

# MINUTES

## SELECTMEN'S/ASSESSORS' MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021 ONLINE INTERACTIVE 6:30 p.m.

**Selectmen present:** John Shepard (Chair), Adam Fuller, Josh White, Martha Johnston-Nash, and Bill Lombardi

**Others present:** Jay Feyler (Town Manager), John Gibbons, Gail Hawes, Jim Justice, Lanny Dean, Amanda Blazek, Catherine Meyer, Greg Grotton, Christine Simmonds, and Karen Poulin

**1. Call Selectmen's Meeting to Order:** 6:30 p.m. by John Shepard

**2. Public Comment:**

Lanny Dean wanted to make sure the board received an email about a drainage ditch.

Jay said he forwarded it to the engineer, who will also be at the meeting we're going to set up. He added engineers are expensive, so we'll try to be concise.

John thanked Lanny, said it's a work in progress, and the board heard his concerns.

**3. Approve Minutes of Tuesday, March 16, 2021:**

Motion to approve by Selectman Johnston-Nash seconded by Selectman White to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Martha asked if the Farmers Market could use the church parking area. John doesn't feel approval is contingent.

Martha noted funding could be beneficial to the town in several different areas. The Town Manager's Report is not clear, or is she misreading it? One possible area: was this regarding bond funding, which can't have anything to do with broadband, correct?

Adam said the question is about federal funding coming down which broadband would come into, not a bond.

John said in his understanding bond funding is strictly for the road bond.

Adam read aloud Item 10, the Town Manager's Report. Since POS has nothing to do with broadband, it was decided to end Item 10 with "beneficial to the town in several different areas."

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Motion by Selectman Fuller seconded by Selectman Johnston-Nash to approve the Minutes of Tuesday, March 16, 2021. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman White, Selectman Lombardi. Unanimous.

Motion by Selectman Shepard to amend the Minutes of Tuesday, March 16, 2021 as above (end Item 10 with “beneficial to the town in several different areas”).

Bill brought up one other change, in Item 9b which should read “Review of the Local Food Ordinance.”

Motion by Selectman Lombardi seconded by Selectman Johnston-Nash to amend the Minutes of Tuesday, March 16, 2021 as above (strike “sovereign” and instead use “local” in reference to the food ordinance). Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman Fuller, Selectman White. Unanimous.

John noted the use of the name “Local Food Ordinance” going forward. He also confirmed that the Minutes of Tuesday, March 16, 2021 had been amended twice, unanimously.

### **4. Approve Treasurer's Warrant dated Tuesday, April 6, 2021:**

Adam said the rock is in the ditch, four loads.

In answer to a query from Martha about winter sand, Jay said it was a mild winter for sand so we had Jones Construction bring it in and we salted it. Martha paraphrased: the product will get carried over but not the expense.

Martha also brought up the excavator. Jay explained that this was the Kubota we bought last year, and that is our lease purchase payment.

Martha also asked about Landmark Construction, three culvert work lines – both Clarry Hill and Coggins? Jay said they had the wrong email address so go back to January; they are all for Clarry Hill.

Martha then asked about two payments to Maine Municipal for workers comp. Jay said they were for annual and year end audit payments.

Martha inquired about the sports fields on page 6, specifically \$1,280.55 for baseball. Jay explained it was for line paint and base area, and Turface which they buy every year. Martha summarized it is this years' worth of product for the field.

Jay also clarified that Indeed.com, on the credit card, was used to advertise for employees. Martha said it confused her as it was under “Professional Development”; she thinks it should go under “Advertising.”

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Bill said thanks; that was on his list as well. He then asked about Durapatch and Coldpatch on page 1. Jay confirmed it was for material only, and that both are the same material.

Adam noted a paramedic handoff to Augusta and asked why not North East? Jay said it probably up in North Washington, and that was closest or the patient requested to go to Augusta. Adam confirmed we did not change our default.

Motion by Selectman Lombardi seconded by Selectman Fuller to approve the warrant. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman Johnston-Nash, Selectman White. Unanimous.

