

MINUTES

**SELECT BOARD/ASSESSORS' MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024
WILLIAM L. PULLEN MUNICIPAL BUILDING MEETING ROOM
ONLINE NON-INTERACTIVE ON TOWN HALL STREAMS
6:30 p.m.**

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

Others present: Jay Feyler (Town Manager), Kathleen Thornton, Josh White, Heather Jackson, John Mountainland, Greg Grotton, Clairlynn Rountree, Erik Amundsen, John Gibbons, Argy Nestor, Ruth Ann Senff-Wiemer, and others

- 1. Call Select Board Meeting to Order:** at 6:30 p.m. by Adam Fuller
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Approve Minutes of Wednesday, March 6, 2024:**

Motion by: Linda Mountainland
2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

Martha said under item 10, Select Board Report, re: storytelling, scratch “nearly 100 people” which was said by Wayne not her.

Amended motion for the change of Martha wanting to omit Wayne’s statement accredited to her by: Linda Mountainland
2nd by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
5-0

- 4. Approve Treasurer’s Warrants dated Tuesday, March 19, 2024:**

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

- 5. Discussion on Coggins Hill protection plans:**

Green Space Committee Chair Kathleen Thornton recapped the situation. She said the Coggins Hill property was acquired by the town in 2021, because the owner did not pay their taxes in a timely manner. It was decided to put the property up for sale. A group of citizens found out that it was for sale and formed a nonprofit to raise money and make an offer on the property. Two abutters also made offers on the property. The select board

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voted to keep the property for several reasons: 1) a lot of interest from people to protect the property/view; 2) it's the highest point in town, and the town's Comprehensive Plan calls for preserving high places and blueberry fields, both of which this is.

There was a vote to keep the property, but many in the room at the time were concerned because there was no mechanism in place to protect the property from development or to make sure that people had access to it. So the board at the time voted to create the Green Space Committee. They urged all the people involved in putting money down on the property to be part of it and try to come up with some way to work together, which did occur, as five of the six committee members are people who put money up to buy the property in the first place.

They spent a year and a half or more meeting and researching many options re: public property. They looked at easements and deed restrictions. They talked with landowners, third-party easement holders, lawyers, and government officials. They whittled it down to two options: 1) a deed restriction and 2) a third-party easement.

Kathleen added there are a lot of preconceived notions about what those things are. She encouraged particularly the select board to read the Green Space Committee (GSC) report which is online. She noted the committee put in hundreds of hours on the report, which she feels is a really good summary of those two options.

She reiterated the main message is to ask everyone to please go through the report. She noted the committee was split, which is why they came to the board with the two options in the report. Referring to a letter they wrote to the board in the fall, she said they felt it best to let the voters choose between the two options.

They (GSC) see it a two-step process: 1) which avenue to pursue and 2) work to be done figuring out what restrictions to put on the property. They are also looking at a management plan as they want to put a minimum amount of restrictions on the property, and everything else goes into a management plan which can be changed. A lot of care has to be made re: restrictions. She added that the property could have the same set of restrictions either way, but we have to be sure those are the ones we want.

In sum, Kathleen said the voters would have to vote on whatever final document was produced. She said the GSC's feeling is that the select board could just vote one way or the other, but because of the number of people who feel one way or another very strongly, they would highly recommend the board send it to the voters via warrant. Back when they asked the board for money for the survey, she reminded, Jay had suggested that people should vote on it. She again urged the board and others to read the report, and to dispel preconceived notions.

Adam thanked Kathleen and the committee for their mountain of work. He also thanked them for their patience, as back in August the board was dealing with mining and other issues.

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Extensive discussion ensued, including re: the two options; whether or not we want or need either one; a vision for the property; and the role of the committee.

Adam said the survey of the Coggins Hill property is up in the town office. (Money for the survey was approved by voters.) Kathleen said the reason we did the survey was to make sure we had access from Coggins Hill Road (we do). Adam added the town should know what it owns. He also noted the committee unanimously concluded that we need to keep and protect the property.

Josh White (who served on GSC), John Mountainland, Heather Jackson (who served on GSC, also a member of the Coggins Hill Preservation Association), and Greg Grotton shared their thoughts.

Motion that the board vote to place deed restrictions on the Coggins Hill property which would prevent development and retain agricultural uses and informal access by: Martha Johnston-Nash

Martha said the idea of the motion is to get to that point, then task the committee possibly in working forward to see what the use would be, and the specifics of the deed restrictions which would go to voters. In other words, the board sends it back to the committee to give them an idea of what the deed restrictions would be, then they take that to the voters.

