


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

GBM
PV

(Zoom)

DATE: Monday, August 1, 2022
TIME: 4PM (In-person; broadcast via ZOOM)
PLACE: Emerson Hall

PRESENT: Peter Vogell, Chair; Gordon MacArthur & Colin Powell, Selectboard members; Shawn Blodgett, Karen Motycka, Finance Officer and Susan Macomber, Town Clerk.

PUBLIC: Liz Parish, Helen Miller, Josh Adam, Scott Vogell, Roberta Boczkiewicz, Shelly Pomeroy (The Castine Inn), John Legg, Nora Spratt, Anne Blodgett, Nina Desmond, and Ann Robinson.

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

Warrants: Peter 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 \$70,903.92; Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve the General Fund Warrant in the amount stated. Second by Colin Powell. No discussion. Peter 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 \$4,625.06; Peter Vogell made motion to approve the Water Dept Warrant in the amount stated. Second by Gordon MacArthur. No discussion.

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

Minutes: Peter Vogell made motion to approve the July 18, 2022, Selectboard Mtg minutes. Second by Gordon MacArthur. No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. July 18, 2022, Selectboard Mtg minutes approved 3-0.

Item 1. Peter Vogell introduced approving Amusement License request – John & Charlotte Legg. John Legg was present.

Gordon MacArthur said questions from last meeting were: the exact date, location and times of the event. John Legg answered: 5-8PM, at their house in the backyard at 19 Pleasant Street, on Friday, 8/12. Colin Powell made motion to approve. Second by Peter Vogell. No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Amusement License – John & Charlotte Legg approved 3-0.

Items 2. Peter Vogell introduced approving Renewal Liquor License – The Castine Inn. Shelly Pomeroy, Manager, was present.

Peter Vogell made motion to approve. Second by Gordon MacArthur. No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Renewal Liquor License – The Castine Inn approved 3-0.

Item 3. Peter Vogell introduced approving the FY 2022-23 Tax Commitment.

Peter Vogell made motion to approve with a mil rate of 13. Second by Gordon MacArthur.

No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. FY 2022-23 Tax Commitment approved 3-0.

Item 4. Peter Vogell introduced approving annual Municipal Officials appointments and read list (see attached). Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve. Second by Peter Vogell. No discussions. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Annual Municipal Officials appointments approved 3-0.

Gordon MacArthur made motion to appointment Peter Vogell as the Local Plumbing Inspector (LPI). Second by Colin Powell. No discussions. Peter asked for votes: Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. LPI appointment approved 2-0 (Peter Vogell abstained).

Item 5. Peter Vogell introduced approving Board/Committee appointments and read list (see attached).

Peter Vogell made motion to approve. Second by Gordon MacArthur. No discussions.

Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes. Colin stated yes. Gordon stated yes. Board/Committee appointments approved 3-0.

Item 6. Peter Vogell introduced approving Consent Agreement – 33 LaTour St; Regan Property.

This item was tabled at the last Selectboard Mtg (7/18) until the property owner signed the documents, then the Selectboard would sign. Property owner, Ted Regan signed with a Notary Public.

Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve & sign. Second by Colin Powell.

No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes. Colin stated yes. Gordon stated yes. Consent Agreement – 33 LaTour St; Regan property approved 3-0.

Item 7. Peter Vogell introduced approving Town of Castine Fire Rescue Department Volunteer Firefighters Insured Personnel Reserve Fund Policy.

Peter Vogell made motion to approve. Second by Colin Powell.

No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. Castine Fire Rescue Dept Volunteer Firefighters Insured Personnel Reserve Fund Policy approved 3-0.

Item 8. Town Manager's Report: Shawn Blodgett, Town Manager read his report (see attached).

#2 LD 290. Liz Parish asked for additional information. Shawn said municipalities are still learning more detail on this law, but applications are now posted on the State's website. Taxes for this year will be the same. This program takes effect next tax year.

Item 9. Other Business as Required. NONE.

Communications: NONE.

Peter acknowledged the public present for any requests, questions, or concerns: -Josh Adam asked if information on how to donate to the Castine Elm Tree initiative could be posted on the Town's website. Josh was told that information was posted that morning. It was asked what the plan was. Shawn said currently there are approximately 30 impacted trees. After we see what donations we get, we will see what the shortfall is, if any, and evaluate what to do next.

-Helen Miller asked why Castine does not hire someone to help raise funds when needed. She said there is so much opportunity out there that Castine misses. Karen Motycka, Finance Officer said using the Elm Tree issue and Committee as an example, the Elm Tree Committee does an excellent job on fundraising. With the amount of the Town's budget plus their annual fundraising there has not been an issue for funds. With the surge in Dutch Elm Disease, it may be different this year. Discussion.

Past Actions: NONE.

Selectboard Comments: Colin Powell made motion to approve a one-time payment to Fire Rescue Dept member in the amount of \$6303 under the Insured Personnel Reserve Fund Policy. Second by Peter Vogell. No discussion. Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to approve. Colin stated yes to approve. Gordon stated yes to approve. One-time payment to Fire Rescue Dept member approved 3-0.

Upcoming Mtgs:

-Mon, 8/15/22 at 4PM - Selectboard/Assessors & Overseers of the Poor Mtg.

-Wedn, 8/17/22 at 8AM – T/G Mtg.

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

Peter asked for votes: Peter stated yes to adjourn. Colin stated yes to adjourn. Gordon stated yes to adjourn. Approved 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:32PM.

Minutes by Susan M Macomber, Town Clerk.



MEMORANDUM

To: Castine Selectboard
From: Shawn Blodgett
Date: August 1, 2022
Re: Town Manager Report

There is quite a bit to go through tonight, so please hold all questions until the end and I'll attempt to answer every one of them at that time.

1. Water/Pleasant/Perkins Stormwater Mitigation Update. As of Friday afternoon, approximately 102 lineal feet of new culvert and one new catch basin had been installed. As of this morning, approximately 30 more feet of culvert and an access point are in place. Once the material arrived and our contracted vendor was able to get to work, everything has been going smoothly, and our project manager feels that the project is moving faster than he expected. We realize that the traffic disruption is not optimal but I would again ask that pedestrians give the area downhill of the Pleasant/Perkins intersection and around the corner of Water Street in the vicinity of Payson Hall a wide berth. The trenches being dug are deep with heavy equipment being moved throughout the area and we fear that someone will be inadvertently injured.

2. LD 290. For those who qualify, sign up is now open for the recently passed LD 290. The signup window expires on 01 December, 2022. LD 290's long title is "An Act To Stabilize Property Taxes for Individuals 65 Years of Age or Older Who Own a Homestead for at Least 10 Years". Guidance and application instructions for this new law can be found at Maine Revenue Services website at the following link:



<https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs/property-tax-relief-programs/stabilization-program>

A synopsis of this law is as follows:

- It is a State-run program which is processed by municipalities.
- To qualify, an applicant must be 1) At least 65 years of age, 2) be a permanent resident of Maine, 3) be eligible for a homestead exemption on the property that is being placed into the program and 4) “must have owned a homestead in Maine for at least ten (10) years. The homestead exemption generally only applies to an applicant’s permanent residence. Castine has approximately 174 homestead exempt properties.
- What the law does is enables “certain senior-citizen residents to stabilize, or freeze, the property taxes on their homestead” at the previous year’s rate. The applicant must re-apply each year.
- A Municipalities roll is to 1) Accept all applications 2) Verify eligibility and notify applicants whether they are approved or denied 3) Track properties in the program, the tax stabilized amount, and the tax that would otherwise have been assessed 4) retain applications for reference and for state valuation audit purposes and 5) annually apply with Maine Revenue Services for reimbursement by November 1st.

Any revenue lost by municipalities is supposed to be reimbursed to the town by the State at a 100% rate.

3. Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) Request. Over the past couple of weeks, when not engaged in other tasks, the Castine town staff spent over 23 hours, in 15 to 30 minute increments, of staff time responding to a FOAA request from a law firm hired by “interested parties” requesting all documents pertaining to new fire station planning going back to January 1st of 2020. To our knowledge, we have completely complied with the FOAA request and provided hundreds of pages of documents containing information already passed to the community through Selectboard updates, community engagements, town meetings etc.



4. Municipal Review Committee (MRC) Update. The Receiver for the Hampden Facility and the MRC did not deem any of the potential buyers as qualified because they did not satisfy the financial and technical requirements to submit proposals to purchase the facility. As a result, the next step is for the MRC to purchase the Facility for \$1-1.5 million, which was the MRC's agreement with the bondholders known as the stalking horse bid. The MRC is now moving forward on exclusive partnership discussions with Revere Capital to help reopen and restart the facility. According to the MRC, Revere capital has experience with investing in small and midmarket companies in the clean tech industry. What we do not know is the exact criteria that was used to disqualify potential buyers and how this same criterion is being applied to both the MRC and Revere Capital. This lack of clarity may be understandable as a certain amount of information must be cloistered during negotiations. However, as the MRC has stated, they will need at least some monetary backing from their membership to restart operations and I do not have enough information at this point to make an informed recommendation to the Selectboard or the town. In the meantime, and since the town voted to increase our recycling budget, we are putting together a plan to restart recycling at the increased cost of \$150 a ton- which is up from the \$85.46 we used to pay for the use of the Hampden facility. The good news is that the town's recyclable options will expand and will include glass. The bad news is that Pine Tree waste will not accept recyclables in plastic bags, all recycled items must be clean and dry, and items must be larger than 2" x 2". This will present a problem in the way we are currently conducting curbside pickup of recycling every other Tuesday specifically because our requirement is for residents to place all recycling in a clear plastic bag. We'll be publishing all information and updated guidance on our web page in the very near future.

5. Consent Agreement on 33 Latour. Mr. Regan has signed and notarized the consent agreement.



6. Unitarian Universalist (UU) Congregation of Castine. I have provided to the Selectboard the quit claim deed to officially codify the UU ownership of the religious edifice and land on the southeast corner of the Town Common. In further research, Brooke Tenney found the original deed from John Perkins to the town that stipulates that if the land ever ceases to be used as the meeting house and school, the land reverts to John Perkins or his heirs. Since the town has already voted on this, I am awaiting a legal opinion from our legal team as to whether a clause like this has a sunset provision by State Law. The UU congregation has already received an opinion from their attorney who said that a 30-year timeline is the standard. Since it is highly unlikely that the building will cease to be used as a meeting house as stipulated in the 1814-15 deed, I would recommend to the Selectboard to sign the quit claim deed and legally codify the reality of the situation.

7. Water Street Closure Next Monday. This Saturday, there will be a crane operating in front of 22 Water Street which will necessitate a short-term street closure. We estimate that the street will be closed from 9:00 AM to NOON. The crane will be moving the final pieces of equipment to the roof of the building so that the property owner can complete a long running renovation of the home. The manager of the bank and apartments across the street have been informed.

8. Volunteer Firefighters Injured Personnel Reserve Fund. Last fiscal year, the town voted to establish a Fire Department reserve account to provide augmentation to the Maine Municipal Association managed Worker's Compensation Claim process in the rare case of an injured Castine Firefighter or Emergency Medical Services Volunteer. The Selectboard has in front of them a policy to manage this fund. This reserve fund is intended to augment, not replace, the Worker's Compensation claim process. The fund currently has a balance of \$20,000 and by the policy, the future growth of the fund will be capped at \$25,000. This policy would allow the Town of Castine to augment an



injured volunteer's workers compensation claim of up to \$1,200 a month for four months in a single year. If the Selectboard chooses to enact the policy, I would ask for a one-time exception to this policy for a payment to a longtime injured volunteer whose injury formulated the idea of this policy. This volunteer's recovery timeline straddled two fiscal years. I respectfully request the enactment of this policy and a one-time payment of \$6,303 to this individual.