### **5. Accept the lighting efficiency grant from Efficiency Maine:**

John said good work.

Jay said we not be able to get done by end June. We're working to extend the deadline. He hasn't signed the documents yet to get the funds. Our local contractor can't do it. If registered with Efficiency Maine it's just a phone call.

Martha asked what the grant is for. Jay said lighting – to change the lighting at the Town Office from incandescent to LEDs, for a total of \$24,000.00

Martha asked about money in reserve. Jay said there is some money in reserve; we will use about all of it. She stated she is not clear on payback time or how to recoup costs.

Motion by Selectman Fuller seconded by Selectman Lombardi to approve lighting efficiency grant from Efficiency Maine. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman White. Abstaining: Selectman Johnston-Nash. 4-0-1

### **6. Discussion on future streaming of meetings:**

Jay said we have the Owl streaming method (the Meeting Owl Pro, a 360-degree smart video conferencing camera). Now that we stream meetings, the public is demanding to sit at home and watch meetings. It doesn't mean they can participate, so they may still have to come to the meeting. The Owl is okay for Planning Board but not ideal, as it needs an operator and won't pick up in-person citizens if they sit up back.

Jay then explained Town Hall Streams, where they bring cameras and microphones, and we set the dates and times of the meetings. They automatically come on, record our meetings, and the meetings are then stored up to the cloud for approximately 12 months so anyone can look at them. Cost is \$150/month for two to four meetings, \$250/month unlimited. We usually have two Board of Selectmen meetings and a Planning Board meeting in one month. The only time we might exceed that would be during budget.

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In answer to John's request for clarification, Jay said if we stay with just the Owl set up, people in the back or 8' away can't hear. The Owl is made for close, roundtable settings and works very well that way. With Town Hall Streams, one camera faces you, one camera faces the audience, and the mic picks up pretty much all the sound. It only requires dates and times put into the system and automatically comes on.

Martha said the Owl seems more difficult than what we want. Once Town Hall Streams is installed, with the town's equipment, do we need audio and video equipment to go with it? Jay said they provide the AV equipment. Martha asked about additional set up and installation fees if we don't go with premium. Jay will get final numbers if the board wants.

Adam doesn't see us putting the genie back in the bottle: we can't ignore streaming. A lot of our citizens, especially older, have had to tackle the digital aspect, so he thinks we probably should do this. He especially likes the idea of meetings being archived for five years. It's very appealing, as a lot of times – as discussed three or four meetings ago – many issues go on longer than 12 months, such as sidewalk and TCC. He's leaning towards premium. Committees, too, people could watch at home and catch up.

Josh's preference would be still to allow people to communicate with us in person. Watching in jammies is ok, but you don't want to try to do business over zoom or hybrid.

Martha agreed it's a good idea, and that we need video for playback or after the fact. She said no interaction on this, right? People either watch or play back. Jay said there are options, but they are three or four times the cost, and we can't the five or six of us do that.

Martha said it's important to have Board of Selectmen meetings done this way; is there a way to record committee meetings without us having to go to premium? Jay said the Owl will probably do a fairly good job, when people are not required to be six feet apart. We have to train people not to shuffle papers, etc., as the Owl will turn toward the loudest sound.

Adam likes the idea of an online repository; for example, you could watch all six Aging in Place meetings and get completely caught up in an evening. Lots of potential – we could do more to get word out on stuff – and also very good for active stuff like broadband, TCC, solar, road workshop.

Bill concurred. He noted one of the changes in our society in the last 18 months with the virus is that people expect to sit in their pajamas and watch the Planning Board. If we don't do that, we are leaving a section of the population behind. Just as people binge on Netflix they can binge on something else.

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Bill asked if it is possible to have people go up to the mic like regular meetings. Jay said they have a mic that should work, but we can require them to step up to it. Bill suggested the chairman could just say “Step up to the mic” to mitigate that issue.

Josh added the initial TCC assessment is on the web; people can still go to that to see what everybody's talking about. Archival is good thing to have. Everybody can stay home and look things up. If they're going to binge, they might as well binge on us.

