

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

MAY 18, 2021

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order via the Zoom platform at 6:00 PM by Chairman Josh Rolfe. In attendance were Board members Paula Johnson-Rolfe, James Jackson, and Leslie Haynes; Secretary Cathy Lord; Finance Director Meghan Dennison; Mary Angarola, David Clark, Bill Kitchen, Sarah Craighead Dedmond.

Mr. Rolfe noted that the only item on the agenda is a discussion of an interim town manager. He reminded the other members of the Board that at the Board's last meeting they discussed hiring someone who could fill in as interim town manager until such time as the Town hires a new town manager and he had asked that the members of the Board think of someone who could possibly fill the interim position.

Mr. Rolfe said that he thought of one person who could fulfill the responsibilities of the interim position - Mr. Bill Kitchen. Mr. Rolfe stated that Mr. Kitchen is very familiar with town activities and that Mr. Kitchen had worked closely with the previous town manager on municipal projects. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe said she had also thought that Mr. Kitchen would make an excellent interim town manager. She pointed out that Mr. Kitchen has previously served on the Board, was an asset to the Board in that capacity, and she believes that Mr. Kitchen is more than capable of taking on this task until a permanent town manager is hired.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by James Jackson, the Board
VOTED:

To appoint Bill Kitchen as interim town manager as a contract/stipend employee.

Mr. Jackson said that Mr. Kitchen has his full support and that he fully agreed with the reasons Mr. Rolfe and Ms. Johnson-Rolfe had stated for appointing Mr. Kitchen. Mr. Haynes said that he also agreed with hiring Mr. Kitchen; he added that Mr. Kitchen is a very smart man and fully capable of doing the job. Mr. Kitchen expressed thanks to the members of the Board; he explained that he has given a tremendous amount of thought to this appointment and the need to keep the Town moving forward. Mr. Kitchen noted that he is sure that he has the support of town office personnel and department heads who will be assets in assisting him. Mr. Kitchen said that he is aware of the key projects currently in process. He added that the search for a town manager should continue to move forward in anticipation of hiring a new manager. Mr. Kitchen added that he feels comfortable and that he believes the temporary arrangement can work.

Mr. Rolfe said that Mr. Kitchen is well-suited to keep the search for a new town manager moving forward. He noted that he wants to give Mr. Kitchen as much guidance as possible.

The Board discussed the details of appointing Mr. Kitchen. Mr. Rolfe said that Mr. Kitchen would be hired as an independent contractor giving him as much time to do the job as he needs. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe thought that the Board should pay Mr. Kitchen the same compensation as the previous town manager. Mr. Rolfe stated that he was comfortable with that arrangement. Mr. Kitchen said this was acceptable to him. The Board agreed that Mr. Kitchen would be given the same salary as the previous town manager received.

Mr. Clark said that he had a problem with how the special town meeting had been conducted. He said that he had been pushed aside when he wanted to make comments on the issue. Mr. Clark said that he was not given the opportunity to speak. He noted that he has contacted the Maine Attorney General's office on how he was treated.

Ms. Angarola asked some questions regarding responsibility dealing with problems in the water system.

Mr. Kitchen reported that the water issue on Water Street is being dealt with - he reported that the Public Works Department will be placing culverts to deal with the problem.

Mr. Kitchen advised the Board that there is a question as to if the construction company working on the fuel farm needs additional insurance coverage. Mr. Jackson suggested that this type of question is a legal question. Mr. Rolfe added that MMA would be a good resource to ask this question.

Mr. Kitchen noted that the tank for the fuel farm will cost \$85,000. He asked if the funds for this purchase have been set aside. Mr. Rolfe noted that the Board had agreed to move forward with the fuel farm. He asked if this would create a cash flow problem. Mr. Kitchen asked if the Finance Director was aware of discussions with Machias Savings Bank to upfront the money for the tank. Mr. Rolfe said that these types of questions can be answered with the assistance of the Finance Director and by looking at information in the town manager's office.

Mr. Rolfe said that he is troubled and concerned with comments and postings on social media. He noted comments posted accusing the Board of bullying and running off the town manager and the police chief. Mr. Rolfe pointed out that the police chief is still employed by the Town. Mr. Rolfe also pointed out that there were postings regarding the municipal budget process that were inaccurately reported. He commented that it was not true that the Board does not support a four man police department and he pointed out as completely false a letter from a person running for a seat on the Board published in the free newspaper claiming that there is a lack of support for the police department.

Mr. Rolfe said that the Board has fully supported the police department in numerous ways: supported moving the police department to a new building, increased the hourly wages of police officers, authorized the purchase of computers, laptops, and docking station, and approved the purchase of a new cruiser. Mr. Rolfe noted that he takes serious issue with the accusations being made against the Board. He stated that members of the Board were voted on to the Board to serve and represent the people. Mr. Rolfe explained that Board members ask questions when and where they see concerns. He reiterated that members of the Board are doing the job they were elected to do. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe agreed with Mr. Rolfe. Debra Haynes commented that the person who wrote the letter should apologize to the Board. Mr. Rolfe said that he believes they are misinformed.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by James Jackson, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 PM.