

# MINUTES

**SELECT BOARD/ASSESSORS' MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 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), Jesse Thompson (EMS/Fire Chief), Matt Eddy (MCOG), Abraham Knight, Bill Packard, Greg Grotton, Argy Nestor, Andy White, Erik Amundsen, Buddy Savage, John Gibbons, Tracy Weed, John Mountainland, 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 Tuesday, April 16, 2024:**

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Martha Johnston-Nash  
5-0

- 4. Approve Treasurer's Warrants dated Tuesday, May 7, 2024:**

Motion by: Wayne Kirkpatrick  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Martha Johnston-Nash

Martha noted the wording of EMS "stab fund" on page 8, Stryker Sales Corporation. Consensus was "stab" likely means "stabilization," and only so many letters can be used.

Motion passed,  
5-0

- 5. Recognition of Union Ambulance Employees on baby delivery:**

EMS/Fire Chief Jesse Thompson recognized Shawn Wallace and Willis Gammon for their May 1 delivery of a baby girl, to two rounds of applause and congratulations. Jesse reported both mom and baby are doing very well. Maine EMS is also recognizing these two providers with historic pins, and the truck gets christened with a historic sticker. Jay noted Willis is our longest serving (EMS) member.

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### 6. MCOG Presentation on Community Resiliency Grant:

Matt Eddy of MCOG said through Jay's participation, Union was selected as part of GOPIF's (Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future) to take part in a community resiliency program. It involves three basic steps: 1) forming a committee; 2) examining through a process that involves some community engagement projects that might be eligible for that; 3) enrolling in the program and setting up to apply for a grant come fall. Grants can be as much as \$50,000 for a project. If you combine the project with a similar request that another community is going for, you can ask for up to \$125,000. Warren is also participating in this round. MCOG will help along the way.

In answer to Martha, Matt said there is no cost. MCOG gets paid out of the grant that was underwritten to get enrollment into the program.

In answer to Wayne about what this goes toward, Matt said community resilience – energy efficiency projects, energy efficiency vehicles, comprehensive planning, wetlands work, etc. Adam mentioned an email citing 72 different items.

In answer to Adam, Matt said it would be awarded this September or you'd wait until next March. Matt added it will take two or three meetings. Martha confirmed the basic foundation of this program is climate change. Linda said most of it seemed to be energy stuff. Discussion followed. Matt said you can do multiple projects.

Motion to set up a committee of seven by: Martha Johnston-Nash  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Linda Mountainland

Amended motion to set up a committee of five by: Martha Johnston-Nash  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Linda Mountainland  
5-0

### 7. Discussion and vote on Historic Registry Proposal:

Matt Eddy of MCOG asked, re: historic tax credits, that the board consider putting off taking any action one way or the other. He referred to a document dated May 7 re: answers to questions raised at the (TCC) working group meeting on Thursday night.

He said Developers Collaborative is the developer they are working with who is interested in redevelopment of Union school and possibly the TCC as well. The piece that makes their project work is the ability to raise historic tax credit equity investment. To do that, the building has to be eligible for historic tax credit, which means the building would have to be registered on the National Register for Historic Places. He spoke with Christine Beard of Essex Preservation who gave us a price of \$10,000 to \$12,000 to do a historic eligibility assessment and therefore make the project eligible.

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Matt added they were not sure about Union school being eligible for historic tax credits. Then a month and a half ago or so, they walked through the building with Developers Collaborative representatives, cut some holes in walls, and discovered that most of the window framing and original architecture is still there. That raised the possibility of moving forward going after historic tax credits and raising capital for the project.

Matt said they talked further with Developers Collaborative this week. He included their website in board correspondence. He said they are one of the best affordable housing developers in the state and have local roots, in Rockland. Kevin Bunker is the founder.

The request is ultimately that the select board approve spending up to the \$12,000. Developers Collaborative would reimburse those funds if the building is found to be eligible. They believe at this stage the building is potentially eligible based on site investigation.

Matt also said we need to develop either an option or a purchase and sale agreement with Developers Collaborative to enter into this agreement and set up the reimbursement process. He would like to go back and work out that agreement with them. Discussion followed.

In answer to Linda, Matt confirmed the analysis would be for both buildings. The developers believe they can raise at least \$2.4 million from the Union school (yellow) building, but he does not believe they took a look at what the TCC (brick) would raise.

Marth clarified that “the Thompson Community Center” refers to the whole complex while Matt had been using that term to refer to the brick building.

Linda confirmed it could be up to five years to take advantage of the equity, and asked what would happen in five years when we don't have the same funding, both buildings are considered historic, and we are still stuck with the brick building. Matt said you could use the equity to rehab the brick building as a community center or a housing project. He added Developers Collaborative is interested potentially in doing the latter. The reason they did not select both buildings is they're trying to move through the Maine rental program which has a cap of 19 units; they paper out the Union school at 18 to 19 units.

More discussion followed during which Adam said he would like the working group's recommendation on this, and like Wayne was uneasy about the \$12,000 expenditure. Wayne had said the developer should have skin in the game by ponying up \$6,000. Matt said they would be willing to reimburse but only if they had an agreement, if the building(s) were considered historic Wayne added. Wayne confirmed with Matt a timeline of September then hearing back from the national registry in two months.

In answer to Adam, Jay said the dormant building costs are a small amount of insurance, electrical, plus deterioration of the building Martha added. Wayne confirmed with Jay that the money from MCOG would come out of the original \$300,000.

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Jay brought up the time spent on the TCC by various entities and possibly a lot of discontent if we didn't follow through to the next step, echoed by Adam who said it could be a what-if for the next 20 years, though he was not happy about the expenditure. Adam also loved the potential that we could end up with two units over there looking at no reno costs potentially to the town for any of it.

TCC Working Group member Abraham Knight said the building isn't going to last another five years. In answer to Adam, Matt said it all has to be done within a five-year window, and the brick building process with the developer could be started in tandem with the yellow building. Matt pointed out that the working group has not yet met with Developers Collaborative.

Motion that we table this until we hear from the committee (TTC Working Group) by: Martha Johnston-Nash

TCC Working Group member Bill Packard framed this as a step in what the working group was charged with. He said there will be costs such as legal, property survey, etc. He explained why the group would like the board to table this tonight. He said it was disturbing that they got the information for Thursday night's meeting on Thursday afternoon. They had not discussed this at all. He said Wayne had told him the board had discussed it and they were not going to spend any more money on that building. Wayne said it's in the minutes. Adam said his questions to Matt were trying to understand the value of pursuing this, and added if the working group recommends it, he's all ears.

Jay said the board could let the working group do their thing. They will ask some of the same questions the board has asked to the Developers Collaborative, and come back on the 21<sup>st</sup> with 99% of the questions answered.

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Wayne Kirkpatrick  
(Motion was to table this until hearing from the TCC Working Group, by Martha.)

Adam said he expects a recommendation one way or the other from the working group. Matt said he is committed two weeks from today. Adam said anyone from the working group could inform the board. Linda asked Matt to send the board any input. Matt closed by saying if this were easy to do, we would have already gotten it done.

Above motion passed,  
5-0

More discussion followed. The board thanked Matt.

### **8. Fire apparatus update and vote to seek RFP for a replacement:**

Jesse said we're overdue for buying a new fire apparatus. We are looking to replace our Engine 4. Our Engine 2 has been taken out of service due to safety issues. Doing an RFP,

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when we choose a proposal we can take some of our fire truck reserve for a down payment, then before the truck is actually completed come to the voters and ask them to raise the rest of the amount, which will buy us some time. He noted lead time on fire truck apparatus manufacturing is two to four years. We have over \$600,000 in the reserve account. Cost of new fire apparatus is about \$1.2 million.

Jay summarized Jesse is asking for board approval to go out for RFPs, not committing anything other than his time.

Motion that Jesse puts up the RFP by: Linda Mountainland

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Jim Justice

4-0-1 abstention (Kirkpatrick)

### **9. Discussion and vote to approve sign renovation and accept donations:**

Sestercentennial Committee Chair Argy Nestor summarized the goal of revamping the sign/map on the Common for Union's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had sent a document with the information and introduced Andy White (maker, fabricator, artist) who has volunteered to help with the sign. In sum, he said the sign is beyond repair and presented plans for a new design. Argy said the three areas are: installing the new sign, removing the existing sign, and the historical society will remove the old sign and put it in the Old Town House. She said they have been working with Frank from the historical society and with Public Works to contact Dig Safe, remove the map supports and footings, and dig the new spot for the new footings.

In answer to Adam, Argy said none of the \$10,000 taxpayer funds voted for the Sestercentennial Committee will go into the sign – they have complete donations. Argy and Andy said all they would ask for would be some time from Public Works to dig and remove the old frame. Jay clarified the donations go through the historical society. Andy clarified the new sign will be mounted on granite posts. Discussion followed.

Motion to give (the Sestercentennial Committee) permission to remove the existing sign, install the new sign, work with Public Works on contacting Dig Safe and potentially digging a hole, and take the old map and donate it to the historical society by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Jim Justice

5-0

Wayne said Argy is doing an awesome job.

### **10. Approve the sale of excess property at TCC:**

Jay said all the groups in the TCC have been asked to remove all their stuff. They will try to figure out where to store some of the museum stuff. There will be excess stuff such as a pizza oven. Abraham has offered to put some of it on Facebook marketplace. The board

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needs to approve getting rid of any excess property. He brought up tables and chairs, the rental of which could make some money for the fire department.

Motion that we sell the excess property at TCC by: Jim Justice  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

Martha clarified that does not include the school house museum items.

Amended motion to sell the excess property at TCC not including school house museum items by: Jim Justice  
2<sup>nd</sup> by: Wayne Kirkpatrick  
5-0

**11. Other Business:** None.

**12. Town Manager Report:** None.

**13. Public Comment:**

Erik Amundsen said the school budget was dropped to a 4.6% increase, a 7.12% increase for the Town of Union.

In answer to Abraham, Jay said we'll find out the deadline for moving out TCC stuff after the 21<sup>st</sup>. Re: trash, Jay said the TMA is responsible for thrift shop stuff. Abraham asked where to put it. Jay said he is not putting a dumpster there and suggested the working group talk to the developers, who may agree just to leave it with their demo. Adam suggested waiting to hear from the working group.

Adam brought up emails about speeding on Common Road and North Union Road. He noted 1) if it's a state road, we have very little authority at all and 2) we don't set or enforce speed limits. Brief discussion followed.

**14. Committee Reports:**

a. Broadband

John Gibbons said the grant supporting fiber expansion is proceeding smoothly. There will be much more to report in the summer. Meanwhile the committee is trying to get a quick assessment of where they'll be after the grant. There are about 1,275 addresses in Union right now. About 2/3 have cable access, and about 1/3 have fiber access. There is a lot of overlap: a lot have both, and a fairly substantial amount on the edges don't have either one. Cable, to the granting agencies, is considered fast enough right now. The granting agencies have regarded replacing cable with fiber as a low priority until they complete building out all the rural areas.

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The grant that Tidewater has right now is aimed specifically at the rural areas. When the grant expansion is completed, there will be about 800 addresses in Union – about 2/3 of the total – that have fiber access, leaving a little less than 500 without it but 3/4 of those have cable access. When this buildout is completed only about 100 will have neither cable nor fiber. The way Tidewater is describing the buildout plan, that 100 number is artificially high, a max, and it's probably closer to half that. Those remaining will be in very remote locations.

John concluded the bottom line is we're getting there and are pretty darned close on the original objective. He noted Tidewater's website is focused on the here and now, while the committee website has to provide the big picture.

- b. Green Space – None.
- c. Sestercentennial

Argy said once again the committee has been awesome. She and Tracy Weed gave an update.

Tracy spoke about the time capsule, which will be dug up as part of the opening ceremony. Steel-Pro has offered to build a new stainless steel time capsule (watertight gasket-sealed box, a complete donation). The committee will start promoting the donation of items to be put into the time capsule soon. Ken of Union Farm has offered his small digging equipment. Wayne said he would donate an excavator. Jay said it would be great to put the drawing of the new time capsule in the town records. Tracy said it will also go into the "50 years" book.

Tracy also said the coins have hit the streets and have been very popular. Over 50 sold in the first week.

Argy said press releases are going out every Tuesday to about seven different newspapers and will involve greater media as time goes by. There's been good success getting information printed. She said volunteers are needed – anyone interested should let the committee know.

Tracy said there are various pop-ups coming. The historical society is showing the Bicentennial home movie by Richie Kahn from 1974. Last weekend they were at Union Farm's open house – great coverage, a lot of contacts. Upcoming is the chicken barbecue that Linda and John are doing, the library plant sale June 1, the Farmers Market, and they will be participating in the Waldoboro Founders Day parade and the Thomaston 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade promoting our event.

Argy said the school put on the play "The Trees Remember," a wonderful positive success. The kids had a chance to learn the history of Union through song, dance, and storytelling. About 400 community members attended.

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She continued they are now doing contra dance every Thursday at school and have been for three or four months. On Friday, May 17, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. there is a community contra dance for all with live musicians accompanying caller Chrissy Fowler who has been working with the students.

Tracy said Dig Safe has been to the Common. The two trees are being delivered next week. Argy said in the next two weeks there will be holes dug and planted. One tree will go in near the bandstand dedicated to Randy Scott that Vick has purchased. The second tree, an elm representing the original elm trees that were planted on the Common, will go at the other end lined up with the other trees.

Tracy said Martha will be ordering t-shirts in the next couple of days. The bandstand has been pressure washed. Michael will start back up there next week and continue the repairs and maintenance per his original plan which includes painting and replacing rotted parts. Argy said Lanny Dean and Jody Wentworth will check out the spire and ball on top.

Argy said they post every day to Facebook and have almost 600 followers. They are on Instagram as well. A newsletter goes out once a month by email – anyone wanting to be on it, let committee members know.

Tracy said parade registration is closed. Ruth Ann has met with Bob Oxtan, Pat Hood, Jesse Thompson, and Bill Packard who have been helping with the route, logistics, etc. Entrants are up to 48. Charlie and Penny Crockett will probably be there documenting that whole weekend for us.

She also said there is a free concert Friday night at the fairgrounds by Enter the Haggis. Buddy has been helping with that.

Re: budget update that Linda had asked about, Tracy said the \$10,000 allocated from town funds is going toward shuttle bus transportation (Luce) \$1,250; porta potties on the Common \$570; radios held over from Union Fair \$125; sanitation (dumpster and trash bags only – trash cans are coming up from the fairgrounds, and Billy Tripp has volunteered to collect the trash for us at the end of the day and take it down to the dumpster at the fairgrounds) \$554.95; logo digitized \$100; Scott Sell filming Community Voices, \$4,000 (Argy noted he is making three films; one will be shown during Sestercentennial weekend, one will be shown at the June 12 historical society meeting; we are hoping everything will be online. Tracy added the historical society will have all the footage including outtakes); Highland piper band from York, \$1,000; and fairgrounds rental for the weekend, \$2,175.50. Tracy said they just found out they will need to bring back to the committee an additional \$303.75 for using the fairgrounds bathrooms on the river side. The total number is \$9,979.20. Argy had noted that bus transportation and porta potties were reduced prices.



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Adam confirmed no donations came through the town. Tracy said everything has been donated to and run through the historical society.

In answer to Jim Justice, Tracy said they reached out to the Shriners and await confirmation.

Adam said that's a lot and thanked them. He reconfirmed at this time they have not committed the additional town money in the budget in any way. Consensus was they are doing a great job.

Buddy Savage explained the process of getting the band Enter the Haggis for the Friday night concert. He said he and his wife are paying the \$7,000 cost for the concert, after initially hoping to raise \$2,000 of that in donations which were slower coming in a year ago when this started, typically.

He said the Sestercentennial Committee had initially come to him wanting to do a smaller event. He emphasized there is no taxpayer money in the concert. He added he was disturbed seeing the concert used as an example of extravagance on the part of the Sestercentennial Committee, which has done a lot of hard work.

Adam said what we are getting back for the town donation is amazing as well as the generosity of people like Buddy and his wife.

An attendee asked if the committee would disclose how much the sign is costing therefore how much they've gotten donated. Adam noted the historical society is an outside entity and did not want to discuss their finances here.

Buddy said his donation (for the concert) will probably work through the town for insurance purposes. Discussion followed.

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

Abraham said there seems to be interest from the developer in both buildings, which would be a vote, and asked when that might happen. Jay said the next election is November. Adam reiterated his love for the idea of senior housing. Martha said it may be later than November due to the developer's timeline. Linda reiterated her concerns about the buildings going on the historical register in the long run. Discussion followed. More to come on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

### 15. Select Board Report:

Jim said May 18 is the Union Fire and Rescue recognition banquet at the town office, starting at 4:00 p.m. RSVP Jim Murphy, Jr. at 542-9786 or [jimmurphy@tidewater.net](mailto:jimmurphy@tidewater.net).

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Candidates' night was discussed. Jay said it's sponsored by Courier Gazette/Village Soup. In answer to Greg, it will include school board candidates.

Adam said he went to the play which was standing room only and fantastic.

Martha said Tracy has been working on getting the Civil War monument cleaned and mentioned it has some cracks around the base, which she wanted noted. In answer to Adam, Tracy said she talked to and got cleaning material from Brooks Monuments. Jay said the town money, if approved in July and not used, can go toward the monument.

Greg said Bob Williams is coming to add a nameplate to the WWII list. He will walk him over to check out the Civil War monument.

Martha acknowledged the energy and enthusiasm of Argy and Tracy who have done the bulk of the Sestercentennial work. The board thanked them.

Wayne said he's going to Florida on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Adam said he'll attend the firemen's appreciation dinner that Wayne will miss.

Linda praised our emergency services and said she hoped we all understand how good a group we have. On May 18 John and she are doing a chicken barbecue from noon to 2:00 p.m. to raise Sestercentennial donation money. There will be take-home containers. Martha added there will be Sestercentennial hats, t-shirts, and maybe coins for sale on site. Linda suggested a bake sale as well.

### 16. Adjourn:

Motion by: Linda Mountainland

2<sup>nd</sup> by: Wayne Kirkpatrick

5-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Abaldo  
Secretary