Martha, as devil's advocate, questioned whether or not we might lose committee members if they know they are being videotaped.

Adam likes her idea but feels if they are not willing to say it on video, they probably shouldn't say it. Besides streaming and playback, you can attach minutes. You can index it with bullet points so they can skip to whatever topic. It lets you embed codes he assumes like youtube, and they click that code – let's say TCC and mention the building integrity study – click and open that. The level of interaction would be great. While he is not one for spending money on frivolous stuff, this is good.

Josh asked about a contract – one year, five years? Can we abandon it if it's not working out for us? Jay said if he recalls correctly, we can cancel at any time.

Karen Poulin said the library records their zoom programs for people to view later. They like zoom as interactive whereas livestream is not. Have you considered recording zoom meetings?

Jay said this is being recorded right now. It's great but you can't have separate computers all together. We will try to get those links on our website. Basically, we do that already.

Catherine Meyer asked if Town Hall Streams has close captioning ability for hard-of-hearing people. Jay said we can always hire a third party service, but it's extremely expensive. Catherine said they are not available after 5 p.m. Adam added that, with a kid sleeping, he's noticed a lot of great plugins that subtitle video streams; it's freeware. His guess is she could probably get one.

Adam was curious about the online turnout the library gets.

Bill said he finds the Vose timing doesn't work, so he uses youtube for example on a Saturday morning to see what they did on a Wednesday night.

John got the sense we want to move forward with Town Hall Streams.

Jay said he will put it in the budget and get those total figures to the board.

“It's a brave new world. We're moving right into it,” summarized John.

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Jay reminded that once the state of emergency declared by Governor Mills ends, town boards and committees can't meet via zoom only.

### **7. Approve \$7,950.00 from PW reserve for extended warranties:**

John said we really benefit from extended warranties: "Our trucks lead a tough life." His number reads \$7,850.00.

Motion by Selectman Fuller seconded by Selectman White to use \$7,850.00 from PW reserve to purchase Extended Warranty for PW vehicles. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman Lombardi, Selectman Johnston-Nash, Selectman White. Unanimous.

### **8. Set road workshop date and agenda:**

May 3, 2021 was agreed on as the date.

Jay will email the engineer.

John said we need to establish an agenda. There are significant concerns from people in town.

Items that were mentioned included: Coggins Hill Road report; plan to pave every road in Union and whether or not that is a good idea; goal to lay down more framework, reassess, do inventory; focus on top 10 problem areas and what they are. Martha brought up the \$1.8 million highway bond.

Bill said we need to have a listing, make a commitment to taxpayers, and communicate clearly. What this year, what next year, how much of this \$1.8 million will be used when. We need a plan; for example, with Sidelinger and Townsend, some want paved and some not. We need to know from a budgetary standpoint. We need a range monetarily and need a plan if not in stone at least in loose concrete.

John said we are departing from the role of Road Commissioner. Describing himself as old school, he prefers to defer to the Road Commissioner. He is a little cautious moving forward beyond the Road Commissioner. That is his two cents.

Bill said he wants the advice of the Road Commissioner but wants to know what we're going to do this year, next year, monetarily so we can communicate to the taxpayer. John said it is collaborative.

Adam thinks we can be productive. He said he'll save most of his thoughts for the workshop, but his personal take is he doesn't see the bond issue as replacing a PW line item. The road bond can get us over obstacles we'd never tackle. Our role isn't to tell the

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Road Commissioner what to do but rather to say this is what we hear from voters, from taxpayers; we need a framework of how to come up with number of people served, cost, long term effect of road. Outlier roads tend to be where development is. Dirt roads, the furthest out, tend to be new developments where people move to. Our first step is not just coming up with cost factors but others such as how many live on a dead-end road? Is it a through road? We need to apply more than just a cost qualifier.

Bill said you took \$400,000.00 out of the road budget and financed it, the opposite of what you were just saying. We've got \$1.3 million – we need to prioritize, hear from the Road Commissioner, then it's our decision what to do and how we're going to allocate. Another item that Jay doesn't like is a lot of taxpayers complain about the speeding issue. As part of the road workshop, we must address at some level the taxpayer concerns about roads. That needs to be on the agenda in some form.

