



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

Selectboard Minutes
Date: January 16, 2024, 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- via zoom: John Spear, Jeff Northgraves
Others Present- via zoom: Terri-Lynn Baines, Ambulance Director Drinkwater, Fire Chief Elwell, Cliff Dacso, Catherine Lerne, Sondra Wallace, Walter Reitz, Sandy Weisman, Connor Calderwood, Cheyenne Grierson, Gavin Burgess, Ryan Colson

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

Consider signing Customer Net Energy Billing Agreement Application.
Land for Maine's Future Inquiry Form.
EMS Stabilization Grant.

IV. Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (December 11th and December 12th)

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to approve the minutes of December 11th and December 12th.

Motion passed 2-0.

V. Old Business

a. Update on Building Use Form

Political parties for caucuses was in the first draft as being able to use the building but, was not in the second draft. Spear will check this. Baines will check recommended insurance limits with MMA. There was a brief discussion on charging non-profits a fee. The Selectboard would like to get Director Alley's feedback on fees.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to table to the next meeting.

Motion passed 2-0.

b. Update on Ambulance Billing-Consider Signing a Service Agreement with First Financial Resources, Inc.

First Financial Resources would retain 33 and 1/3 of the amount they collect. FFR works with Comstar, the Town's ambulance billing company. It appears if the patient sends in a hardship waiver after the account is sent into collections, the Town could withdraw the

collection authorization with no charge. The Selectboard would like to confirm this before the agreement is signed.

There was an objection from the public to sending unpaid ambulance bills to collection. It was felt most of the amounts were small and were what was left after the insurance companies paid. Although a few bills are balances left after the insurance company has paid, many of the bills that are unpaid are patients that did not have insurance. There was a discussion on the fairness of some patients paying and others not and some not responding at all. The Selectboard feels this is more about the process than it is about the money.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to approve signing the agreement contingent on Baines confirming with FFR that if a hardship waiver is received after the account has gone to collections the Town can withdraw it. Also to authorize the Town Administrator to sign the agreement.

Motion passed 2-0.

VI. New Business

a. Consider New Hires- Requested by Fire Chief Elwell

Gavyn Burgess lives in Port Clyde and Spruce Head. He is looking to give back to his communities. Gavyn will be a Jr. Firefighter.

Cheyenne Grierson lives on the Grierson Road. She works at the hospital and sees the need for first responders and wants to give back to her community.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to hire Gavyn Burgess as a Jr. Fire Fighter and Cheyenne Grierson as a Fire Fighter as recommended by Fire Chief Elwell.

Motion passed 2-0.

b. Consider New Hires-Requested by Ambulance Director Amy Drinkwater

Drinkwater would like to hire Connor Calderwood as a driver. Calderwood lives in town. He works for Thomaston and would also work for South Thomaston Ambulance. Calderwood wants to further his career in EMS and Fire.

Chris Gamage works in Rockland and St. George. He has passed his EMS test.

Matt Heroux is in EMT class tonight and is not able to attend the meeting. He also works for St. George.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to accept the recommendation of the Ambulance Director to hire Matt Heroux, Chris Gamage and Connor Calderwood.

Motion passed 2-0.

There was a brief discussion on hiring practices.

c. EMS Stabilization Grant

Ambulance Director Drinkwater is looking for permission to apply for the EMS Stabilization Grant. 37 million dollars will be available for Maine EMS. Of the 37 million, 19 million dollars will be available in the next 90 days. The grant is only for the stabilization of EMS. Drinkwater and the Selectboard discussed, if received, how the money could be distributed.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to authorize the Ambulance Director to apply for the Stabilization Grant in the amount of approximately \$45,000.

Once the money is awarded Drinkwater will come back to the Selectboard to discuss distribution.

Every Ambulance service in the state that applies will receive an amount based on an established formula.

Motion passed 2-0.

d. Consider Approving Fire Department Request for Permission to Apply for Fire House Subs Foundation Grant

The Fire Department would like permission to write a grant request to Fire House Subs Foundation in the amount of \$13,000. This will buy two sets of devices needed to control fires in electric vehicles.

Fire House Subs is a National chain of fast food restaurants. The Chain makes grants to fire departments. The Fire department would like permission to apply for this grant. Cliff Dacso will be filling out the grant application.

If awarded the grant the South Thomaston Fire Department would be the only Fire Department in this area to have this equipment.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to authorize the Fire Department, on behalf of the Town, to submit a grant application to Fire House Subs in the approximate amount of \$13,000 for equipment.

Motion passed 2-0.

There are no strings attached to this grant.

