

**PUBLIC HEARING - INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT AWARD  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT  
JULY 22, 2020**

A public hearing was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Josh Rolfe. In attendance via the Zoom platform were Board members Bill Kitchen, Paula Johnson-Rolfe, James Whalen, and James Jackson; Town Manager Christina Therrien.

Mr. Rolfe noted that the purpose of this public hearing is to receive citizen input and comments on the award of a \$200,000 public infrastructure grant award in accordance with the requirements of the Phase II Community Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Mr. Rolfe asked the public joining via Zoom for any comments or questions on the grant award. No comments or questions were made.

The public hearing was closed at 6:05 PM.

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**BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS**

**JULY 22, 2020**

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order via the Zoom platform at 6:10 PM by Chairman Josh Rolfe. In attendance were Board members Bill Kitchen, Paula Johnson-Rolfe, James Whalen, and James Jackson; Town Manager Christina Therrien; Secretary Cathy Lord; Town Clerk Sandra Clifton; Police Chief Todd Hand; Jarod Guillette (Zoom host), Bruce Matson, Mary Angarola, Dennis Emidy, Jeff Pulver, Fred Michaud, Robert Skehan, Bob Berta, Kurt Penney, Wade Carter, Ed Pellon.

**1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION**

On a motion by James Whalen seconded by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2020 Board meeting.

**2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION**

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

To approve municipal warrant #3 in the amount of \$42,217.97; to approve municipal warrant #4 in the amount of \$16,446.16; and, to approve municipal warrant #5 in the amount of \$30,092.46.

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

To approve school warrant #3 in the amount of \$164,175.57.

**3. MMA BALLOT - LEGISLATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE**

Ms. Therrien reviewed the Maine Municipal Association's legislative policy committee ballot with the Board and suggested that the Board could vote for the two Washington County candidates on the ballot - Louis Pinkham and Harry Fish. By a consensus decision, the Board asked the Town Manager to fill out the ballot voting for Mr. Pinkham and Mr. Fish. Ms. Therrien reminded the members of the Board to stop in at the town office to sign the ballot for submission.

#### **4. SHELLFISH ORDINANCE DISCUSSION**

Ms. Therrien explained to the Board that she received a telephone call from a company located in southern Maine asking questions about harvesting shellfish in Machias and shipping the shellfish back to southern Maine for resale. Ms. Therrien said that this conversation alerted her to the need to protect the resources located in Machias and she suggested that the Board may want to investigate the passage of a shellfish ordinance since Machias does not have this type of ordinance offering protections and governance over the municipality's resources. Mr. Rolfe noted that Machias should have the authority to provide guidance for the use of the resources located within the town limits. He agreed with Ms. Therrien's suggestion to look into a sample ordinance to review and revise that would meet the needs of Machias. Ms. Therrien suggested that the Board could review the ordinance used in a small municipality such as that of Jonesboro. It was the consensus of the Board to proceed with the ordinance review and discuss this issue at the Board's next scheduled meeting. Mr. Whalen also suggested that the Board could benefit from input from Machias shellfish harvesters and he said that he could invite two people to the Board meeting who could assist in the development of an ordinance.

#### **5. MDOT DISCUSSION OF 4-WAY STOP AT INTERSECTION OF BROADWAY & COURT STREET**

Mr. Rolfe welcomed several members of the Maine Department of Transportation to the Board meeting via the Zoom platform to discuss efforts to restructure the traffic pattern and increase safety at the intersection of Broadway and Court Street in Machias. Mr. Bruce Matson introduced himself, as well as other participants Mr. Fred Michaud, Mr. Bob Skeham, Mr. Dennis Emidy, and Mr. Jeff Pulver. Mr. Matson noted the history of problems at the intersection of Broadway and Court Street. He advised the Board that MDOT team members visited the site and looked at the problem on a typical vehicle traffic day along with the Public Works Director and also received some input from the Machias Police Chief. Mr. Matson noted that the MDOT looked at the accident pattern at the intersection and also looked at the added problems of a high crash location and speeding problems. Mr. Matson explained that the MDOT team believes that a four-way stop would address the problems at the intersection since it is apparent that a two-way stop is not working at the intersection. He noted that the MDOT has looked at information and the data of a four-way stop versus a two-way stop and found that the four-way stop at intersections such as that at Broadway and Court Street to be more effective at accident prevention.