Martha asked about thoughts on BOS getting involved in discussions with the state regarding their projects such as aprons they haven't fixed, the four corner light that goes out occasionally and getting that more stable, a speed sign coming into it from the east.

Jay said the state notifies us when they are doing paving and projects. Usually one of the elected reps emails you and takes credit though they had nothing to do with it. The light is a state issue. He emails, anybody can email. It's the State of Maine. We can partner, etc. but he doesn't recommend it now as we are not a DOT favorite. They do it for reasons we don't get into.

Jay added while he's not here to cause hate and discontent, the board will get serious resistance if it wants to go road by road. It's not the board's job to set policy and approve budgets – pave here, a culvert there. What you'll see is that the person who screams the most you have to answer to. We have free access to an engineer from one of our paving companies. Trust the experts. None of us have the expertise they have. So fair warning.

### **9. COVID-19 updates:**

Jay said none, but he sees in the paper it's increasing.

### **10. Other business:**

Jay said in the packets he sent a tax certificate for tree growth and open space added -- two parcels, #1552 and #242. As assessors the board needs to vote to collect this amount.

Motion by Selectman Johnston-Nash seconded by Selectman Lombardi to take these parcels #1552 and #242 as outlined out of tree growth and bill accordingly. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman Fuller, Selectman White. Unanimous.

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### 11. Town Manager's Report: None.

Adam brought up the issue of trash cans – none by the tennis or basketball courts and lots of trash. He believes Abe Knight had chimed in about how it's the same as Ayer Park: people just throw garbage. TCC mentioned trash cans are not their responsibility. You can get commercial trash cans for \$1,200.00 each, which is fairly expensive, but a lot of young families in town have been in this discussion. Greg used to help clean up. Maybe this is something we could look into.

Martha said she would direct people to Parks and Rec.

Adam said he thought of it, but they have a limited budget. They'd come to us for purse strings. We're not discussing next year's budget yet, but maybe we should look at.

He added it's not unheard of for a town to have a waste bin in a park. People are talking about it. They're not wrong.

Bill asked Jay about an update on treasurer candidates. Jay replied we have three strong candidates; all have held the title Town Manager in the midcoast and two have done Treasurer work. He meets with the top candidate on Friday.

Bill asked about CMP – PW garage, normally 200 range in last few months 16; lot of credit to solar panels.

Jay said street lights are about a 40% decrease. They are still trying to charge us for old ones that don't exist. The town office is down about 30% though they are having difficulty and bill us wrong. This has to do with heat pumps; oil consumption is way down because of the heat pumps – a good investment once we get CMP straightened out.

Jay also mentioned a shot in the dark: there are some federal grants out of Pingree's and Golden's offices, \$100k to \$1 million. We are working on possibly applying for midcoast-wide broadband; we'd have to buy in. As a small municipality we don't have the staff to get things ready by the deadline. He thought about TCC, could throw that in, but we don't have any ready for construction report. Big cities with two or three planners on staff will outdo us, so he doesn't have a lot of confidence here. Normally their pet projects are with people they know.

Jay sent emails – one is from Roger about the Food Ordinance and concerns he had. Next meeting you have to vote on those ordinances, solar and a couple minor changes in the Land Use Ordinance.

Jay added that right now, the state is not having a November election.

Budget packets will be out no later than the 19<sup>th</sup>.



**12. Committee Reports:**

**a. Broadband:**

Adam said there will be a meeting with new members on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The gist is which direction to recommend board goes: LCI, Tidewater, ConnectME grant, or fully commit to the midcoast task force? Adam continued:

Brief synopsis – long term, municipal broadband is really top notch. There is some concern about how long it will take. Also Tidewater is existing, local, and ConnectME is there. We recommend both options right now.

Lincolntonville has 90% coverage yet they very much signed onto municipal broadband. We can probably do a ConnectME grant; we won't get 100% town but it could benefit some taxpayers and won't cost, so there's no reason not to pursue it.

