



Town of South Thomaston, Maine
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Selectboard:

John Spear

Jeff Northgraves

Sue Snow

Selectboard Minutes

Date: March 12, 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: Jeff Northgraves, Sue Snow, via zoom: John Spear
Others Present: Terri-Lynn Baines, Hannah Moholland, Community Center Director Pennie Alley, Sandy Weisman, Fire Chief Elwell, Vernard Mossman, Erv Curtis, Rich Norman, Lynn Tootill, Ann Norman, Sondra Wallace

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 a donation to the skate park.

IV. Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (February 6th, 12th, and 13th)

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the minutes of February 6th, 12th and 13th.

Motion passed 3-0.

V. Old Business

a. Discussion Regarding Possible Pickleball Court on Basketball Court.

Rich Norman spoke about the tennis/basketball court project. A group was started with the Town Administrator, Owen Casas to pursue a grant to fix the tennis courts. The group got started, then covid hit. Later the group worked with the State to see what they could pursue for a grant. The basketball court and tennis courts were both in the original grant, so the basketball courts also needed to be included in any grant application. Once the grant was awarded, the Town was not able to get a contractor, so the project was delayed another year. Last year the Town was able to resurface and line the basketball court but nothing was done with the tennis courts. The tennis courts have continued to deteriorate, and you cannot play tennis on them. Pickleball has become popular and only half the tennis court is used so pickle ball can be played. Pickleball lines were put down on the tennis court for residents to be able to play pickleball. Now that we have resurfaced the basketball court, Norman would like to make three or four pickle ball courts on the basketball court. Norman is asking that part of the grant be used to put a surface and lines on the basketball court to play pickle ball.

There was a discussion that the basketball court gets a bit of use and if young adults/kids came to play ball and pickleball players were on the basketball court, most likely they would leave and that is not fair to the basketball players.

It was pointed out that the tennis courts and the pickle ball courts are under the same original grant. Both tennis and basketball courts need to be included in any grant that is applied for. It's not only that the companies were not available when the grant was received, the tennis courts needs to be ripped up and started again. The tennis resurfacing company said spending money to just resurface the tennis courts would be wasting money. The grant was amended and used to build a handicap accessible parking lot for the courts and resurface and paint lines on the basketball court. The grant is in the process of being closed out and there clearly would not have been enough money to upgrade the tennis courts.

Hagar is lined up to pave the west tennis court and then this could be made into pickle ball courts.

If the basketball court was changed to a pickleball court, the primary use would still be basketball and if a group is playing pickle ball they would have to stop if basketball players showed up to play.

Rehabbing the west court will rely heavily on volunteers. It will be 30 days after paving before acrylic can be put down. It was suggested that a pickleball court could be taped on the basketball court during the 30 days. The concentration should be on getting the west court fixed and see where we can go from there.

Alley, as part of the recreation non committee, supports using the basketball court for different purposes.

Northgraves moved and Snow seconded a motion to authorize Rich to gather the money and volunteers to put the acrylic and pickleball markings on the basketball court to play pickleball and to redo the basketball court professionally when the west tennis court is ready.

Discussion that there is no money available for the basketball to be used as a pickleball court. There is also no money in the proposed budget for the tennis court.

Motion passed 2-1.

b. Update Regarding Brush Disposal

When Spear returns, he will contact DM & J and they will do test runs of disposing of brush. Disposing of brush is cheaper than disposing of solid waste. It's \$80 a ton. There doesn't need to be a container on site, when there's enough to fill a container D M & J will come down Jim Kalloch can be hired load the container. The Town can do test runs to get a sense of the cost. Leaves would have to go into the main hopper. The ashes that are at the demo debris facility need to be tested and hauled away.

c. Update on Attorney Collins Recommendation on the Hiring Process

Northgraves has not been able to get in touch with Collins.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to table.

Motion passed 3-0.

d. Update on Revaluation costs.

The Cushing Revaluation, done by Maine Assessment and Appraisal cost \$139,000 for all residents, commercial, industrial, and exempt real estate parcels, based on \$100 per parcel. Any additional accounts discovered or added during the project will be assessed and invoiced at the same \$100 per parcel rate.

South Thomaston has around 1278 parcels. The estimate from KRT Appraisal for a full appraisal is approximately \$145,000. KRT is booked through 2026. This will also give the Town time to save money and provide information to town residents regarding revals.

The balance in the Reval account is \$90,000.

