



Town of Machias
Town Office
7 Court Street, Suite #1
P. O. Box 418
Machias, ME 04654



Machias Select Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 26, 2025 @ 6:00 PM
At Machias Tele-Business Center

Call to Order: Jake Patryn, Chairperson

Adoption of Minutes - To review and adopt the minutes from Select Board Minutes February 12, 2025.

Items to be signed

1. Warrants
2. Certificate of Appointment – Harbor Master
3. Certificate of Appointment - Town Manager, Treasurer and Airport Manager

New Business

1. Machias Assessor Position
2. Town Meeting Date
3. Solar Moratorium
4. Sewer Ordinance Modification
4. Station 1898 Boxcar Ownership

Old Business

- 1 Machias Comprehensive Plan Update

Other Business

1. Town Manager's Update

Executive Session to be held in accordance with Title 1 Chapter 13 MRSA §405 Paragraph 6A

Adjourn

Next Meeting: Select Board Meeting 03/12/2025

Telephone: (207)-255-6621 E-Mail: townclerk@machiasme.org

Visit our website at machiasme.org

“Town of Machias is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.”

J Douglas Guy III
Certified Maine Assessor
467 Court St Machias ME 04654
dougguy@myfairpoint.net
207-263-6824

February 18, 2025

Select Board
Town Manager
Town of Machias, Maine

Subject: Machias Assessor

In January 2025 I advised Sarah that due to personal reasons, pretty much old age and health issues, I needed to resign after 30 years as Assessor for the Town of Machias. I agreed to remain in that position, handling day to day inquiries and perfecting the delayed, and then redone, 2024 Tax Commitment until a replacement could be found or the Town felt that it was no longer in need of my services.

During 2024 I worked with Tony Bennett, who is a Selectperson in Pembroke, on the tax commitments for Pembroke, Perry and Charlotte. I am currently the single appointed Assessor for Charlotte and the Assessors' Agent for Perry. Tony assumed the Assessors' Agent role in Pembroke in February, 2025. He has recently been recognized by the Property Tax Division of Maine Revenue Services as a Certified Maine Assessor. Working with me, Tony gained extensive experience using the web hosted TRIO-Harris real estate and business personal property valuation software and tax billing system. This is the same system Machias will be switching to on or about March 6th.

As part of this TRIO conversion, I have suggested that Machias add two new options to the assessing software package:

Full Personal Property – Currently, Personal Property valuations are entered manually after the assessment has been determined on paper. Paper records are on file. “Full” Personal Property allows for data entry of the list of taxable (or untaxable) personal property and a calculation of the assessment by the TRIO application. Calculation of the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) and those items eligible for the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) allows for quicker preparation of forms and reports for the taxpayer, and Town. Conversion over to this could be done in stages. Significant data entry will be required for the larger accounts. This data entry would be in addition to the regular annual maintenance.

Real Estate Commercial – currently residential properties have their assessment calculated by TRIO. Commercial property valuations are generally based on Marshall and Swift cost of construction estimates that have been adjusted for local market conditions. The commercial records are all paper files. Real Estate Commercial will require property specific data to be

entered into TRIO and then TRIO calculates the assessment. As in personal property, this improves assessment transparency and access to reports and making any necessary changes.

Work typically being done by the Machias Assessor this time of year includes the following:

1. Update of ownership and property for changes between 4/2/2024 and 4/1/2025. This includes things like making address changes to the "Central Parties" datafile of taxpayers in the TRIO system. There are some 1500 real estate accounts.
2. Mailing of "Section 706" letters requesting personal property data from those subject to personal property tax. (Jane has traditionally helped with this) There are about 165 existing accounts. There are probably 20 new, very small businesses that need to be identified and added to the personal property tax role.
3. Field inspection of those properties that have new or changed improvements in place as of 4/1/2025.

Besides the TRIO upgrade and conversion there is the new office space location, etc. With the move of Town Offices in 2024, my decreased time in the office over the past few years due to the pandemic and my ability to access the Town's data system remotely, and my health issues, I have fallen behind in organizational and filing work. Over the years I have set up a filing system by property Map and Lot number where documents of all kinds pertaining to a property may be filed. I would suggest that a new Assessor would reorganize the filing system so that each property have an appropriately labeled file envelope and "start fresh." I have more than a Banker's Box of stuff to be filed. If I were to continue as Assessor I would be asking for clerical help to set up the new files.

It is a little unclear as to when the 2025 Tax Commitment will be since it has been later than August the past few years.

In order to expedite my retirement from Machias, I recommend that the Town appoint Tony Bennett as Machias' single-appointed Assessor and start paying him so that he can begin work on the 2025 taxes as soon as possible. I would work with him during the rest of February and March getting files over to Stackpole drive. The March fee of \$2100 would be my final check. When TRIO web hosting goes into effect on March 6th Tony would have access and could begin making changes. Prior to a March Selectboard Meeting where Tony is appointed I will tender my written resignation to the Town Clerk.

I sincerely appreciate the flexibility and support that I have received since my diagnosis in 2023. Please let me know if there are any questions.