Municipal broadband is very much ahead of us. To be involved with that task force would mean \$15k in our budget toward the engineering cost (probably half, but they ask that). Another aspect would be to commit to their set of six principles. Would the board like to make a motion of the six principles?

The committee hopes to start looking at having an engineering plan done. No cost right now for signing onto the task force.

Bill asked if 100/100 is an unrealistic number. It might be a goal but not really achievable? He will vote for it but thinks it's not really technically cost efficient for towns to be doing that.

John Gibbons stated with fiber network it is absolutely achievable. With certain other kinds of networks that's a good concern, cable for example, a shared access medium. With fiber, there is separate fiber to each residence. So one gigabyte service is achievable.

Adam stated cable is a different animal: 100 download, 10 upload if you're lucky. Downeast broadband is turning into a national model. Most of Maine runs gigabyte speeds business or not. Municipal is like a spiderweb that covers everybody – you can wire in a lot of different ways. Rural often has long runs, condensed on the main track. The more you build out the network, the better network you have. Starlink upgraded this week to 250 by satellite. Everyone says fiber is still light years ahead of them. It would still be an order of magnitude better than what we have.

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### Midcoast Internet Coalition Guiding Principles

- Establish regional utility district through interlocal agreement as permitted by State law
- Build a Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) internet network to provide cheaper, faster, and better high-speed internet access
- Ensure that the network is open access, inviting multiple providers to deliver services to residents and businesses which will offer a range of products, pricing options, and competition
- Establish a minimum symmetrical speed of 100 Mbps for download / upload to be provided by any service provider leasing the utility's dark fiber network with the capability of providing symmetrical 1 Gig for users choosing that option
- Provide universal access to all residences and businesses within the geographic region of the utility
- Best in class customer support with locally managed and operated offices

Motion by Selectman Fuller seconded by Selectman Lombardi to adopt the six principles above. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman Johnston-Nash, Selectman White. Unanimous.

John Gibbons said a couple things are coming from the Midcoast Internet Coalition. They asked towns to allocate a substantial portion of DC money to broadband. This will be coming down the pike in the not too distant future.

#### **b. Food Ordinance:**

Josh said there has been no meeting since the last Board of Selectmen meeting. Tomorrow night is a meeting where we will go over the lawyer's suggestions, and get what we're trying to do out to the public. He expects to be approving the ordinance in two weeks.

#### **c. Aging in Place in Union:**

Bill reported a bang-up St. Patrick's Day luncheon that served 52 people. The committee received notes about how great it was, and a couple donations to Meals on Wheels. The next luncheon will be June 24. Bill offered a tip of the hat to Eric Durbas. Currently in progress and on the agenda is working with the Masons about doing light fix up for seniors.

#### **d. Future of the Thompson Community Center:**

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Martha said the first meeting was March 17. Rebekah Smith was elected Chair, Sharon Caron Vice Chair, and Martha is doing minutes. Rebekah said she'd set up time to tour TCC with Lori. We split into two groups and did that this afternoon. Next meeting is tomorrow night at 6:30 p.m. via zoom on the calendar.

### 13. Selectmen's Report:

Adam said we'll talk a lot in the road workshop. He mentioned his road, Barrett Hill Road is a great example of what needs to be discussed. There are now 22 houses after the pavement ends. He has several elderly neighbors, one who calls before he leaves his house as he gets stuck in the road. That's a problem. Adam is aware the road bond is nowhere near what we need to fix a road like his. Also, he can't get mail at his house as the post office won't come up; but the school bus has to come. The bus has gotten stuck. He does thank the PW guys; they dumped a ton of stuff, and it gets pounded in. But what if the ambulance had to get up?

John said sounds good for the road workshop.

Martha thanked everyone for their input.

### 14. Future Agenda Items:

Adam said trash cans.

### 15. Adjourn:

Motion by Selectman Lombardi seconded by Selectman White to adjourn. Vote by roll call. Selectmen in favor: Selectman Shepard, Selectman Fuller, Selectman Johnston-Nash. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo  
Secretary