The Fire Department was awarded a grant to be used for the town fire ponds.

e. Land for Maine's Future

The Land purchase article on the Town Meeting Warrant authorized the Selectboard to apply for grants and seek out donations to try to recoup costs of the land purchase. A Lands for Maine's Future Grant is now available An inquiry form needs to be submitted by Friday, January 19, 2024. Sondra Wallace has worked on the inquiry form and is looking for support and permission from the Selectboard to submit the form.

Wallace explained because we got such a deal on the Smith land we can ask for the whole amount of the price we paid for the Smith and Cline properties instead of 50 percent of what we paid. The amount requested can be the full purchase price of \$67,000 plus a bit added on for stewardship. The next step will be to fill out a full application. The property will need to be surveyed and will probably need to be appraised. We will also need title insurance on these properties.

There was a brief discussion on donations already received and what strings may be attached to the grant if awarded. No grant disbursements will be made until a year from March.

Discussed was having a survey done and the possibility of getting a grant for a survey. Also discussed was having an appraisal of the property and getting an estimate of the costs for a survey and appraisal.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to authorize the submission of the inquiry form to the Lands for Maine's Future to request reimbursement for the Smith/Cline properties.

Motion passed 2-0.

There was a further discussion on talking with a surveyor to show him the surveys/maps we have and get a sense of what we have and get some advice and a cost of a survey and a time table of when it could be done Also discussed was having a budget line in the upcoming budget for work on the preserve.

f. Consider Donation from the Board of Directors of the Library and Community Center Auxiliary Board

The Board of Directors of the Library and Community Center Auxiliary Board voted to donate \$4000 to the town for the town to hire an architect to do drawings of the proposed new building.

Sandy Weisman explained the Facility Committee is ready to reach out to the community and talk about the new building. The Committee would like to hire Alexander Shaw who will design a three dimensional drawing which can be taken to meetings. The money is for phase one, which will take approximately 44 to 50 hours. Because it's a community project, Mr. Shaw is charging \$85 an hour which is a reduced price.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion for the Town to accept the \$4000 donation from the Library and Community Auxiliary Board for the purpose of engaging an architect and to authorize Terri working through the Facilities Committee to sign the agreement and gather whatever information she needs to engage Alexander Shaw.

Motion passed 2-0.

Weisman requested the Facilities Committee be allowed to purchase Little Greenlight to track donations. The cost of the software is \$486. The purchase could be made from the donation account.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to authorize \$486 paid from the Town's new library account for the purchase of Little Greenlight software.

Motion passed 2-0.

There was a discussion on who would administer Little Green Light. The Town will be the licensee.

g. Customer Net Energy Billing Agreement Application

The Selectboard agreed Baines could sign the agreement.

h. Discussion on Delinquent Personal Property Tax Bills

The Selectboard discussed the delinquent Personal Property taxes and the possibility of sending them to collections. Baines will talk with the collection agency. She will send out new letters to the business owners regarding delinquent taxes.

i. Quarterly Review Revenues/Expenses

The Selectboard reviewed the revenues and expenses.

j. Discussion on Budget Timeline

The Selectboard set meetings with Department Heads for Feb 12th & 13th. Meetings with the Budget Committee will be held April 9th, 10th, 11th and the 15th if needed.

k. Set Annual Town Meeting Date

Dates were discussed. This year will be a bifurcated meeting. The Selectman election will take place on June 11th at the polls and will adjourn to the 18th of June. June 18th will be the town meeting portion where articles will be voted on.

l. Monthly Reports

The Selectboard reviewed the monthly reports.

m. Discuss Personnel Issue (Possible Executive Session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A §405(6)(C))

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to enter executive session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A §405(6)(C).

Motion passed 2-0.

The Selectboard entered executive session at 7:58 pm.

The Selectboard exited executive session at 8:16 pm.

VII. Donations

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to accept \$2500 from an anonymous donor to offset the land purchase.

Motion passed 2-0.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to accept \$1000 from Cliff and Sheri Dacso for the new library.

Motion passed 2-0.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to accept \$100 from Anthony Kufrovich to offset the land purchase,

Motion passed 2-0.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to accept \$50 from Michael and Cynthia Lucas for the Ambulance Service, to be used for food.

Motion passed 2-0.

VIII. Correspondence

The Selectboard reviewed the correspondence.

IX. Warrants Review and Approval

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the warrants.

X. Review Items for Next Agenda

Discussion about what if any town land we want to include in the preserve.

XI. Schedule Future Meetings

February 6th scheduled.

March 12th and March 18th Regular Selectboard meetings.

Meetings with Department Heads February 12th and 13th.

Meetings with Budget Committee April 9th , 10th , 11th and 15th.

XII. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

XIII. Adjourn

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:17 pm.

Motion passed 2-0.

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86370757025?pwd=OW1YVUU4em5NK2ljc1p5d3VmcVFBZz09>

Meeting ID: 863 7075 7025

Passcode: 941621

Selectboard Approved February 6, 2024