

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

AUGUST 23, 2023

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order at 6:07 PM by Chairman Jake Patryn. In attendance were Board members Carole Porcher, Sandra Sinford, Ben Edwards, and Michael Hinerman; Town Manager Bill Kitchen; Secretary Cathy Lord; Ambulance Chief Ryan Maker; Fire Chief Joey Dennison (Zoom), Police Chief Keith Mercier, Officer Tim Mace, Public Works Director Mike Schoppee, Robert Boggia, Nicole Case, Stephen Simmons, Bob Berta.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Ben Edwards, seconded by Michael Hinerman, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2023 Board meeting. (Ms. Sinford abstained from the motion noting that she was absent from that meeting)

2. SEWER SIPHON PROJECT - BID AWARD

Mr. Kitchen advised the Board that on February 24th bids were opened by the town's environmental engineer, Olver Associates, for the South Side Pump Station installation project. He noted that the only bidder on the project was Donovan Construction of Crawford, Maine at a total base bid of \$2,700,600.; he added that Olver Associates recommends completing the base bid and alternate bid No. #1 which is to upgrade the existing Broadway pump station for \$64,840.

On a motion by Carole Porcher, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

That the Town of Machias accepts the recent offer of \$785,440. in principal forgiveness funding from the DEP's CWSRF program towards the Siphon Replacement Project/South Side Pump Station.

On a motion by Michael Hinerman, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

On the recommendation of Olver Associates, to award the bid for the construction of the South Side Pump Station to Donovan Construction (Crawford, Maine) on a base bid of \$2,760,000.

3. COMSTAR AGREEMENT - AMBULANCE BILLING

Mr. Kitchen noted that the contract on ambulance billing is up for renewal. Ambulance Captain Ryan Maker noted that the town's current billing contractor, Comstar, has made some changes to their contract with the Town. He advised that the company plans to charge five percent of total billing for their services. Mr. Maker recommended signing the agreement because the ambulance service does not want a lapse in services. He noted that the Town will go out to bid due to the fact that a flat fee form is preferred by the ambulance service. Mr. Maker noted that the service's revenue should increase with the efficiencies put in place; he noted that five percent of the service's total billing will be significant. He added that the agreement with Comstar can be terminated with sixty days notice.

On a motion by Sandra Sinford, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To sign the agreement for billing services with Comstar and in the interim ask the ambulance service to research available options for going out for alternate bids.

4. FIRE DEPARTMENT NEW HIRE

Mr. Kitchen noted that there is an opening for a permanent part-time driver/dispatcher in the fire department and that he is recommending the appointment of Colby Ross to the position. Mr. Kitchen noted that Mr. Ross has filled in extensively in the driver/dispatcher position in the past and is aware of the needs of the position; Mr. Kitchen recommended that since Mr. Ross has filled in extensively that the standard probationary period be waived.

On a motion by Carole Porcher, seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board
VOTED:

Based on the recommendation of the Town Manager, to hire Colby Ross for the position of part-time driver/dispatcher for the fire department and to waive the standard six month probationary period.

5. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT - DUMP BODY BIDS

Public Works Director Mike Schoppee advised the members of the Board that he solicited two quotes on the purchase of a new dump body for one of the public works trucks. The two bids were from Viking Cives in the amount of \$49,975.00 and Howard Fairfield in the amount of \$52,737.50. Mr. Schoppee reported that the dump body from Viking Cives is immediately available and he noted that citizens approved spending up to \$60,000. at town meeting for the purchase. Mr. Schoppee advised the Board that the old truck body would be sold for junk.

On a motion by Ben Edwards, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To approve the purchase of a dump body from Viking Caves in the amount of \$49,975.

Mr. Schoppee thanked the Board for their support. Mr. Kitchen commented that the Town looked "fabulous" for the blueberry festival and that he received many compliments on the town's appearance. Mr. Kitchen thanked the Public Works Department for their efforts.

6. MORATORIUM ON MARIJUANA DISPENSORIES

The Board discussed a proposed six-month moratorium on new marijuana dispensaries in Machias to allow the Board adequate opportunity to consider options for both medical and adult use marijuana. Mr. Patryn noted that a public hearing would have to be scheduled to obtain input from citizens and that there would be a time frame to work with if a moratorium was approved. Mr. Kitchen noted that there are many issues to work through.

