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**Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 5, 2023, 4:00 PM
Emerson Hall**

Present: Colin Powell, Chair; Gordon MacArthur and Roberta Boczkiewicz, Selectboard; Shawn Blodgett, Town Manager and Karen Motycka, Finance Officer.

Public: Marc Pelletier, Don Tenney, Brooke Tenney, Bob Friedlander, Joe Slocum, Helen Miller, Peg and Mac Patterson, Jim Hubbard, Bente Hartmann, Liz Parish, Julie Bohan, Dan Leader, Tom Comiciotto, Josh Adam, Gus Basile, Bobby and Ruth Ann Vagt, Phil Freedman, Ann Blodgett, Doug and Judy Fitzsimmons, Jim Day and Zoom attendance – Pat Bishop, Mary Kneisel, Susie Hatch and Kate Noel.

Colin called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. It was verified that a quorum was present.

Colin asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the agenda. There were none.

Colin introduced Warrants, Abatements, review Budget vs. Actual, Trial Balance Sheets, Bank Reconciliations and Excise Tax Collections. Colin asked for a motion to approve the General Fund Warrant in the amount of \$499,375.26. Gordon made a motion to approve the General Fund Warrant in that amount. Roberta seconded the motion and noted that the warrant covered 48 bills, most covering Debt Service. Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Colin asked for a motion to approve the Water Warrant in the amount of \$108,341.08. Roberta made a motion to approve the Water Warrant in that amount. Gordon seconded the motion. With no discussion, Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Colin made a motion to abate two personal property tax bills totaling \$61.36 and to issue one supplemental personal property tax bill in the amount of \$25.96. Gordon seconded the motion. With no discussion, Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Colin introduced approval of Minutes of previous meetings. Gordon made a motion to approve the minutes of August 21, 2023 meeting. Roberta seconded the motion. With no discussion, Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Gordon made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2023 meeting. Roberta seconded the motion. With no discussion, Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Roberta made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2023 meeting. Gordon seconded the motion. With no discussion, Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Colin introduced Old Business. The board had discussed Food Trucks and the Zoning Ordinance, however they were still working on, so no update at this time.

Item 1.

Colin introduced Update from Boards/Committees. The Harbor Committee was on the agenda, however no one from the committee was present.

Item 2.

Colin introduced Town Manager's Report. Shawn read his report (attached to become part of the minutes). Recently DOT placed counter cords in various locations around Town. DOT does road surveys every 2 years to count traffic. Discussion on when to recognize Dr Olivari's years of service to Castine and surrounding communities. The Selectboard gave guidance to Shawn on how to proceed with Western Court St. They all felt overlay was the best option now. Roberta made a motion to accept the CurbSol proposal/bid for section of sidewalk on Pleasant and Perkins Streets. Gordon seconded the motion. Discussion on price and that it was within the expected estimate. Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

Shawn ended his Town Manager's Report announcing that as of March 15, 2024 he was resigning from his position as Town Manager.

Item 3.

Colin introduced Other Business. There was none.

Colin introduced Communications. There was none.

Colin acknowledged members of the public. Dan Leader asked what the downside was to pave over western Court Street now. Colin said there was a plan to rebuild the road, including water and sewer in 2027, after some major debt service was retired.

Gus Basile asked if there was any concern with Town wells and saltwater intrusion with sea level rise. Shawn said that the geologists have not raised any flags on that subject. Shawn reminded everyone that with the Battle Ave Ponds and Reservoir, we have a healthy reserve of water.

Don Tenney brought up the water main break on Court Street and that the Town may have some water valves that are not functioning properly.

David Avery asked Shawn about his reasons for resigning. Shawn said he and his family were not leaving Castine. He was looking for a reduction in work hours and more time with family. Bobby Vagt said he was saddened to hear of Shawn's leaving and had much appreciation for all he has done.

Marc Pelletier had five items he wanted to comment on. Parking, recycling, soil testing, MMA Lighting Plan for the Waterfront (Roberta reminded him that MMA has monthly meetings at Town Hall for the Public to get updates and ask questions) and 26 Water Street.

Shawn said that Luke Chiavelli (the CEO who is handling 26 Water Street) believes the permit is ready to go to the Planning Board and is trying to coordinate a schedule that will work for all. The alleged sign violation was asked about. Luke has been given the information.

Brooke Tenney asked if PFAS was being tested for in the soil testing at the Court Street Fire Department location? Shawn answered yes.

Liz Parish and Judy Fitzsimmons continued discussion about 26 Water Street sign. Colin reiterated that the Selectboard is taking the advice of Counsel.

Joe Slocum reminded the room that everyone is entitled to due process, even difficult people.

Colin asked if there were any Selectboard Comments. There were none.

Next meetings: Work Session Monday, 09/11/23 at 9AM, Selectboard Meeting Monday, 09/18/23 at 4PM.

With no other business, Roberta made a motion to adjourn. Gordon seconded the motion. Colin called for a vote.

Approved 3-0.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.

Minutes by Karen Motycka.



MEMORANDUM

To: Castine Selectboard
From: Shawn Blodgett
Date: September 05, 2023
Re: Town Manager's Report

1. Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Grant Application Outbrief.

There will be a theme for the first three things I speak about tonight. Last week, I conducted an outbrief with NBRC staff on Castine's NBRC Catalyst grant application. As a reminder, this was a grant application which would have allowed the town to completely rebuild Western Court Street. The only two points that were made to me with regards to shortfalls of our application were that the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA costs were not adequately accounted for in our construction work plan and our economic impact data was not sourced. As an aside, we had the source for the data, but were space constrained by the online application form and our NEPA costs were aggregated in our work plan, but not broken down. As the debriefer told me, these were incredibly minor shortfalls in our application. Between myself, Ina Schonberg, Lisa Simpson Lutts, and Craig Johnson at Maine Maritime Academy we collectively had well over a hundred hours of work in this application. I did receive encouragement to apply again, as our application made it through the NBRC evaluation and on to the Maine Commissioner and Governor's Office, who ultimately pick who is funded. We were not picked. The ultimate lesson learned from this is that there isn't an external funding source who will ride into town with a bag of money over their shoulder and make our infrastructure problems go away. Some might say we should bond for this and all of the other projects needing to be done. If the Town authorizes a bond for the Western Court Street project, the mil rate will go up by 4.4% and



the town's cheap sewer rates will go up by 16%. However, projects such as these in town can't be viewed with a myopic lens. We currently have a Congressionally Directed Spending Package progressing which will defray \$1.76 million of a \$2.3 million dollar project to replace the 52 year old Sea Street pump station. If successful, the CDS package will still leave the town with a \$500 thousand dollar sewer shortfall, meaning that even if the CDS package comes through, sewer rates will already be going up by 16%. Put Western Court Street on top of that and rates will go up by 32%.

2. Paving 2023. Paving will begin around town in the latter portion of this week on seven different paving projects. These projects are:

- a. Overlay 130 feet of Tarratine street by the MMA entrance.
- b. Patch three sections of western Battle Avenue totaling 210'x9'
- c. Patch three sections of Water Street to include a cost share portion with a property owner where the pavement was cut for a sewer hookup. Ditch maintenance is included in one portion of this work area to enable better stormwater drainage flow.
- d. Patch the area of Perkins Street where the Water Department needed to conduct some work.

All in, these projects will cost approximately \$54,125 leaving the town with just over \$75,000 in paving money for the spring of 2024.

Separate from paving projects, we have signed another contract to conduct ditch maintenance at the base of Wadsworth Cove road to alleviate the winter icing issues that occur there.

3. Western Court Street. Back to Western Court Street. Leaving such a robust amount of money in paving reserves was by design. As we were unsuccessful with the grant application that would have enabled the town to completely rebuild western Court Street, we are left with only two options. Go to the town and seek a bond while understanding the increased mil and sewer rates, or pave over this section of Court and wait until 2027 for the debt relief that we



know is coming. As we have a CDS package pending with the Federal Government and the Sea Street pump station being THE critical node for sewage transport in town, I assess this project as the higher priority. My greatest fear is that inflationary pressures will continue to raise the bar to be just out of reach by 2027. I request prioritization guidance from the Selectboard on this issue.

4. Sidewalks. Around a month ago, we contacted around a dozen cement contractors from Castine to Bangor and from Ellsworth to Belfast. Of all of them, only three would commit to doing flatwork, or sidewalks. Of the three, only two would work in exposed aggregate Portland cement. One contractor deferred as they knew that there was no way that they could get to another project anytime soon. The bid received was from Curb and Sidewalk Solutions or CurbSol out of Holden for \$44,916 and the project area will be on eastern Pleasant Street from Court to Perkins and around the corner to the East on Perkins to tie into the newer walk that was emplaced as part of the Main Street project. All told, we will be emplacing 460' linear feet of 4' wide walk on Pleasant and 147' of 3' wide walk on Perkins. This project will represent a second phase of a three phase attempt to generate a walking corridor in this section of town. The first phase was to widen Water Street around the blind corner. This will be the second phase and our hope is for external funding to help defray the cost of a sidewalk emplacement on Water Street. Maine Department of Transportation representatives are working on this with the town. I respectfully request the Selectboard to authorize my contracting with CurbSol for this sidewalk project.

5. Streetlights. As many in town know, Castine has owned the streetlights since they were transitioned to LED. The upside in this is that the town saves thousands of dollars a year in decreased energy costs and rental fees. The downside is that only CMP approved contractors can work on the lights when we have a problem and these contractors are in Dover-Foxcroft and Camden.



In October, we intend to have six lights worked on around town. These lights are in the following locations:

- a. 137 The Shore Road
- b. Corner of State Street and Windmill Hill Lane
- c. 21 Tarratine
- d. 127 Perkins Street
- e. 23 Wadsworth Cove Rd.
- f. At the corner of Court and Dyer.

If any resident notices a streetlight not working properly, please contact town hall and we will ensure that the vendor looks at the light when they are in town.

6. Doctor Olivari. I respectfully request that the Selectboard recognize Dr. Olivari at time and date in the near future for her 28 years of medical service to the Town of Castine.

7. Soils Testing at the Fire Station. I expect the results from the firm hired to conduct soils testing on the Fire Station lot sometime this week.

8. Staff Reorganization. On Monday of this week, the majority of town staff met to brainstorm staff re-organization. I'd like to make this a topic for discussion at the next work session with the Selectboard. There are concerning trends across all functional areas of town staff and to rectify them, some investments will need to be made but I believe that the costs are reasonable. First, we are largely one staff member deep in most of our functional areas – today -traffic enforcement as an example. Second, I do not believe that we are properly aligned from a functional perspective. Third, I do not believe that staff are properly empowered to make decisions and manage or fix issues within their purview – Road Commissioner is an example. Lastly on this topic, trash and recycling pick up continues to be a problem. Town staff are currently having to send a half a pickup load a week to the landfill of items left out for recycling.



This is a cost that the taxpayers of Castine are bearing because recycling standards are not being followed.

9. Resignation. Lastly, I would like to formally announce that as of March 15, 2024, I will be resigning from my position as Town Manager of Castine. In the very near future, we will be contacting Maine Municipal Association to aid the town in a search for a new manager for the town.