Mr. Dennis Emidy said the the MDOT has reviewed the average daily traffic numbers on both streets from 2015 to 2019 and examined traffic accident reports (four accidents in which drivers ran the stop sign/eleven accidents in which drivers stopped but did not properly the yield right-of-way). Mr. Emidy noted that crash reduction statistics were examined when using a four-way stop versus a two-way stop and he showed several examples in Maine where the MDOT changed intersections into four-way stops which resulted in a reduced number of accidents and subsequent driver injuries from occurring. Mr. Emidy stated that the MDOT believes that the benefits of a four-way stop would better address the problems at the intersection.

Mr. Jeff Pulver showed a concept plan for the installation of different types of stop signs for the intersection. He advised the Board that the change to a four-way stop would be publicly advertised to make the public aware of the change and that a message board would be erected advising drivers of the coming change to the traffic flow at the intersection.

Mr. Jackson commented that accidents are being caused by drivers at the stop signs; he cautioned that large semi trucks hauling heavy loads on Court Street having to stop and then restart creates a problem. Mr. Pellon said that he has lived in this area of Machias for many, many years and he questioned who was behind the need to make changes to the intersection. Mr. Pulver noted that the MDOT Safety Office looks at problem areas with high accident rates and determines if changes should be made to areas where there is a reoccurrence of vehicle accidents. Mr. Pulver added that the MDOT has found consistently that four-way stops

do reduce the occurrence of "angle crashes" such as what has historically been happening at this intersection.

Mr. Rolfe asked what the MDOT plans to do at the intersection. Mr. Robert Skehan explained that the MDOT takes many things into consideration in making these types of changes. He noted the need also to mitigate the speeding problem in the area. Mr. Skehan said that the MDOT looks at the most cost effective way to address problems; he added that the MDOT will discuss the town's concerns and will develop recommendations to solve the traffic problem at the intersection. Mr. Whalen said that he was glad something was being done to improve the problems at this intersection. Mr. Skehan explained that the MDOT is only asking for drivers to spend an additional six seconds waiting at the intersection. Mr. Rolfe reviewed that drivers are not yielding to traffic at the intersection causing the majority of problems. He pointed out that people are concerned with trying to solve the problem through the use of multiple stop signs at the intersection. Mr. Rolfe explained that Machias appreciates the MDOT's efforts in addressing the problem; he added the observation that safety is the number one priority for all concerned.

Mr. Bob Berta questioned the MDOT personnel regarding parking in front of Porter Memorial Library and the post office and suggested that there could be vehicle parking on only the post office side. Mr. Matson noted that this might be a solution but that there would need to be strong support from the Town to make this type of change.

The members of the Board thanked the MDOT team for discussing the problems found at the intersection of Broadway and Court Street and reviewing possible solutions to increase safety at the intersection; Mr. Rolfe noted that the Town will await the recommendations from the MDOT regarding the intersection.

## **6. SOLAR PROPOSAL FOR THE CAPPED LANDFILL - REVISION ENERGY**

Mr. Kurt Penney introduced himself as sales executive for Revision Energy, a company which builds solar projects. Ms. Therrien reviewed how the Town initially became involved with the company by her reaching out to the company to discuss a possible project in Machias; she explained that potential properties were looked at as being most suitable for a solar project. Ms. Therrien pointed out that the capped landfill site was deemed a suitable location since this land cannot be used for any other purpose. Ms. Therrien explained that Mr. Penney is appearing to answer any questions and provide more information to the Board. She advised the Board that a solar project would provide an income to the town which is beneficial to taxpayers.

Mr. Penney informed the Board that the Town would be purchasing a monetary credit that counts against its electric bill and that the net energy credit is \$0.149 per kilowatt. He noted that the standard time frame for a project is twenty years. Mr. Penney told the Board that more site preparation and permitting needs to be done to place solar panels at the landfill site. He noted that there are some risks involved with such a project and he pointed out that the company would not pay more than the net energy billing credit. Mr. Penney explained that since the solar panels are located on town property there would need to be a lease agreement between the company and the Town. Mr. Penney advised the Board that a benefit of the project is that the infrastructure is built by an independent company with future potential for the town to take over ownership and the energy savings.

Mr. Rolfe commented that the Town needs to enter into an agreement that minimizes the risk for the Town. Mr. Penney told the Board that assurances would cut down on potential increased energy savings and that there is one option that minimizes the risk versus the reward. He noted that the company could utilize an index rate agreement in which the Town is paid less per kilowatt hour but the investor takes on more of the risk. Mr. Penney said that he could work up a proposal using the index rate option for a twenty year lease for the Board to review. He advised the Board that an interconnection application is the initial step in a solar project (estimated cost of \$2500.) and he strongly advised that this application be submitted as soon as possible. Mr. Rolfe asked if

Revision Energy could pay for the interconnection application. Mr. Penney agreed to submit the application at the company's risk and pay the application fee. It was the consensus of the Board to allow Revision Energy to move forward with the application (Note - 4 Board members agreed; 1 Board member disagreed). Mr. Penney said that Revision Energy wants to work with the Town and wants to secure a place in the queue by agreeing to move forward with the interconnection application. He advised the members of the Board that they would need to sign the interconnection application before being submitted. Mr. Rolfe thanked Mr. Penney for speaking to the Board and Mr. Penney thanked the Board for the opportunity to make a presentation.

Mr. Jackson noted that he was not in favor of submitting the application; he shared his thoughts on the machinations of energy companies and his reservations. Mr. Whalen suggested that the Town Manager work up a concrete report of costs and what the Town will receive in dollars and cents.

#### **7. NEW PUMP STATION FORCE MAIN PROPOSED LOCATION**

Ms. Therrien informed the Board that the Town is looking at placement of the underground pipes for the new pump station near Norman Nelson Park. She explained that test borings will be made in this location. It was the consensus of the Board to direct the Town Manager to proceed with the project.

#### **8. DISCUSSION OF RESERVE POLICE OFFICER HOURLY WAGE**

Police Chief Todd Hand asked the Board to consider increasing the hourly wage paid to reserve police officers. The Board discussed the current hourly wages paid to graduates of the police academy and non-academy officers. After an extensive discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to look at increasing the hourly wage paid to reserve police officers; the Board agreed to match the wages of a blue pin entry level officer.

Mr. Hand advised the Board that the police department has received many calls from residents on the West Kennebec Road complaining about the noise made at night by shellfish harvesters. Mr. Rolfe advised Mr. Hand that the Board has decided to look at adopting a shellfish ordinance for Machias.

#### **9. MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS AND FACILITIES**

Mr. Whalen noted that at the June 24th Board meeting a memo of agreement between the Town and the school department on maintenance of the school grounds and facilities was put on hold. Mr. Whalen pointed that Mr. Porter was to send a memo to the Board addressing the maintenance of facilities. He pointed out that nothing has been received from Mr. Porter. Mr. Whalen suggested that the Board move forward with the memo from the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Whalen pointed out that the Board is asking the school department to do their part in taking care of school grounds and facilities. Mr. Rolfe said that he was uncomfortable with some of the wording in the memo and he added that the memo does not accurately represent all the Board's feelings. Mr. Jackson said that he would prefer to reword the memo and discuss the memo further before being sent. Mr. Kitchen said that he was not aware that Mr. Porter was to provide something in writing and he suggested revisiting the contents of the proposed memo. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe agreed that the Board re-examine the proposed memo. Mr. Whalen commented that the wording of the memo has been revised and he requested setting a date for further discussion; he added that the Board owes it to the children to provide playing fields comparable to those found at Washington Academy. The members of the Board agreed to discuss the memo at their next meeting. Mr. Rolfe cautioned that people should be careful of comments directed at the school department. Mr. Whalen asked what comments Mr. Rolfe was referring to. Mr. Rolfe said that he was not willing to address this situation other than to say that town officials should be diplomatic in conversations with school personnel.

## **10. AIRPORT UPDATE**

Ms. Therrien advised the Board since there were no comments on the airport plan that she would ask the town's consultant to go ahead and finalize the paperwork.

## **11. SIDEWALK UPDATE**

Ms. Therrien advised the Board that Hancorn's has been working on the sidewalks; she noted that there have been many positive comments about the efforts at repairing the sidewalks.

## **12. PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION SITE UPDATE**

Ms. Therrien noted that she has a schematic of the layout of the recreation playground. She informed the Board that the centerpiece of the playground should be delivered during the second week of September. Ms. Therrien advised that the lumber for the facility has been ordered along with the lumber and forms for the skateboard park. She noted that she is researching the cost of wood chips as the base material for the playground.

## **13. OTHER BUSINESS**

A. Ms. Therrien advised the Board that they have a copy of a proposal from Black Bear Security to review.

B. Ms. Therrien noted that the Board has a copy of the revised selectmen's report for publication in the annual town report. Mr. Rolfe suggested one change to the wording in the comments on the ambulance department.

C. Mr. Whalen noted that during the school budget meeting there was no final decision regarding a school resource officer. Ms. Therrien noted that funds (\$15,000.) were budgeted only for a part-time SRO. The Board briefly discussed if this would be a Machias or a county police officer. Mr. Rolfe said that he preferred that the position be filled by a Machias officer although he pointed out that available personnel is limited.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by James Jackson, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 PM.