On a motion by Carole Porcher, seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board
VOTED:

To schedule a public hearing to discuss a possible six month moratorium on new marijuana shop applications subject to the Town Clerk's input.

7. SCHOOL GRANT FOR RESOURCE OFFICER

Machias High School Principal Nicole Case explained that the school department has a fantastic partnership with the Machias Police Department. She noted that the school department had applied for a Stronger Connections Grant with the Department of Education and was informed on 8/10/23 that there had been a conditional contract of \$250,000.00 grant over three years awarded to the school department. Ms. Case noted the need to work out the details of the grant between the Town and the school department. Ms. Case explained that \$130,000. was awarded for the first year, \$70,000.00 for the second year, and \$50,000.00 for the third and final year.

Police Chief Mercer advised the Board that the resource officer would be employed as a Machias police officer; he said that he would like to proceed with the hiring process as soon as possible.

Ms. Porcher expressed some apprehension regarding the time after the grant monies are exhausted in three years. She noted that she would like to see documentation of the utilization of the resource officer. Mr. Patryn pointed out that applicants for the position should be made to realize that the position is a three year position. Mr. Edwards said that he would like to see an exact summary of what the resource officer's job encompasses. Ms. Case explained that the SRO would provide much support to the schools. Mr. Edwards noted that it is important to get as much as possible for direct support in the long term. Chief Mercier noted that he would be the supervisor of the SRO.

On a motion by Ben Edwards, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To accept the \$250,000. three year grant from the State of Maine Department of Education for conditional award of a Stronger Connections Grant pending final grant award.

Ms. Case noted that she and the Police Chief will develop the budget utilizing the grant funds and that the SRO will be paid by the Town to be reimbursed by the school department which receives the funds of the grant. Mr. Edwards suggested that the budget committee could assist in budget development.

8. POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Chief Mercier gave a brief update on activities in the Machias Police Department.

9. AMBULANCE SERVICE - NEW HIRES

Mr. Kitchen noted that Mr. Maker has recommended that Dustin Maxie be appointed to the ambulance apprenticeship program and that Jessica Bouchard be appointed as an ambulance EMT.

On a motion by Ben Edwards, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To approve the appointment of Dustin Maxie to the ambulance apprenticeship program and the appointment of Jessica Bouchard as an EMT.

10. AMBULANCE SERVICE CREW WAGES

Mr. Kitchen noted that he had sent the members of the Board information on wage increases for ambulance personnel for their review. Mr. Edwards complimented the members of the ambulance service for their dedication and work for the betterment of the service. Mr. Edwards commented that he objected to paying service members to stay at home when they are on duty. Mr. Kitchen noted that he would pay workers to physically be on duty at the station. Ambulance Chief Ryan Maker noted that increasing wages would give the service the ability to accept more transfers, increase the amount of staff retention in the service, and would contribute to a reduction in response time. Mr. Maker noted that there is a good team of people working in the ambulance service. He added that by increasing wages he hopes to retain employees for the long term. Mr. Edwards commented that he strongly believes in planning ahead and involving contract towns; he suggested that there should be a pro-active relationship between contract towns and the ambulance service. Mr. Ryan noted that towards this effort he would like to see an annual meeting of contract towns and the ambulance service. Mr. Patryn noted that he felt really positive about making these wage changes.

On a motion by Ben Edwards, seconded by Michael Hinerman, the Board
VOTED:

To accept the proposed ambulance wage increases and to implement these rates at the earliest possible date the Finance Officer can arrange the changes.

Mr. Patryn noted that the Board can receive an update at their next meeting.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Porcher suggested that the Board consider an ordinance governing fireworks and other annoyances. She noted a recent fireworks display that caused concern in her neighborhood. Mr. Edwards agreed that it would have been advantageous to know about the fireworks ahead of time so neighbors could be prepared. The Board discussed the suggestion. Mr. Patryn pointed out that there are safety issues to be considered which might necessitate having regulations governing these occurrences. Mr. Edwards noted that the argument for the need for zoning must be considered.

12. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Carole Porcher, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 PM.