J Douglas Guy III

Sample

MORATORIUM ORDINANCE ON LARGE SCALE SOLAR FACILITIES

WHEREAS, the Maine legislature has enacted laws over the past four years that are intended to encourage and subsidize the development of large scale solar facilities in the State of Maine;

WHEREAS, as a result of these new laws, developers are proposing unprecedented numbers of large scale solar facilities throughout the state;

WHEREAS, areas in the Town of Athens are suddenly under the threat of increased development pressure from large scale solar facilities, and in the absence of an ordinance to regulate such facilities, the Selectboard has already approved two such systems;

WHEREAS, there is a likelihood that other areas of town could be subjected to this development due to the amount of undeveloped land, relatively low land prices, access to major transportation and electricity corridors, government subsidies, and current high demand for such development;

WHEREAS, residents of the Town of Athens have expressed concerns about proposals for such developments, including concerns regarding quality of life, adjacent property values, loss of wildlife habitat, health and safety dangers, visual impacts, overburdening of public facilities and electrical transmission systems, loss of farmland and timberlands, and decommissioning liabilities and costs;

WHEREAS, the unregulated location and operation of large scale solar facilities within the Town of Athens raises legitimate and substantial concerns about health, safety, and environmental impacts of such uses, as well as visual impacts, overburdening of public facilities and electrical transmission systems, and other considerations related to appropriate siting of these facilities;

WHEREAS, continued development of such systems could pose serious threats to the public health, safety and welfare of the residents of Athens through over-development in parts of the town without adequate provisions for issues of land use compatibility, aesthetics, visual impacts, decommissioning, safety, accessibility for emergency vehicles and training for emergency response teams for such type developments, protection of drinking water, management of storm water, preservation of farmland and woodlands, and an overburdening of utilities providing electricity to the people and businesses of Athens;

WHEREAS, existing zoning and regulations do not adequately provide mitigation for incompatibility of land uses, negative visual impacts, lack of accessibility for emergency vehicles and training for emergency response teams, contamination of drinking water, inadequate treatment of storm water, loss of wildlife habitat, damage to farmland and woodlands, reductions in quality of life for abutters, and overburdening of utilities providing electricity to the people and businesses of Athens;

WHEREAS, the Town's current ordinances are insufficient to prevent serious public harm that could be caused by unregulated development of large scale solar facilities;

WHEREAS, the town needs at least 180 days to study the land use implications of these pressures and develop and implement appropriate regulations for development of large scale solar facilities;

WHEREAS, in the judgement of the town, these facts establish that a Moratorium Ordinance in accordance with 30-A M.R.S.A.4536(1) is immediately necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety and welfare;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the voters of the Town of Athens, that the following Moratorium Ordinance on Large Scale Solar Facilities be, and hereby is, enacted and, in furtherance thereof, the town meeting does hereby declare a moratorium on the location, development, operation or licensing of large scale solar facilities within the Town.

For the purposes of this Moratorium, "large scale solar facilities" are defined as any solar facilities, projects, or installations including the associated solar arrays, solar related equipment, energy storage facilities, and components for distribution, which are intended to and/or in fact does generate electricity. This shall include, but is not limited to, any ground mounted or pole mounted photovoltaic (PV) array that is greater than 500 square feet in size.

Residential solar energy systems with an array area of less than 501 square feet in size, and ground or pole mounted arrays for private use with an array area of less than 501 square feet in size, are exempt from this ordinance. Large scale solar facility developments that received approval from the Town of Athens prior to the effective date of this Moratorium ordinance are exempt from provisions of this ordinance.

If enacted, the provisions of this Moratorium ordinance shall be applicable to all pending proceedings, applications and petitions commenced after November 2, 2023, which is the date of filing this initiative in the Town Clerk's office of the Town of Athens.

This Moratorium Ordinance shall remain in effect for a period of one hundred eighty (180) days after said date unless extended, repealed, or modified by the municipal officials of the Town of Athens, or until a new and revised set of regulations is adopted by the Town of Athens, whichever shall first occur.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this Moratorium Ordinance shall apply to large scale solar facilities that are proposed to be located within the Town on or after the effective date of this Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that notwithstanding the provisions of 1 M.R.S.A. § 302 or any other law to the contrary, this Moratorium Ordinance, when enacted, shall govern any proposed large scale solar facilities for which an application for a building permit, certificate of occupancy, electrical permit, shoreland zoning approval, site plan or any other required approval has not been submitted to and granted final approval by the Code Enforcement Officer, Selectboard, or other Town officials prior to the effective date of this Moratorium Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that no person or organization shall develop or operate new large scale solar facilities within the Town on or after the effective date of this Moratorium Ordinance without complying with whatever ordinance amendment or amendments the town meeting may enact as a result of this Moratorium Ordinance; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that during the time this Moratorium Ordinance is in effect, no officer, official, employee, office, administrative board or agency of the Town shall accept, process, approve, or in any other way act upon any application for a license, building permit or any other type of land use approval or permit and/or any other permits or licenses related to large scale solar facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that if any large scale solar facility is established in contravention of this Moratorium, each day of any continuing violation shall constitute a separate violation of this Moratorium Ordinance, and the Town shall be entitled to all rights available to it in law and equity, including, but not limited to, fines and penalties, injunctive relief, and its reasonable attorney's fees and costs in prosecuting any such violations. Any violation of this Moratorium Ordinance is subject to an enforcement action under 30-A M.R.S.A. 4452; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that should any section or provision of this Moratorium Ordinance be declared by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such a declaration shall not invalidate any other section or provision.