

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

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Roberta J Boczkiewicz
(Zoom)

DATE: Monday, November 6, 2023

TIME: 4PM

PLACE: Emerson Hall

PRESENT: Gordon MacArthur, Acting-Chair, Roberta Boczkiewicz, Selectboard member (Colin Powell, ZOOM); Shawn Blodgett, Town Manager (ZOOM); Karen Motycka, Finance Officer and Susan Macomber, Town Clerk.

PUBLIC: Bob Friedlander, Don Tenney, Ruth Ann & Bobby Vagt, Peg & Mac Patterson, Hank DeRaaf, Jeff Ackerman, Bill Corbett, Scott Vogell, Susan Hazlett, Charlie Pearce, Ina Schonberg and David Avery of the Castine Patriot.

Zoom: Bruce Boczkiewicz, Liz Parish, Mary Kneisel and Brooke Tenney.

Gordon MacArthur opened the meeting at 4:05PM, immediately following the Public Hearing. Gordon verified that there was a quorum.

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

Gordon MacArthur asked for a motion to approve the warrants, abatements, budget vs. actual and trial balance reports, bank reconciliations and excise tax collections; Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve the General Fund Warrant in the amount of \$110,258.01. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. Roberta pointed out that this warrant covered 104 bills, the largest ones paid to Bowden & Son for paving jobs and to Olver Associates for Sewer Plant operations. With no other discussion, Gordon asked for votes: General Fund Warrant approved 3-0.

Roberta Boczkiewicz made motion to approve the Water Warrant in the amount of \$14,736.72. Second by Gordon MacArthur. With no discussion, Gordon asked for votes:

Water Warrant approved 3-0.

Minutes: Roberta Boczkiewicz made motion to approve the October 16, 2023, Selectboard Mtg minutes. Second by Gordon MacArthur. With no discussion, Gordon asked for votes:

10/16/23 Mtg minutes approved 2-0 (Colin abstained, not present at the mtg).

Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve the October 23, 2023, Selectboard Mtg minutes.

Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. With no discussion, Gordon asked for votes:

10/23/23 Mtg minutes approved 2-0 (Colin abstained, not present at the mtg).

Old Business:

- 1) LD 791 Funding: Roberta said funding for Fort George has passed in legislation but has not passed in the Appropriations Committee. The plan is to do some modifications to the bill to incorporate 19 other sites in Maine to allocate the funding to. There is a letter available with Roberta encouraging the community to send to Governor Mills and other Maine Government representatives.

Bill Corbett asked how much is the funding and what are the plans for it? Roberta said that the initial amount was \$1,000,000 but with other sites in the mix it will realistically be around \$50,000. Roberta said the hope is to use the funds towards better signage and to fix safety hazards.

- 2) Parking Survey: the survey was online and is now closed. 94 surveys were received. Here are a few takeaways:

- a) oppose kiosks/paid parking
- b) work with Main Street property owners
- c) work with MMA regarding the Penobscot lot
- d) oppose purchasing land for a town parking lot

Discussions about moving forward and possibility of developing a Parking Committee.

- 3) Maine200 Funds Update: there are 2-3 options to consider for using the remaining donated funds left in the bank from the Maine200 celebration that had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

- a) towards a walking trail
- b) towards new playground at Adams School
- c) towards incorporating Madockawondo's daughter into the plans

We could also split the remaining funds between two projects.

New Business:

Item 1. Gordon MacArthur introduced approving amendments to the Traffic Ordinance.

Roberta Boczkiewicz made motion to approve the amendments to the Traffic Ordinance adding another 15-minute space in front of the Post Office and giving authority to the Postmaster and his/her designates to write parking tickets to violations in front of the Post Office on behalf of the Town of Castine. Second by Colin Powell. Discussion.

Bill Corbett asked if the times would be posted. Answer was yes.

With no other discussion, Gordon asked for votes:

Amendments to the Traffic Ordinance approved 3-0.

Item 2. Gordon MacArthur introduced updates from any Board/Committee Chair or Member present: 1) Tree Committee.

Don Tenney, Chair, gave updates. Dutch Elm Disease is present and still moving through our Town. Two trees were removed in front of Charlie King's house on Court Street. These trees were diseased but never treated because they were in such poor condition. Stump grinding will take place most likely in the spring. Ten trees in total have been removed this year with 11 more to do, mostly on MMA campus. Don said he is working on a couple property line matters, IE Mundth/Castine Clinic on Court Street to define who owns where and what property the tree is on. Aging trees sometimes must be removed too.

Bill Corbett said it seems as though the treatment plan is working. Don said yes for right now. There are a few more trees the Committee wishes to treat if funds allow.

Susan Hazlett asked if there were grants available to property owners who cannot afford treatment and/or tree removal. Don answered yes, but the funds are not substantial.

Charlie Pearce asked what the tags on trees are for? Don said it means that tree is in the Committee's inventory/database.

Gordon MacArthur asked if Don had a metal detector to help with locating pins for defining property lines. Don said no. Gordon said he could help with that.

Question about stump grinding. Don said that stump grinding is aesthetically pleasing, or it helps with the spread of the disease (DED). The disease can spread through the root system.

Item 3. Gordon MacArthur introduced the Town Manager's Report. Town Manager, Shawn Blodgett read his report (see attached):

Shawn added that Castine has received 13 Town Manager resumes. He said he will need guidance from the Selectboard to start reviewing. It was decided that Gordon & Roberta would be the two to start reviewing the applications with Shawn. They will bring the new Selectboard member up to date once Election Day is over and time for the new member to get adjusted.

#2 Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Water Rate Increases: Gordon MacArthur made motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign Castine up for PUC rate increase program. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. Approved 3-0.

#3 Town Hall Doors: Gordon MacArthur made motion to authorize the Town Manager to apply for the next round of CRP/Community Action Grant in the amount of \$50,000. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. Approved 3-0.

#5 Town Staff Compensatory Time-Off: Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve a compensatory day off for the front office staff on Monday, 11/12/23 due to working long hours on 11/7 Election Day. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. Approved 3-0.

#6 Policy Change: Gordon MacArthur made motion to approve a Policy giving Town Office staff the authority to lock front doors whenever a staff member is in the office alone. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. David Avery asked if this Policy was voluntary or mandatory. Gordon said he would gather it would be voluntary. Policy approved 3-0.

Item 4. Other Business as Required: None.

Communications: a) email from Jeff Ackerman asking for Town involvement requesting MDOT to review speeding on Windmill Hill. There have been far too many accidents in this area. Everyone agreed and felt it was appropriate to ask MDOT to review. Shawn will draft a letter from the Selectboard to sign.

Gordon acknowledged the public present: -Bill Corbett said in Belfast they have four swings on their Harbor Walk and it has been received nicely by the community. Bill said there is interest in building a few swings for Castine and place on Town properties (maybe Fort Madison, Backshore, etc). Gordon said it was a good idea but would like to see a picture of the swings and make sure it would be something people wouldn't get hurt on.

-Bobby Vagt asked if there will be community participation in the Town Manager search process. The Selectboard will discuss whether there will be community participation. The Selectboard will be the ones to decide.

PAST ACTIONS: Memo updating appointments to the 11/7 Election Clerk list.

Gordon MacArthur made motion to appoint Barbara Fleck & