

MINUTES

**SELECT BOARD/ASSESSORS' MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023
WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM
ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS
6:00 p.m.**

Select Board present: Jim Justice, Adam Fuller, Martha Johnston-Nash, Wayne Kirkpatrick, and Linda Mountainland

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Robert Doucette, Greg Grotton, Ellen Harrison, John Gibbons, Steve Migliorini, Erik Amundsen, and others

- 1. Call Select Board Meeting to Order:** at 6:00 p.m. by Wayne Kirkpatrick.
- 2. Enter Executive Session for request of Poverty Abatement 36 MRSA § 841:**

Motion to enter Executive Session for request of Poverty Abatement 36 MRSA § 841 by:
Linda Mountainland
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
*4-0

*Adam Fuller had not yet joined the meeting.

- 3. Exit Executive Session:** at 6:20 p.m.

Motion to close Executive Session by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
5-0

- 4. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 5. Approve Minutes of Tuesday, December 5, 2023:**

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Linda Mountainland
4-0-1 abstention (Justice)

- 6. Approve Treasurer's Warrants dated Tuesday, December 19, 2023:**

Motion by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
5-0

Select Board Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2023

7. Action from Executive Session:

Motion to approve the abatement of taxes in the amount of \$578.15 for case #23-1 pending denial by Maine State Housing by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

8. Discussion on Overlock Hill Cemetery Properties:

Tabled, as Adam is waiting to hear back from a state agency.

9. Approve Legal Action on Map 1 Lot 11:

Jay said the board would be approving possible legal action, if the landowner does not follow through with what is required from the CEO.

Robert Doucette spoke about his business as well as personal challenges during what has been a rough year. He said he has had a garage since he's been here. He still does some towing and tows his own stuff. He works on excavators, bulldozers, sailboats, etc. He acknowledged he has a mess and said he has been trying to clean it up. He also said he talked to (CEO) Grant today, and the plan is to have the property all cleaned up by June 30, 2024.

Jay said it would be up to the CEO who has not yet signed off on that date. He also noted that Robert had been asked to apply for a junkyard permit. Robert said he did not need it with a garage. Discussion followed. Martha expressed sympathy for Robert's situation. Adam said he was inclined to trust our CEO. He noted the letter says the next step is to go to legal action, and the CEO can let the board know if something gets worked out in the meantime.

Motion to empower the CEO to take what legal action he needs to take to resolve this issue by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Jim Justice
5-0

10. Confirm the Road Commissioner's removal of objects in the ROW on Quiggle and Mt. Pleasant Roads:

Robert Doucette spoke about his property and having a ROW. Jay said there is a state law about having things in the ROW re: deadlly fixed objects. He added it is a three-rod road, so 49.5', say 50', 25' from the center line. He pulled the deed, and when Robert bought the property from Jones they did not convey the ROW in the deed, a moot point.

Adam said he deep dove into this last year, due to the sidewalk issue on Depot Street, re: exactly where rights as homeowners end.

Select Board Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2023

Jay said Robert agreed twice to move the articles but has not done it, and importantly it needs to be done by snowplow season. Robert said he will see if he can get it done in the next week or so. Jay said just push it back 10'. Robert said he will take care of it. The board thanked Robert.

11. Appointments of Sestercentennial Committee members:

Motion to approve both by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

12. Town Manager's Report:

Jay said they had a nice employee luncheon today and gave out service awards. As in the past they used credit card points to give everybody gift cards.

Re: storm damage, he said over the years Public Works has done a very good job of getting our roads and ditches taken care of and our culverts oversized. He said we had very little erosion, mostly trees down – we dealt with Knox, we seem to have the CMP and EMA stuff working cohesively now. Martha thanked Public Works for getting the tree down on the corner of Pound Hill and Shepard Hill Roads.

Jay also said we have quite a bit of money putting up signs, cones, etc. which is 100% FEMA reimbursable, noting other stuff is overtime. He added the the governor declared an emergency for Knox County (and all counties except Cumberland and York), so we should be able to get some of that money back.

He also said delivering the food will start tomorrow (as previously discussed), continuing ,over the next couple of days with some of it probably after Christmas.

Jim brought up his neighbor's dead trees. Jay said under state law if the tree is a danger, it is the homeowner's responsibility to cut it down. He added town crews cannot cut anything above a wire, as there is a danger of it going the wrong way which is why they use the tree services which are very expensive. He noted the Shepard Hill section was over \$3,000 which Martha had heard was not bad. Jay said they are talking about putting a chipper on an excavator, as no one is getting responses for roadside brush cutting which is not only labor intensive but also more Workers Comp costs.