2nd by: Jim Justice

More discussion followed, including concerns about re-tasking the GSC.

Kathleen asked the board to come up with clear tasks they need from the GSC. Adam agreed the committee should be repurposed with new bullet points.

Martha said the board tasked the GSC with this, they brought two good options, and the town will be able to see what those deed restrictions are. She added the board has to have a better clearer understanding of what the restrictions will be and how the property will be used before they take it to the town.

Clairlynn Rountree (who served on GSC) shared her thoughts. More discussion followed.

Linda asked to move the motion.

Above motion passed,
5-0

Adam told Kathleen she could expect a bullet-pointed task list; if they look at it and say this is not how we want to do it, just get back to the board – email him directly – and go from there. He thanked the committee, Kathleen, and everybody else for the discussion.

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6. Discussion on the Animal Control Ordinance update:

Jay said they brought this up before, about limiting the number of dogs that a commercial kennel can have. The ACO recommendation was 10. He needs to know what the board wants to do before he spends time and legal costs.

Motion that we limit it to 10 by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Linda Mountainland
5-0

Jay said the board will vote on the actual ordinance later.

7. Other Business:

Jay said they have a Sestercentennial email from Norma Hunt who lives in Waldoboro. He added you can have people who live out of town on some boards and committees.

Motion to nominate Norma Hunt to the Sestercentennial Committee by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Jim Justice
5-0

Jay brought up the Landmark contract re: tennis and basketball courts because he needs to put it in the budget. Estimated cost of services is \$9,500 with the application itself depending on time commitment \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Adam said a big part of this was survey work on the courts; if we go forward with any kind of improvements we need to know where the boundaries are, and realistically whatever happens with TCC will not include the courts.

Jay clarified the survey is approximately \$4,500, then about \$5,000 is design and cost estimate for the courts. Adam wanted to make sure we are not committed to go forward until after we've seen that.

Jay said we do have deadlines; with the grant they're probably going to have to go simultaneously. By the end of June he believes the LWC upgrade has to be in, so they'll have to work on these things together – as they're doing the survey, preliminary design and cost estimate, he's got to be filling out the application. In answer to Adam, Jay said if we don't get the grant we can still pull the plug on final work, but most of the money's going to be spent because by the time we hear from the grant it could be fall 2025.

Adam clarified we are not locking ourselves into redoing the courts. Jay said he will go back and read through it, noting funding has to be approved before we submit the grant.

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Linda asked if this is something we have to do this year. Jay said the LWC Fund would decertify that if we asked them, the courts; the property can never change but eventually you still have to provide equal or better recreational opportunities of what that provides, so somewhere along the line you've got to take care of it. He said this year they have preliminary approval to apply, and as long as have all the paperwork, surveys, etc. it is pretty much guaranteed we're probably going to get the grant. Linda said it's still going to cost the town \$250,000 which Jay said is the average cost. Once we get through this first step, he added, there is a tennis grant – not sure if pickleball can be on it, too – of about \$50,000 to get us down to \$200,000. Martha expressed major concerns about committing more taxes with the school, TCC, etc.

Erik Amundsen said like a lot of other things, you are in this situation because it was kicked down the road to save money, and in the end result it costs you money. He said \$9,500 to do the survey and apply – that's it, nothing else will be committed even if it (the grant) is approved. He said there are funds out there that can be gotten most of the time if you do the research. He urged the board to make decisions.

Jay said they cover 50% of the costs including this cost, if we get the grant.

Linda asked how long we have to spend the grant if we get it. Jay said he has the wording upstairs and will look; he believes you have to have the support of your community by a vote, noting it's a point system. Adam confirmed you would have to say you're committed to your half. Jay said the award could be as early as this fall. Wayne said we should at least get the survey due to TCC.

Motion that we just do the survey on the property over there (tennis and basketball courts) and not go ahead with the application by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash

Linda confirmed with Jay the grant covers 50%; we pay and get reimbursed.

