



Town of South Thomaston, Maine
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Selectmen:
Jeffrey Northgraves
John Spear
Sue Snow

Selectboard Minutes
Date: April 23, 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, John Spear
Others Present: Terri-Lynn Baines, Hannah Moholland, Walter Reitz, Moira Paddock, Barbara Reitz, RSU #13 Superintendent John McDonald, Kelli McCannel Chair of the Finance Committee, Brad Choyt, Denise Rzeznikiewicz, Marcia Turner, Rhonda Nordstrom, Catherine Lerme, Stephanie Welch, Mark Jones, Anne Norman, Rich Norman, Pennie Alley, Arthur Alley, Lynn Tootill, Leslie Spear, Paul DiMaggio
Via zoom: Steve Betts, Krista Tripp

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**

Cemetery Donation

Krista Tripp is seeking approval to use the Town Landing in the same way as last year.

Move the RSU#13 Budget discussion to the top of the agenda.

The Road Commissioner announced Westbrook Street will be closed for several hours tomorrow for reclaiming and repaving.

As the Selectboard representative to the Library/Community Center Auxiliary Committee, Spear reported last week the auxiliary filed two grant applications for a 3.46 million dollar project. It's from federal sources, for 75% of the project so if awarded the amount would be 2.6 million.

Follow up on Maine Coast Seafood.

IV. **Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (April 4,9,10,11,15)**

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the minutes of April 4th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 15th.

Motion passed 3-0.

V. Public Comment for Items not on the Agenda

There was a question about the hours of the Westbrook Street closure tomorrow.

VI. Old Business

a. Review Town Meeting Warrant

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the warrant as presented.

Motion passed 3-0.

b. Discuss Painting the Little Red School House

The person that the Town awarded the painting contract to backed out due to Workers Comp Insurance issues. Another company is interested but may have the same issue. He is not available until next year and he isn't sure we will find anyone this year.

Discussion on the Workers Comp form that the State requires. If they don't have insurance and don't fill out the form, the Town has to pay the workers comp. when the Town has its workers comp audit.

Discussion on paying WC as an employee or when we have the audit.

The Selectboard decided to put it out to bid again.

VII. New Business

a. RSU #13 School Board Representative Brad Choyt and RSU #13 Business Manager- Discussion on the School Budget

Mr. McDonald Superintendent of RSU #13. Mr. McDonald reported that although there were concerns regarding learning loss during covid, the study that has been done does not show that. He also reported that attendance is up.

The Schoolboard has determined they would like universal Pre-K throughout the district, next year there will be 5 pre-K classes and a year or two after all parents that would like will be able to send their child to pre-K will be able to do so. McDonald spoke of many programs the District hopes to offer and also pointed out how well the sports programs are doing.

Kelli McCannel presented the RSU #13 Budget of approximately 36 million. The proposed increase is 6.41%.

RSU #13 has 1,489 students Pre-K through grade 12.

McCannel explained the funding formula used by the State.

There will be 10 budget articles to vote on on June 11th.

McCannel reviewed some of the significant budget considerations.

Adding three additional Pre-K classes.

Maine Care billing will help with the increase in the special ed budget.

Benefits increased.

The impact to South Thomaston should be 3.5% less than last year if this budget passes.

Also discussed was enrollment has declined .and electric buses. The district has one electric bus. It has been somewhat problematic. The cost of the bus was subsidized by the state.

b. Approve 24-25 Budget and Funding Sources

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the 24-25 municipal budget, which does not include the County or the School Budgets, in the amount of \$2,137,254, as depicted on the funding sheet presented at the meeting dated April 12, 2024.

Motion passed 3-0.

c. Request from Paul DiMaggio to Discuss a Proposed Warrant Article

Mr. DiMaggio has been following the Gilford Butler/New Community Center discussion since the beginning.

He discussed the different articles that have been voted on over the years. He feels the Town/Committee has gained knowledge in the past 5 years. He feels the lower level of Gilford Butler could be used. Dimaggio feels provisions should have been made for renovations.

DiMaggio reviewed recommendations from the futures committee and again discussed Article 10, and the amendment to Article 10.

DiMaggio feels there is a lot of confusion in town about what has been voted on, and a simple vote could clear things up.

The Selectboard refuted many points. There was a discussion on the basement and that construction costs have increased. Also discussed was Gartley & Dorskey's report, the roof, bricks that are an issue and why there was not a structural analysis done.

The Article Mr. DiMaggio proposed is :

Article:

“Do the Voters of the Town of South Thomaston hereby direct the Town Officials to:

1. Change course from the current goal of demolition and replacement of the Gilford Butler School building as a Library and Community Center and chart a new course with the goal of continuing the use of the existing building as a Library and Community Center and to renovate it as a private and public funds become available.