In the fall the Selectboard will sit down with two or three appraisal companies and Kevin McCormick the Town's Assessor's Agent.

e. Discussion on Tax Acquired Properties

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to authorize the Town Administrator to hire the sheriff to deliver a letter to Mr. Walsh and change the date to whatever seems reasonable.

Motion passed 3-0.

f. FY 24-25 Budget Review

The Selectboard did not review the budget.

VI. New Business

a. Consider New Hire- Requested by Fire Chief Elwell

Vern Mossman would like to join the South Thomaston Fire Department as a fire police member. Mossman lives in Rockland. He would like to be a fire police member to assist fire fighters. He also works for the Owls Head Fire Department and has the required training.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to hire Vernard Mossman as a fire police member pursuant to the Fire Chief's recommendation.

Motion passed 3-0.

b. Appoint John Poirier as Conservation Commission Member

There is no paperwork from Mr. Poirier saying he would like to be a Conservation Commission member. He attended a Conservation Commission meeting and after the meeting told the chair of the Commission he would be interested in becoming a member. Poirier will be replacing Theo Pratt.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve John Poirier as a Conservation Commission member for a term ending 2026 or whatever term Theo Pratt's term would have ended.

Motion passed 3-0.

c. Report Regarding Activities of the Library and Community Center Facilities Committee and Auxiliary

The Board of Directors has been meeting every month and has raised money for start-up costs. The Board has hired an architect, Alexander Shaw, to produce schematic drawings of the proposed building.

The Board of Directors have used start-up funds to buy the software Little Greenlight.

The Facilities committee will be putting out a monthly communication to keep the town residents apprised of the projects.

Board members will host in-home meetings to show the drawings of the building and ask for support.

One option that is being discussed is to build the new building behind the the Gilford Butler building so as not to have a disruption of programs and the library.

The Board of Directors has submitted paperwork to get an IRS designation. That number will be needed to apply for grants. They have received three grants for startup costs. Weisman submitted a list of grants they propose to apply for.

The Little Greenlight software is ready to use. The Board has been assured of \$150,000 from donors in the community.

Weisman sent out a notice that the committee was looking for a graphic designer to work with them to create a logo design for the project, to be used for mailings, grant applications cover letters, signage, and personal communication. She received three answers and has talked to two graphic designers interested in working with the group. One is willing to do the work pro bono.

d. Consideration of Proposed Bylaw Amendments Governing the Library and Community Center Auxiliary

Spear explained the amendments.

Proposed amendment #1

Add the following language as Article I, 8

Conflict of Interests The Board of Directors of the Corporation, within 45 days of approval of this bylaw amendment by the South Thomaston Selectboard, shall adopt a conflict of interest policy which the Board of Directors may amend from time to time.

Spear move Snow seconded a motion to approve this proposed amendment.

Motion passed 3-0.

Proposed amendment #2

Add the following language as Article III 1, b

b) Notwithstanding Article III, 1, a, if after 120 days of appointment by the incorporator of a majority of initial Directors, the person or group designated by III, 1, a, fails to nominate the number of initial directors they are empowered to nominate, the Board of Directors may appoint Directors to those seats and establish the terms. After 60 days of the expiration of the terms of the initial Directors, if the person or group designated by III 1, a, fails to nominate the number of Directors they are empowered to nominate, the Board of Directors may appoint Directors to those seats and establish the terms.

Add the following sentence to Article III, 8, between the words “Directors” and “Unless”

This removal authority shall not apply to Directors appointed by the Board of Directors pursuant to Article III, 1, b.

Add the following sentence to Article III, 8, before the last sentence.

After 60 days of the creation of a vacancy if the person or group designated by III, 1, a, fails to nominate a nominee to the vacancy they are empowered to nominate, the Board of Directors may appoint a Director to the vacant seat.

In the last sentence of Article III, 8, strike the word “resigned” and replace it with the

word “previous”.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve this proposed amendment.

Motion passed 3-0.

Proposed amendment #3

At the end of Article III, 5, insert the words “Personal information held by the Corporation, including, but not limited to, names, birthdates, social security numbers and similar identifiers, marital status and other familial and personal relationship information, financial and tax information, physical and email addresses, phone numbers, donation and pledge amounts, regarding its Directors, employees, donors or potential donors, shall not be deemed a public record”.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve this proposed amendment.

Motion passed 3-0.

e. Broaden Purpose of Land Donation

The Grant application is for the full amount the Town paid for the properties because the deal was such a bargain. The Town won't need a match because of the land value. This could mean that donations already received could be used for another purpose.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to authorize the Conservation Commission to draft and send a letter out to the handful of folks that have donated, explaining the situation and ask if their donation can be used for a different cause if the whole cost is awarded through the grant.

Motion passed 3-0.

f. Review Draft of Warrant for Annual Town Meeting

An article needs to be added to put similar constrictions on the Cline property that is on the Smith property.

After a brief discussion it was decided to prohibit ATV's on all town properties. Spear will write a draft ordinance and run the enforcement by Kristin Collins, the Town Attorney.

g. Review of The LMF grant application process

The latest draft is rough, and Sondra is looking for input from the Selectboard. GRLT was fine partnering with this, but the GRLT is now saying they cannot partner with LMF. There was a discussion on the deeds, whether they are quit claim deeds or warranty deeds. Receiving grant money will depend on clear title. It also needs to be determined if the solar farm abuts the land.

The community has been very supportive.

Wallace reviewed several points in the grant application.

#2. Town Forest Road refers to the road that goes off the Stump Dump Road. This road has severe damage.

#4. Title insurance will be needed to get the grant. The Town can purchase title insurance once the survey is done. The Town also needs a clear title. Another thing to decide is the Town

would get a yellow book appraisal or a cheaper appraisal. Without a yellow book appraisal, grants would be limited. There also needs to be an environmental assessment.

#6. Wallace and Lerne cannot figure anyway to get $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile closer to the entrance of the trails in a car. Could the entry to the preserve be changed and not change where the cars park? Could the second gate be moved up to the salt shed? A right of public access must be demonstrated.

#17. Estimate of managing and maintenance costs.

Here was a discussion on fencing vs signage, barriers where ATV's come in, and gates.

Money will be needed to repair ATV damage to the preserve.

The cost estimate for the first 3 years is \$20,000 to \$40,000.

h. Discussion on Supporting the Maine Trails Bond

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to authorize submitting a letter in support of the Maine Trails Bond.

Motion passed 3-0.

i. Execute Net Energy Billing Agreement with CMP

Spear moved and Snow second a motion to sign the net energy billing agreement with CMP.

Motion passed 3-0.

j. Execute Written Confirmation with F.E. Beal Survey Company

We have oral assurance that the grant to pay for this is coming.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to execute the written confirmation with F.E. Beal Survey Company.

Motion passed 3-0.

k. Request to Rescind Approval that the Town Purchase Little Green Light Software

This request was from the President of the Board of Directors of the Library & Community Center Auxiliary.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to rescind the purchase of the Little Green Light Software.

Motion passed 3-0.

l. Discuss Mowing Contract

The current landscaper has backed out of the current contract. Baines will send the invitation to bid to people that responded to the last request. The request will be for a three year contract. Bids need to be returned to the town office by April 1st. The Selectboard will open the bids at the Selctboard meeting on April 4th.

m. Coordination of Grant Submissions

The Board of Directors of the Library Facility Committee has been asking for a list of grants different committees/department heads plan to apply for. Baines will send out a letter drafted by Spear asking Committees and Department Heads to reply by April 1st.

Spear moved and Snow *seconded a motion to have Baines send out the letter after changing the reply date to April 1st.*

Motion passed 3-0.

VII. Monthly Reports

The Selectboard reviewed the monthly reports.

VIII. Donations

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to accept donations to the library. John Dennen in the amount of \$200 and Peter Lindner in the amount of \$150. Also to accept a donation from Healthy Kids in Damariscotta a donation in the approximate amount of \$547.45 for the skateboard park.

Motion passed 3-0.

IX. Correspondence

The Selectboard received two emails asking the Selectboard to reconsider demolishing Gilford Butler School.

They also reviewed an email about the Forest Preserve and a letter reviewed from Owen House requesting a contribution from the Town.

X. Warrants Review and Approval

The Selectboard reviewed and approved warrants.

XI. Review Items for Next Agenda

XII. Schedule Future Meetings

March 18th @ 5:30, April 4th at 3:00.

Meetings with the Budget Committee April 9th, April 10th, April 11th, at 4:00 and 15th if needed.

April 23rd 6:00 regular selectboard meeting.

Town public information meeting being held by the ORC and the PB to inform the residents of the town of upcoming changes to the land use ordinance. It will also be an opportunity to discuss short term rentals in the town and how residents feel they should be handled.

XIII. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

XV. Adjourn

Without objection the Selectboard adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86376058395?pwd=ZEN3Ty9qNU5icU1DLzNWM3N2M3JWZz09>