Above motion passed,
5-0

Re: the fire station improvement, Jay said he talked to the engineer today. They are recommending L. G. Whitcomb, the second lowest bidder. It's going to be approximately \$157,000. He noted re: paving, approximately \$10 a ton is added to use the polymer asphalt in front of the town office which, when the school is doing paving, we should look into, as it's very resistant to weight. In answer to Jim, he clarified it's virgin asphalt with a polymer injected into it, a little difficult to put down but a much better long-term life; they are using it on the turnpike now. Adam confirmed it will be on this year's budget. In answer to Martha, Jay said he will present some reserve and other funds including ARPA. He noted L. G. Whitcomb did the Clarry Hill project last year.

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Motion to accept LG Whitcomb's bid for the fire station by: Wayne Kirkpatrick
2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash
5-0

In answer to Wayne, Jay said they will start in July.

8. Town Manager Report:

Jay said the Easter Egg Hunt is coming up next Saturday at 9:00 a.m. He needs volunteers to put out Easter eggs. He added it's over in half an hour. Adam said anybody who has a kid, it's a must. Jay said the Easter bunny is committed.

Jay also said as everybody knows Matt is leaving (Public Works). He will send an email tomorrow and has offered the job to an internal employee whom he thinks he will do a fantastic job. He added Public Works is hiring again, since on April 19 Matt will be headed to Georgia. Jim said Matt did a good job, echoed by Jay.

9. Public Comment:

Erik Amundsen handed the board paperwork re: a quarter of the school budget, special education. The board thanked Erik, who offered to answer questions once they've read it.

10. Committee Reports:

a. Broadband

John Gibbons said they are off and running. The grant contract with MCA has been signed. Jay, Adam, and all the committee members met with LCI the week before last to work through the detailed plans. What they got was a bit less detailed than what they were looking for, but they got a lot. They are at the point where they can start to draw down the grant money from MCA right now, important because of supplies including between 30 and 40 miles of fiber and components they need to build a network.

They have selected a contractor to put fiber on the poles and expect to see fiber starting to go up on the poles possibly as early as next month. They expect to be making connections by the end of summer and possibly as early as July. They are still waiting to get from them the detailed list of roads and addresses that the new fiber will be covering, needed before they get serious about publicizing this to the citizens. They expect to discuss soon the specifics of what the committee can do to help publicize, likely focused on getting early signups for service with the new fiber. There will be advantages for citizens to sign up early due to the way LCI is planning to cluster the connections. In answer to Jim, John said they need about another month to get the details of when LCI is ready to start pushing that, certainly not later than May.

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Jay said he sent the committee stuff from Alan late this afternoon. Adam said there are roughly 245 Union addresses with no high speed internet at all right now, adding that until the last year or so the government has treated broadband as a luxury. He said this provides broadband without hitting the taxpayers with a bill which is huge, and it would not happen without John on the helm – “there is no doubt without John Gibbons on this, we wouldn’t be where we are.” The board and attendees thanked John. Adam added LCI has been a great partner through the process.

b. Green Space

Kathleen asked for the board to get the bullet points to the committee as soon as possible. Adam said he will start an email with the board tonight.

c. Sestercentennial

Argy said the musical will be at the elementary school on Tuesday, April 30, at 1:30 p.m. The contra dance will be Thursday, May 9, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The three-day schedule will be finalized tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. It will be posted on the historical society site, the Sestercentennial Committee’s Facebook and Instagram sites, and hopefully on the town site. Also hopefully between now and then, she added, it will not change.

The parade has 27 entries. Ruth Ann has been incredible – there are floats, bands, unicyclists from Ashland, etc. In answer to Wayne, Argy said they know the parade route but there will be some follow-up discussion on it. Ruth Ann said she has to make an appointment with Jay.

Adam brought up the marshal which the board will discuss. Argy said they will discuss it in the committee as well, at their April 1 meeting; they will plan to provide that information then the board can decide.

The commemorative coin design is complete and very cool. Once it goes to the printer, which will be soon, it will be ready in two weeks.

The book will go to print at the end of May. It will follow the last 50 years like the gold one did the 200 years before that. It will be a paperback.

Michael Colson is starting the latticework this week on the bandstand. As soon as that’s finished, he will start working on the roof. He noticed the plants are coming up. Argy added if you see him out there say hello and thank him for his work; also he has donated all the materials, the paints. Scot Sabins through Hammond Lumber donated the roofing materials. They just received a donation for \$2,500 to

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cover the labor cost, so the town will not be paying anything to have that job complete.

Linda said she'd emailed re: information on money spent and donations. Argy said they know what the \$10,000 in the '23-'24 budget will pay for, and they have information on the other \$10,000 expenditures the bulk of which at this point is trying to pay for the re-doing of the map. Argy added the map was created in '68 and repainted in '82 and hasn't been touched since, so it will cost a pretty penny.

Linda asked about the parade costing \$10,000 as she had understood it would be volunteer. Argy said there are many things – a few that haven't been sponsored – such as the Midcoast Community Band is \$350. The Shriners are \$300. The Dunlap Highland Band is \$1,000. The Down East Quintet is \$600. The draft horses are \$500. Ruth Ann said everything costs; it was an eye opener. In answer to Linda, Adam said the budget has to go to the voters; the additional \$10,000 will be part of our budget if we put it in there. He said Jay asked Argy to get any additional funds requested in before the budget meeting.

Linda said she thought we need to look at what they've spent money on and how much they've gotten in donations. Argy said they can provide that information but would hope the donations that come in aren't hinging on what is needed and what the board will support. She also said it's a little bit more than that weekend, adding it's \$2,100 to rent the fairgrounds for that weekend, and the bus for the day is \$2,500. She noted they were charged to make the best celebration they could and do the job, so they're moving forward.

In answer to Greg, who was concerned about the fairgrounds number, Argy said she had a copy of the draft schedule. She said at the fairgrounds will be the Matthews Museum, Enter the Haggis band Friday night (not coming out of their budget), Company B and the 20th Maine set up there and demonstrations all three days; Maine Sports Car Club drive-in after the parade; antique tractor display after the parade; Ashley One Wheelers, the unicyclists, on Saturday; kids' activities on Saturday, a couple of bounce houses; and an antiques auction.

Martha said she had a copy of the letter from Matt with a breakdown of costs for the fairgrounds. She read aloud:

- Friday \$400 grounds rental (food trucks, electricity/water use, parking for concert patrons), \$200 stage rental fee, \$125 restrooms at Blueberry Acres.
- Saturday \$400 grounds rental fee, 4200 pulling ring rental for sheepdog demo, \$125 for restrooms at Blueberry Acres.
- Sunday \$400 grounds rental fee, \$200 antique auction at Blueberry Acres, \$125 restrooms.

She added they had not expected those figures.

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Adam thanked Argy and asked for a breakdown of that by next week as Jay puts it in the budget binders. Argy said the earliest she can get it to them will be the 29th.

In answer to Linda, Adam said it will be a line item in our discussion with the Budget Committee, a separate item. He added we go line by line through the entire budget. Also in answer to Linda, Jay said the town could vote on the \$10,000 but you'd need a separate article. He noted for the board there will be a large number of warrant articles this year, because of LD 2003, mining ordinance, etc. Martha reminded it's not a town meeting anymore. Adam said everything is on the warrant. Linda said she thought the town should have a right to vote on it.

Argy said, as said a year ago and maintained by the committee all along, whatever money they don't need of the town money they won't use. As donations continue to come in, they have no idea what that can amount to. Adam paraphrased the donations can potentially offset or replace that money. Argy noted they received a donation of \$1,100 last week from an individual in town; their first donation was \$1,300 in cash, anonymously.

Martha said someone messaged and asked about political candidates in the parade, suggesting there might be some issue with it as it is a town parade. Ruth Ann said they made a decision they wanted it to be apolitical.

Ruth Ann said Valley Distributors, contact for the Budweiser Clydesdales, said they would contribute to the cost of the Clydesdales' \$4,000 fee.

Adam asked for the budget as soon as possible.

Linda also got an email about politics/free speech and confirmed the parade will be apolitical.

- d. Ambulance Advisory – None.
- e. Thompson Working Group

Jay said they are currently in discussions with a very experienced developer that has a stellar history of successful renovations. On March 4 the developer toured the building and did a detailed examination of key structural components. At this time the results of the tour are being researched to see if the building qualifies as a historic structure (50-50 chance, Jay said). We await the results of the research and hope to have an answer from them by the next meeting.

11. Select Board Report:

Adam gave an extra thank you to Kathleen and the Green Space Committee. Wayne echoed Adam, saying he is on their side and will help them out as much as he can. Linda

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said the 30th is Jay's Easter egg hunt, and the 31st is the Easter breakfast. Martha said she will be at the breakfast in a Sestercentennial hat with hats and signups.

12. Adjourn:

Motion by: Linda Mountainland

2nd by: Martha Johnston-Nash

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo
Secretary