty Ordinance Request

Ray Martin explained why he felt the town should consider a Food Sovereignty Ordinance. The Selectboard will like more time to research this and will put it on the agenda for the May 9th meeting.

There was a discussion on the sample ordinances provided.

j. Discussion Regarding the Condition of the Skate Board Park

There was a discussion on the state of disrepair of the skate park and the bigger pieces of equipment. It was suggested the big pieces be removed and some smaller pieces could be bought off the shelf. The Skate Park is in bad shape and very dangerous.

Alley would like to see a recreation committee formed. She would also like to have someone with carpenter experience look at the skate park. Ray Martin volunteered to look at it before the May 9th meeting. The Skate Park is used by more than just skateboarders. Kids on roller skates and bikes are also using the park.

k. Monthly Reports

The Selectboard reviewed the monthly reports.

VIII. Correspondence

IX. Warrants Review and Approval

The Selectboard approved the warrants.

X. Schedule Future Meetings

Scheduled meetings reviewed.

May 3rd at 4:00 pm- workshop with Ambulance Director.

May 9th at 6:00 pm – regular meeting

May 10th at 4:00 pm – meeting with the Owls Head Selectboard.

May 23rd at 6:00 pm. - regular meeting

May 30th at 6:00pm - informational public meeting for possible ordinance (food sovereignty),
Town manager advisory article and land purchase articles.

June 20 town meeting

XI. Adjourn

Without objection the Selectboard adjourn 8:09 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85241534424?pwd=QUR2WEtSTXZuSS9RZEM2SHNvNzdBZz09>

Meeting ID: 852 4153 4424 -Passcode: 240674

Selectboard Approved May 9, 2023