13. Other Business: None.

14. Public Comment:

Ellen Harrison requested that the Town Manager give a year-end check-in on the application for the redo of the tennis courts. Jay said he answered her email. She brought up the importance of public information.

Select Board Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2023

In answer to Adam, Jay said we did the preapplication so now it is all in their hands, and they will do a visit. He also said we had Maine Tennis come up; they said they would have a quote by the end of the year, which is needed for the full application, which is not open yet until we get approved by them to be able to apply. He added he did not think there would be an issue for us to apply and qualify. He said they award in the fall, you start the following year, and the preliminary application (which we have already done) closes at the end of December.

15. Committee Reports:

a. Broadband

John Gibbons said LCI is still working with the ramifications of the recent change in grant funding sources for the fiber network buildout they are planning to carry out. The committee met last week to sort out priorities in the near term and reached an agreement on what we need from LCI and how soon. They plan to meet with LCI shortly after the holidays.

With LCI they are looking for, in particular, what are the addresses in Union that they will be able to reach with this new fiber network? They are keeping in mind two questions: 1) does it come to my house? and 2) when will it be here? They are also keeping the schedule in mind. They will be working on their ombudsman role. He expects to have something more concrete in six weeks or so.

b. Green Space – None.

c. Sestercentennial – None.

d. Ambulance Advisory – None.

e. Thompson Working Group

Steve Migliorini said the working group met on December 12. They discussed and reviewed the modifications on the Request For Qualifications for the design build options for the Union school. The revisions discussed took into account the results of the November 7 town vote, which will be highlighted for prospective developers to consider. The working group expects the RFQ to be ready to be issued by mid-January and is optimistic that these revisions will attract qualified senior housing developers for the project. Adam said sounds great.

On pickleball: Ellen Harrison said Parks and Rec meets tomorrow. She wanted to do a summary report on pickleball just for public knowledge. Adam confirmed this is just for pickleball.

Select Board Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2023

Ellen said beginning in 2023 they established Union Elementary as an inside space for pickleball. Hours January to June were Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to noon, and Thursdays 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. They had good attendance.

She said they then moved to the TCC outdoor tennis courts. They taped then painted lines with town funding. They played an average of three days a week, usually 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. depending on the weather. They were able to progressively improve the surface of the court with help of town funding, filling in cracks, cleaning off, etc. She said they got tennis quality approved money to do this and noted it will be a smooth transition when we get somebody to do the courts. She added they met tennis players in town and got good input re: the importance of the courts to townspeople.

She said in November they moved back to Union Elementary where they should be able to keep going until the end of June again. Hours are Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to noon, Sundays 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. She added attendance has been good, people are enthusiastic, and beginners are encouraged. She thanked the Town of Union and SAD 40.

To participate in pickleball, she encouraged people to download an app or just show up. Jay said the Parks and Rec Facebook page has pickleball contact info.

In answer to Jim, Ellen said there is no cost involved; they have beginner rackets and the town has purchased pickleballs; no special uniform needed. Linda clarified the money comes from taxpayers allocated to Parks and Rec, which Adam noted also does a lot of fundraising. Adam thanked Ellen for the update. Jay said there is a pickleball racket on the bench upstairs.

16. Select Board Report:

Linda thanked the community for the outpouring of help with the free Christmas dinner that she and John are hosting at the Masonic building. She said anyone alone for Christmas, any family who can't afford Christmas dinner, anyone new to town please come. From 11:00 a.m. to noon Molly Luce will do carols, with serving of food noon to 2:00 p.m., all free. She said Shanie from the hardware store is doing all the decorations. She again thanked the community for really stepping up, noting she and John have been totally amazed.

Wayne brought up a situation re: SAD 40 buses. Erik Amundsen said they are addressing that and have a transportation meeting Thursday at 4:00 p.m. Discussion followed. In answer to Adam, Erik said he is trying to have the meetings at 5:30 p.m. and no update on videotaping the meetings. In answer to Linda, Adam explained ParentSquare. Jay said they probably do a pretty good job (getting info to) parents but a horrendous job getting info to the public. Adam noted the bond issue highlighted a communications disconnect.

Select Board Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2023

Martha said kudos to Kevin Curry for cutting up a tree in the road last night with his chainsaw. Linda said Jerry Curry did the same thing for her. Adam said the town crew did a great job on the hilltop. Jay said the fire department did some of that, too.

Wayne said the fly car was condemned and is not fixable.

17. Adjourn:

Motion by: Martha Johnston-Nash

2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary