

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

SEPTEMBER 9, 2020

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order at the Machias Tele-business Center and via the Zoom platform at 6:00 PM by Chairman Josh Rolfe. In attendance were Board members Paula Johnson-Rolfe, James Whalen, James Jackson, and Leslie Haynes; Secretary Cathy Lord; Town Clerk Sandra Clifton; Finance Director Meghan Dennison; Police Chief Todd Hand; Fire Chief Joey Dennison; Mary Angarola, Andrew Kahrl, Bruce Smith, Sarah Newell.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by James Jackson, seconded by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2020 Board meeting.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by James Whalen, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2020 Board meeting with the following correction: under the motion to appoint the members of the Downtown Revitalization Committee the name of Kehben Grier should be removed.

2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION

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

To approve municipal warrant #16 in the amount of \$19,795.59; to approve municipal warrant #17 in the amount of \$52,682.30; to approve municipal warrant #18 in the amount of \$9,820.59; and, to approve municipal warrant #19 in the amount of \$87,724.82.

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

To approve school warrant #82820 in the amount of \$290,438.98.

3. FIRE CHIEF - PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS/BUDGET QUESTIONS

Fire Chief Joey Dennison asked the Board how the Town would be moving forward with departmental activities in the absence of the town manager. Mr. Rolfe explained that in the absence of the town manager, the Board has delegated individual department heads with responsibilities for their departments. Municipal Attorney Sarah Newell noted that the Board should not be making the day-to-day decisions of municipal departments; she noted that the Board has appointed responsible individuals who take the responsibility for these duties. Mr. Rolfe asked if the Board should be delegating responsibilities to department heads? Ms. Newell cautioned that the Board does not need to make any directives since decisions in the absence of the town manager are the responsibility of the department heads. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe said that she agreed that the Town has department heads who are responsible for day-to-day decisions. It was the consensus of the Board that department heads make decisions in the absence of the town manager for their individual departments. Mr. Rolfe noted that a department head can also confer with municipal counsel on questions in the absence of a town manager.

Mr. Dennison asked the Board about the procedure in hiring new personnel in the absence of the town manager. The Board discussed the procedure to follow in the absence of the town manager in personnel hiring.

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

That the managerial duties of the hiring of personnel by department heads will be assumed by the Finance Director during the absence of the town manager.

Mr. Dennison asked the Board about the responsibility of paying for departmental costs in the absence of the town manager. Mr. Rolfe explained that the Board relies on the department heads to make spending decisions with the guidance of the Finance Director and the outline of the municipal budget passed by citizens at the annual town meeting. Mr. Dennison said that he was concerned that the training line in the fire department budget was cut from \$1500. to \$200. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe pointed out that funds are available in other budget lines of the fire department. Mr. Rolfe advised Mr. Dennison that he can come back to the Board to discuss training costs if he finds that an adjustment needs to be made in funding. Mr. Whalen questioned that warrants were not given a final review in budget development. Ms. Dennison pointed out that the Board signed the warrants which indicates they were read and reviewed by the Board. Mr. Rolfe said that he believes that the warrants were written as agreed upon by the Board. Mr. Whalen said that he believes that the warrants were changed. Mr. Rolfe asked Mr. Dennison to confer with the Finance Director on funding for training; he noted that he could not recall this budget line being cut.

Mr. Dennison also noted that he was not sure of what the plan is for the public safety building now that the police department has been relocated. Mr. Rolfe suggested that the fire and ambulance departments develop a budget; look at the space that remains to house the fire and ambulance departments; and, present a plan for the building on how to utilize the space. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe noted that the Chief can get some quotes for the interior work. The members of the Board said that the Fire Chief could move forward in conference with the Finance Director following municipal purchasing policies. Mr. Haynes commented that "something definitely needs to be done in the building".

4. SOLAR PROJECTS

The Board reviewed solar projects with Mr. Andrew Kahrl. Mr. Rolfe said that he had e-mailed Mr. Kahrl materials for him to review. Mr. Rolfe noted that the proposed solar project at the municipal landfill has been halted since the participants were notified that there is no capacity left in the grid. Mr. Rolfe noted that there remains another option open to the Town for which Mr. Kahrl can speak to. Mr. Kahrl advised that there is a solar project in Sullivan that Machias can benefit from; there would be a fifteen percent savings on energy bills and is a low-risk option for a twenty year period (long term energy project). Mr. Kahrl said that he could do a comparison between the Sullivan project and the landfill proposal.

Mr. Rolfe asked if it were possible to combine both the net energy billing credit with the competitive supply contract for a thirty percent savings for the Town. Mr. Kahrl said that it was possible to have a co-generation agreement and that this could be discussed. Mr. Rolfe said that he would reach out to Mr. Whitney for additional information and will get back in touch with Mr. Kahrl on his discussion with Mr. Whitney.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Ms. Clifton explained to the Board that the Tax Assessor is unable to run the commitment of taxes until September 25th; she informed the Board that the town office will instead be closed on September 29th to allow processing of tax bills. Members of the Board questioned the reason for the delay. Ms. Clifton advised the Board that a reason for the delay was not given.

B. Ms. Clifton advised the Board of a request to use the Southside Field for volleyball during weekends through the end of September. Mr. Rolfe said that there should be no problem provided there is no conflict with the school department.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

To adjourn to executive session at 7:49 PM in accordance with MRSA Title 1 Chapter 13 Sub-section 405(6E) to consult with counsel.

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

To adjourn the executive session at 7:32 PM and reconvene in open session.

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

To assign the manager duties of a personnel issue brought to the Board's attention by Downeast Community Hospital to Betsy Fitzgerald.

On a motion by Lesley Haynes, seconded by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, the Board
voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 PM.