And

2. Instruct the Library and Community Center Facility Committee and the Library and Community Center Auxiliary to direct efforts to the goal as defined by the Voter's final decision of this question.”

The Selectboard reviewed and discussed DiMaggio's request for an article and the article itself. Discussed were the things that the Town/Selectboard has learned about the GB Building since the first vote to build a new building. Also discussed were the needs of the community.

A petition was presented to the Selectboard. It was felt the Article is illegal. The Town cannot instruct the Library and Community Center Auxiliary plus, the words "final decision" cannot be used.

There was a long discussion on whether the town knew what they were voting on at the town meetings. Some feel the articles were not clear.

Before a new building is built the town would have to vote to appropriate the money to build the new library/community center.

Alley wanted to fix the basement to be able to use it in the winter, even if temporarily, but feels she was shut down because the money will be needed for the new library. She also feels she is not able to apply for grants because the Library Committee is applying for the same grants. Private donors are ready to help repair the basement of the Gilford Butler Center even if it is temporary.

Barbara Reitz informed the public attending that the Library Auxiliary has applied for a grant for the whole project. The application has been sent to Collins and King and sent to Pingree as well. This grant is only for a new building, it could not be used for renovations. It will not be known for several months if they will get this award.

Spear moved and Northgraves seconded a motion to deny DiMaggio's request.

There was a discussion on why we don't want to try to build a new building and that the town is divided. Also discussed was the article needs to be changed to be put on the Town Warrant. There was also a discussion of retracting the petition if the committee will know soon if their grant will be moved forward.

Motion passed 2-1.

There was a discussion on why the proposed article is not legal. The group will take it back to their lawyer.

One of the circulators agreed to take the petition back after it was presented to the Selectboard.

d. Discussion on Town Landing

Tripp joined the meeting through zoom. She is requesting to use the Town Landing again this spring. She says they have not had any problems. It is difficult for them at low tide to deal with the oysters. She requested to be able to use the Town Landing until May 14th.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to allow Tripp to use the facility until May 14th as long as she moves quickly if someone wants to launch or come into the landing.

Motion passed 3-0.

e. Maine Coast Seafood Follow Up

There has been no response from the owners/representative of Maine Coast Seafood. The Selectboard is concerned about the condition of the property and items/debris that may get out into the ocean and be hazardous.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to instruct the Town Administrator to inform them if there isn't a concrete plan or action within the next 7 days the town will begin to contact State and Federal Enforcement Agencies.

Motion passed 3-0.

f. Sign Eastern Fire (Fire Protection and Life Safety Inspection) Agreement

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to sign the Eastern Fire (Fire Protection and Life Safety Inspection) Agreement.

Motion passed 3-0.

g. Discuss MOU with Maine EMS

Snow moved and Spear seconded a motion to table until Drinkwater could join the meeting.

Motion failed

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to sign the MOU with the Maine Department of Public Safety.

Motion passed 3-0.

h. Sign Haskell's Water Treatment Service Agreement

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to sign the Haskell's Water Treatment Service Agreement.

Motion passed 3-0.

i. Discussion on Roof Repair

Spear discussed the roof with John Hansen. They both feel the roof isn't leaking, the water is coming through the peak, driven by the wind. Hansen felt that the rust spots could be re-moved and the roof painted with rust oleum. The Selectboard will look for other options and revisit the roof repair discussion.

Snow moved and Spear seconded a motion to table the discussion.

Motion passed 3-0.

VIII. Monthly Reports

The Selectboard reviewed the monthly reports.

IX. Donations

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the donation to the cemetery from Sandra Williams.

Motion passed 3-0.

Spear moved and Snow seconded a motion to approve the donation to the Fire Department from Linda and Dan Palmer

Motion passed 3-0.

X. Correspondence

The Selectboard reviewed the correspondence.

XI. Warrants Review and Approval

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the warrants.

XII. Review Items for Next Agenda

XIII. Possible Executive Session Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A §405(6)(C)

The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:12 pm.

The Selectboard exited executive session at 9:17 pm.

XIV. Monthly Reports

The Selectboard reviewed the monthly reports.

XV. Schedule Future Meetings

May 14th is the next scheduled SB meeting. The May 28th SB meeting is rescheduled to May 29th.

XVI. Adjourn

Without objection the Selectboard adjourned at 9:18.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89100452919?pwd=UkFwbXBsY2FTZUR5YjllNjR6NEZsQT09>

Meeting ID: 891 0045 2919

Passcode: 486181

Selectboard approved May 14, 2024

