

Public Hearing Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 19, 2025
At Machias Tele-Business Center

In attendance: Chairman Jake Patryn, Ben Edwards, Sandra Sinford, Carole Porcher, Mike Hinerman, Tora Johnson, Town Clerk Sandra, Finance Director Nicholas MacDonald, Police Chief Keith Mercier, Asst. Ambulance Chief Steve Simmons and recording secretary Sharon Mack.

The first hearing was called to order at 5:01 p.m. with 22 audience members, 13 on-line attendees as well as the town officials listed above.

Jake Patryn opened the hearing and explained it was intended to **gather public input on the town's options for repayment of \$314,152.41 to the county for a Tax Anticipation Note that is due on December 31, 2025.** The county does not have the funds and has asked all Washington County towns to pay their share before that date to avoid defaulting on the note. Finance Director Nick MacDonald outlined the town's three options: take the money from reserves, or take out one of two loans, a 5 year loan at 4.2% or a 10 year loan at 5.6%.

Both Nick MacDonald and Ben Edwards, who is vice chair of the select board and the Washington County Budget Committee, recommended taking out the 5 year note. Ben Edwards said if the town opted not to pay the amount, it would just be tacked on to next fall's county tax bill. Nick MacDonald stressed that the town is in a strong financial position and that would likely pay the note off by next year, as soon as the ongoing audit is complete. He expects the 2024 audit should be completed in January 2026 and the 2025 audit by June or July 2026. Audience member William O'Leary asked if any illegal financial actions had been conducted by the county. Ben Edwards assured him there was no fraud or misappropriation of funds. Other questions and comments by residents centered around accurately knowing the town's fund balance and the effect of these actions on next year's county tax bill.

The proposed payment options for the county's TAN debt public hearing was closed at 5:40 p.m.

Jake Patryn opened the second public hearing at 5:42 p.m. and explained it was intended **to receive public comments about a proposed draft Solar Farm Ordinance.** Misha Curtis of Mid Coast Solar stated his company was launching a solar farm near the airport that will be 9 acres in size. He and Sean Murphy of the solar company, Flycatcher, suggested several changes to the draft including setbacks and screening requirements. They submitted written comments to the board. Audience members questioned the setback requirements, who will inspect the site to confirm it is meeting all requirements, potential toxic runoff, erosion, and depreciating values to neighbors' properties. Town Manager Sarah Dedmon explained that the town cannot outright ban solar farms but this proposal regulates them with community input.

The proposed Solar Farm Ordinance public hearing was closed at 6:17 p.m.

Jake Patryn opened the third public hearing at 6:17 p.m. and explained the board was gathering **public input on a proposed Wind Farm Ordinance.** He said it would regulate Type 1-4 turbines and deals with sighting, noise and other issues. One resident, Craig Cameron, questioned the need for the ordinance, adding that "wind farms are worthless and are being taken down, and they are ugly." Jake Patryn responded that the town had no right to ban wind farms but this ordinance would allow local regulation.

The proposed Wind Farm Ordinance public hearing was closed at 6:28 p.m.

Jake Patryn opened the fourth public hearing at 6:28 p.m. and explained the board wanted input on **entering into long term lease agreements** at the airport for hangar space. Sarah Dedmon explained that the taxiway is near completion and that provides access to up to four and eventually up to six privately owned hangars. The leases would be for 20 years and cover the land that the privately constructed hangars are built on. Residents questioned when the runway expansion will be completed to allow fixed-wing aircraft, particularly LifeFlight, to land in Machias. Sarah Dedmon said a plan is underway and the town is currently working with an engineering firm. There were no other questions.

The public hearing to allow the town to enter into long term lease agreements was closed at 6:35 p.m.