

Approved @ 3/15/21 Zoom Mtg.

Gordon S. MacArthur
Peter Vogell

TOWN OF CASTINE
SELECTBOARD, ASSESSORS & OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Monday, March 1, 2021

TIME: 4PM (via ZOOM)

PLACE: Emerson Hall

PRESENT: Gordon MacArthur, Chair; Peter Vogell & Colin Powell, Selectboard members; Shawn Blodgett, Town Manager; Karen Motycka, Finance Officer and Susan Macomber, Town Clerk.
PUBLIC: Liz Parish, Bobby & Ruth Ann Vagt, Helen Miller, Pat Bishop, Bev Bishop, Bruce & Roberta Boczkiewicz and Eli Forman of the Castine Patriot.

Gordon MacArthur opened the meeting at 4:00PM. Quorum was confirmed with Peter Vogell stating his presence; Colin Powell stating his presence; and Gordon MacArthur stating his presence.

Gordon asked if there were any additions or deletions to the Agenda: NONE.

Warrants: Gordon asked for a motion to approve the warrants, abatements, budget vs. actual and trial balance reports, bank reconciliations, excise tax collections.

General Fund Warrant in the amount of \$74,728.70; Peter Vogell made motion to approve the General Fund Warrant in the amount stated. Second by Colin Powell.

Gordon asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. General Fund Warrant approved 3-0.

Water Dept Warrant in the amount of \$23,617.75; Peter Vogell made motion to approve the Water Dept Warrant in the amount stated. Second by Colin Powell.

Gordon asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Water Dept Warrant approved 3-0.

Disbursement Warrant for monthly State Reports in the amount of \$1,851.25; Peter Vogell made motion to approve the Disbursement Warrant in the amount stated. Second by Colin Powell.

Gordon asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Disbursement Warrant approved 3-0.

Minutes: Peter Vogell made motion to approve the February 16, 2021 Selectboard Mtg minutes. Second by Gordon MacArthur. No discussion. Gordon asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Feb 16, 2021 Mtg minutes approved 3-0.

Peter Vogell made motion to approve the February 23, 2021 Budget Work Session Mtg minutes.

Second by Gordon MacArthur. No discussion. At this Work Session a Warrant was addressed and approved. Gordon asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Feb 23, 2021 Mtg minutes approved 3-0.

Item 1. Gordon MacArthur introduced the Town Manager's Report: Shawn Blodgett gave a brief report.

1) State COVID19 updates.

2) Mount Desert Grant Manager reached out about available grant funds to assist with costs regarding Charging Stations. Shawn said this needs more research to see if it is a good fit for Castine and where would a charging station could go. Town Dock was discussed but Shawn has concerns about taking away much needed parking spaces, as a charging station would need to be dedicated.

Liz Parish suggested behind Emerson Hall.

3) Public Works, Henry Erhard, has been working on insulating the Lighthouse basement.

Pat Bishop asked if the Lighthouse was occupied. Shawn said yes, there is a tenant.

Liz Parish asked when the Lighthouse Lease expires. Shawn said he believed the current lease expires June, 2022. Discussion.

Item 2. Other Business as Required: NONE.

Communications: - Pat Bishop on behalf of the Castine Touring Company addressed a new venture for this upcoming season. Pat reviewed the Touring Company's background and statistics; 2016 = "Scarlett" had 196 riders, 2017 = 306, 2018 = 581 and 2019 =770. Scarlett has earned \$27,000 and has donated to the Town \$2,000 in 2019 and \$2,500 in 2020; \$600 to the Castine Merchants Association. The new addition is having a Trolley Tour on Monday mornings partnering with American Cruiseline. The Trolley would take Cruiseline passengers on a guided tour around Castine. They expect 38-50 passengers each visit. They will rent the Trolley (with driver) and Touring Company volunteers will do the tours.

Discussion.

Gordon MacArthur said when he was reviewing the proposed route the only recommendation (coming from his Civil Engineering - roads & transportation experience) is to eliminate going down Green Street and use Dyer Lane instead because of the steepness at the bottom of Green Street. Liz Parish thanked the Touring Company and its volunteers for the benefits it brings to the Town and community. Peter Vogell agreed and said Scarlett and the Touring Company is a great addition to the Town. Colin Powell thanked Pat Bishop for the background and statistics. Learning those details was both interesting and helpful.

-Email from John Czuj giving perspectives regarding George Stevens Academy (GSA) request for exceeding maximum tuition. John Czuj is a Sedgwick resident and a concerned Peninsula citizen.

He is requesting that Peninsula towns consider his perspectives on GSA's public campaign to raise tuition above its allowable maximum. GSA is requesting an additional \$1,000 tuition rate per student. There are other alternatives than them taxing the towns. Below is summary of John Czuj perspectives:

- GSA has the means to solve its problem, without the towns
- GSA wants to be public and private at the same time, and should not have it both ways
- GSA's PR campaign has been on high volume, and is not an objective source for voter information
- Precedent and benchmarking across other Maine academies should be considered, before town's votes
- John requests help in saving GSA but only with real accommodations from the school

Discussion. No action taken but Selectboard did say they were interested in addressing this further with the Castine School Board. Peter Vogell said they need to find out what the School Board says on the issue.

Gordon acknowledged the public present for any requests, questions, or concerns:

1) Roberta Boczkiewicz said since this is their first winter in Castine, she asked about snow/ice removal from sidewalks. Town Manager, Shawn Blodgett and the Selectboard gave some history on the topic. This is not the first time this has been discussed and brought before the Board. The Town has only one Public Works crew member which makes it a difficult task and figuring out logistics. Staffing and equipment is costly. Often times there is no place to put the sidewalk snow. Castine has no Ordinance that requires property owners to keep sidewalks in front of their properties clear and cleaned. It would be hard to enforce as not all Castine property owners are here during the winter months and/or they physically cannot do snow removal themselves or afford to have it removed.

Discussion. Liz Parish suggested putting the topic to the Town voters for snow removal specifically on Main Street. Everyone agreed they do not want to see anyone getting hurt. It was decided to talk more about it and gather updated information.

2) Liz Parish asked Bobby Vagt if it was appropriate to give an update on the Castine Area Relief Program. Liz said there are funds enough for approximately 5-weeks worth of meals in the treasury. Liz mentioned they might need to consider requesting additional donations and/or do some fundraising. Bobby Vagt said he could give a few updates but did not have concrete numbers off hand. He said they have an application into the Maine Foundation and trying not to rely on the Town. He added that he knows about ½ dozen individuals who would donate, if asked, as they do not want anyone to go hungry. Castine was the first to donate and has inspired others to do so, i.e. Town of Penobscot might be donating. The Area Relief Program has accommodated over \$17,000 in assistance.

Past Actions: NONE.

Selectboard Comments: Pat Bishop asked the Board a broad question. What does the Board want for Castine's future? Discussion.

Gordon MacArthur said they will soon begin the process for updating the Comprehensive Plan. He does not have any knowledge for year-to-year plans or goals at this time.

Colin Powell said it is hard to outline anything else when Castine's infrastructure needs has been most of their focus and a priority. There is a lot more to do regarding Castine's Infrastructure Master Plan. Pat said many new young families have come to Castine due to COVID19, now how do we keep them here? Colin said Pat should volunteer for the Comprehensive Plan Committee to help figure that out.

Upcoming Mtgs:

Monday, 3/15/21 at 4PM (ZOOM) - Selectboard/Assessors & Overseers of the Poor Mtg.

Wednesday, 3/17/2021 at 8AM - T/G Mtg (ZOOM), if needed.

Gordon MacArthur made motion to adjourn. Second by Peter Vogell.

Gordon asked for votes: Peter stated yes to adjourn. Colin stated yes to adjourn. Gordon stated yes to adjourn. Approved 3-0. Meeting adjourned at 4:40PM.

Minutes by Susan M Macomber, Town Clerk.