

Selectmen/Assessor's Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2016

Board Present: Greg Grotton, Lyle Cramer, Jim Justice, John Shepard and Sarah Drickey.

Also Present: Jay Feyler, Jim Murphy and Paula Sutton.

1. **Call Selectmen's Meeting to order:** by Chair at 6:30PM.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** given by all who wished.
3. **Public Comment:** Paula Sutton a candidate for The House of Representatives said she came to the Selectmen's Meeting to learn and listen to what is going on in the Town of Union. Lyle commended the Fire Department for their work in two recent fires: one in Washington and the other in Union.
4. **Approve minutes of August 16, 2016:** Motion John Shepard to approve the minutes as written. Seconded Lyle Cramer. Unanimous.
5. **Approve and sign commitment assessment warrant, Jim Murphy:** Residents will receive another \$5,000 exemption on the value of their home making it a total of \$15,000. This means you don't pay taxes on the \$15,000 value of your home. The State of Maine is supposed to reimburse us a portion of that, the other is simply lost revenue. Our Schools, County, etc. still need to be paid so we are forced to raise the mil rate to cover the loss. In simple terms it is nothing but a cost shift. The figures for this year will be updated. Last year The Town share was \$2,296,185.00, this year \$2,301,672.04 a difference of .023%. The County last year \$218,083.10, this year \$224,182.16 difference of 2.8%. School last year \$2,033,033.41, this year \$2,196,106.00 difference of 8.02%. Taxes to be raised: Town \$17,131.26, County \$6,099.06, School \$163,073.00. Percentages: School 58%, Town 36% and County 6%. Jim noted with the increase in the Homestead Exemption from \$10,000 to \$15,000 there is a reduction of taxable value. If there is less taxable value the tax rate increases even with flat budgets. With the Homestead Exemption increase again next year to \$20,000 we will be faced with the same issue. It might be best to temper the increase this year to \$16.90 knowing that next year also could be a spike year, better to have two middle ground spike years than one larger and one smaller. As a related note, in order for Homestead properties to not have an increase even with the increased homestead the tax rate would need to be less than \$16.20. Since that is not possible Jim is suggesting a tax rate of \$16.90. Motion Lyle Cramer to approve a \$16.90 mil rate. Seconded Jim Justice. Unanimous. Lyle approves of the letter that Jay is proposing as an insert

with the tax bill. Lyle's concern is that it doesn't go far enough. It's bad enough that our School Assessment is going up \$163,000 which is 8% that we will have to pay SAD #40. The thing that is not included and people didn't think about it when they went to the polls was the fact that it was in addition to two Bonds that were voted on by the Townspeople in the vicinity of \$90,000. The School District received an extra \$100,000 to spend then after that. They didn't say a word about the Bond Issue they threw out to us just before the Budget was approved and that was for \$1,000,000.00. In addition to a 8% increase in the budget from last year they also had an extra at least \$1,000,000.00 to spend for two bond issues that came just before and just after the budget. It's Lyle's opinion that most of that should have been in the budget. Lyle saw a listing of stuff that was proposed and not one of those things fit the reason why they should do a Bond. They were mostly maintenance things: taking down a wall, putting a small roof on, replacing tiles, etc. that's maintenance stuff that's not what they should put into a Bond issue. Lyle would like to see what the amount of money is we are paying toward the Bond and, it's spread out over the next ten years. That's unreasonable especially this year when we had to foreclose on five properties because people couldn't afford to pay their taxes. Jay said the letter is really just for informational purposes pointing out when tax bills go up where the problem is. Some people read it some people don't but it saves us a lot of phone calls and it also gives Jay support for the Bill that he wants to get through LPC and get to the Legislative body which neither Republicans or Democrats will probably have the courage to support that Schools send out their own Tax Bills. They become much more accountable that way and very much more accountable to people when they have to look them in the face. Sarah said its money that is needed but they don't put it in the right places. Greg also agrees with the letter as Lyle said the voters don't understand all of it. When they go into the voting booth to vote on The Bond there is no money amount shown and this is by State Law. All they can do is either vote yes or no to what was approved, if we want to do something the people need to go to the School Board Meetings.

6. **Approve and sign pole permit for Mt. Pleasant Road:** Jay said he thinks it's actually Miller Road off of Mt. Pleasant Rd. where the pole location is. Motion Lyle Cramer to Approve Pole Permit. Seconded John Shepard. Unanimous.
7. **Approve and sign notice of election and warrant Mid-Coast Technology:** Jay noted the Bond is for \$25,000,000.00 to construct and equip a new career and technical school building and related facilities to be located at 1 Main Street in Rockland and as part of that project to demolish the existing school building. This is something the Board has to sign we have no choice. Motion Lyle Cramer to Sign Election Notice and Warrant. Seconded John Shepard. John noted they gave a presentation providing a pretty clear analysis of budgetary, it was never intended to last more than 20 years however the \$25,000,000.00 is staggering. John was on their Board 12/15 years ago when they didn't have enough space, there was a Violation with the air control quality, a lot of repairs with the building and it has to be much worse now. It's a big investment. Vocational Education is over looked and it needs to be given more emphasis. Lyle thinks vocational education is headed down the wrong road because half the time you have to go to a regular high school and the other half to a Vocational school.

Take a kid from Washington that kid has to go from Washington to Medomak Valley then to Rockland from Rockland back to Medomak to get the bus to go home. Because kids want to be with their classmates they don't want to sign up to spend half the day outside their home school where their friends are. He hates to see us spend this much money to put the kids there for half a day where half the kids won't go in the first place. Greg supports the Vocational Education is needed more in this State than most people realize. He agrees with Lyle, pick the kids up and take them straight to Tech School, at the end of the day bring them back home. Greg asks for a vote. Unanimous.

8. **Update on Comprehensive Plan Committee:** there was none.
9. **Sign Treasurers Warrant dated September 6, 2016:** Motion James Justice to sign Treasurer's Warrant. Seconded John Shepard. Unanimous.
10. **Other Business:** MMA voted Delegates the Board needs to sign. Jay has been the Voting Delegate, Lyle Cramer has been Alternate Voting Delegate. Motion James Justice to Appoint Jay Feyler as Voting Delegate and Lyle Cramer as Alternate Voting Delegate. Seconded John Shepard. Four for. (Grotton, Justice, Shepard and Drickey) One abstention. (Cramer).
11. **Town Managers Report:** Pine Tree Trash dumped a load of burning grass over at the Community Center that the Fire Dept. and Public Works responded to. We will bill Pine Tree Trash for the cleanup of man hours and equipment hours along with the rental of a Bobcat from Union Farm. DEP had to come in so it was a big delay that extended everything. It was an expensive load of trash. Rabbit Farm Rd. has been paved. Barrett Hill is still scheduled in another week to 10 days, grind it and bind it.
12. **Selectmen's Report:** there was none.
13. **Future Agenda Items:** there was none.
14. **Adjourn:** Motion Lyle Cramer to adjourn at 7:30PM. Seconded Jim Justice. Unanimous.

These minutes were approved on September 20, 2016 with the following amendments.