

MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEETING TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022 ONLINE VIA ZOOM 6:30 p.m.

Select Board present: Jim Justice, Adam Fuller, Martha Johnston-Nash, Josh White, and Bill Lombardi

Budget Committee present: John Gibbons, Barry Norris, Erik Amundsen, John Mountainland, Lawrence Nash, Mike Drickey, Paul Gaudreau, Terry Brackett, and Wayne Kirkpatrick

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Jesse Thompson (EMS Chief), Christine Simmonds (Village Soup), Greg Grotton, Abraham Knight, Sarah Drickey, and others

1. **Call Select Board Meeting to Order:** at 6:30 p.m. by Adam Fuller.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Public Comment:** None.
4. **Approve Minutes of Tuesday, January 4, 2022:**

Motion by: Martha Johnston-Nash
2nd by: Bill Lombardi
5-0

Approve Minutes of Thursday, January 6, 2022:

Motion by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

5. **Approve Treasurer's Warrants dated January 18, 2022:**

Motion by: Josh White
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
4-0-1 abstention (Justice)

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6. Ambulance Budget Presentation from Chief Thompson:

Jesse presented the budget which had options as usual. He noted the dire situation of staffing emergency personnel locally, statewide, and nationally. The big ticket item: personnel. Option A1 would add four full-time paramedics and keep two per diems, shifting some of the cost to the fire department. Option A2 would mean keeping only one per diem person and hiring four full-time paramedics.

Discussion followed about paramedic training; 2021 budget now at 51%; the \$275,000 ambulance request from ARPA; impact of the budget increase on the taxpayer; the crucial impact of emergency services personnel and how it is a workers' market. Jesse's work, both EMS and budgetary, was praised.

Jay added you will be seeing significant increases in payroll in all departments. The State of Maine can't get enough staff in fire and ambulance departments. There has got to be some state and federal response there in helping us recruit people and grants. He noted this increase will be the least impactful, because it is shared with two other towns.

Option A1 is an 85.4% increase, which Bill said is both hard to swallow and understandable.

Motion to accept Jesse's A1 budget by: Josh White

2nd by: Jim Justice

5-0

John Gibbons then asked the Budget Committee if all were in favor of adopting A1 as above:

8 in favor (Norris, Amundsen, Mountainland, Nash, Drickey, Gaudreau, Kirkpatrick, Gibbons)

1 opposed (Brackett)

2 absent (Cobb, Day)

Motion passes.

7. Discussion and vote to suspend signatures for previously funded outside agencies:

Motion by: Martha Johnston-Nash

2nd by: Bill Lombardi

5-0

8. Appointments to the Future of the TCC Committee:

Motion to accept Ariana Whiting's application by: Martha Johnston-Nash

2nd by: Bill Lombardi

5-0

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Motion to accept Michael Beardsley's application by: Bill Lombardi
2nd by: Josh White
5-0

9. Discussion on SB Sidelines:

Conversation essentially determined that the SB Sidelines, which Bill started about a year and a half ago, are a good thing — a “Cliffs notes” version of the meeting getting into the reasons why board members do what they do. Feedback the board received a few weeks ago was overwhelmingly positive. The need to be conscientious was brought up a number of times, in terms of not being one-sided and not letting personal opinions bleed in. Bill added that every board member is welcome to comment, and he gets a draft of the Sidelines out 48 to 72 hours ahead of time so Jay and the board can offer comments.

10. Town Manager's Report:

Regarding Public Works, no major storm so far, but the rain and ice have been hell. We have spent a ton of money; probably three-quarters of our money has been spent on dirt roads. It has been quite an expensive winter thus far. Storms seem to come on weekends so we can pay overtime. Big trucks don't like ice; we've had some tow bills. Parts went up 15 to 20%, and diesel went up another seven or eight cents today.

Bids for Ayer Park & Clarry Hill came in last Thursday. We will go with the most responsible and responsive bidder who can do the job. It will be on agenda next meeting. Clarry Hill was close to Jay's estimate; it could get delayed again if we get a mitigation grant and would only cost us 20%. That caveat will be put in the contract of the successful bidder.

Covid finally hit our office, which is why we're still on zoom. Luckily the person was exposed over the long weekend and didn't bring it into the office. Probably in the next four to six weeks we will start meeting in person again.

Budget Committee dates are being worked on.

Josh asked about having a bulk tank for diesel. Jay said it would not happen with this year's numbers, but it has been looked into and should be talked about in the future.

Martha asked about ARPA funds. Jay has not heard anything from the county. Bill said there will be a zoom meeting about ARPA funds Thursday.

In answer to Martha, Jay said the Special Town Meeting by law has to be in person.

Bill asked about the purchase of the Heald Highway (BM Clark) property. Jay said he has preliminary survey results, and everything should be done by next meeting; he believes there has been an acceptance of the Pullen Committee offer by the seller without caveats.

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11. Other Business: None.

12. Committee Reports:

At the next meeting, Adam would like to hear from someone representing TMA, other than Martha who is already involved in the board and CFTCC.

a. Broadband

John Gibbons said LCI met to discuss Jay's recent meeting with the principals. The purpose was to formulate priorities for a second meeting. We are not there yet but moving along.

The Coalition held their monthly directors' meeting last week with a primary focus on financing for the Core Four towns. They are planning a campaign to obtain signups and possibly first month deposits. This is also progressing but slowly.

Adam echoed John's view that they will have more information at the next meeting.

b. Aging in Place in Union

Bill said the next meeting is January 10. There will be a St. Patrick's Day luncheon featuring corned beef; sign up by March 3. Stacey has done a brilliant job putting together flyers, press releases, etc.

He had a nice conversation with Holly DeYoung about the Community Circles program she has done. He hopes for a soft launch on that in spring when we can hopefully meet outside.

c. Future of the Thompson Community Center

Martha said there is a meeting Monday at 6:00 p.m. via zoom. They will get started on what they need to do to bring back to the Select Board.

She said Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. the thrift shop will be having a bag sale downstairs. The new thrift shop will also be open upstairs. They have had some people walking in the gym, which they hope to have open mornings for people to come in and exercise. More information is to come, including weekday hours. Right now they are making up a list of volunteers.

Adam reiterated the committee's focus on going forward with fleshing out options, actual cost, and actual time frame. TMA now has the building. We want

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to go to the voters with all the options. He thanked everyone involved in TMA – it's a lot of work, and they have really stepped up.

Abraham Knight asked about costs involved in getting some of this information, such as a potential appraisal. Adam said specific costs would have to be brought to the board and weighed option by option; meanwhile utilize the expertise of people on the committee such as realtor Erik Amundsen.

Abraham then asked about Josh having said some people would like to tear the building down and put up a new one; any idea what size, what would be in it, and would part of the building be saved? Adam said for the most part we are not looking at other buildings. Bill said this is a conversation for another time.

Greg Grotton said the townspeople should decide what they want for a community center more than the Select Board; they should also know square footage costs, noting a similar building in Yarmouth cost \$314 per SF while Siemens had a cost of about \$300 per SF.

d. Green Space

Josh said they met on the 12th. A representative from Midcoast Farmland Trust gave a presentation. They need to talk to some more specialized people about deed restrictions, etc. They will hear from a lawyer at the January 26 meeting.

13. Select Board Reports:

Josh will drive around picking up evaluations, which had been interrupted with the zoom meetings.

Martha enjoyed Budget Committee members staying on and joining the meeting.

John said the Budget Committee met last night to discuss Special Town Meeting warrant items. They voted to recommend that townspeople vote for it for the \$30k and will have someone speak on this at the meeting.

Jim, Martha, and Adam all thanked Public Works for the excellent road care, including working on our roads by 4:30 a.m. Adam's daughter also appreciates the well-tended roads and gives him daily updates from her bus experience.

Adam thanked Christine Simmonds for the excellent Union Elementary photos in the Courier Gazette.

14. Future Agenda Requests: None.

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15. Adjourn:

Motion by: Bill Lombardi

2nd by: Josh White

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary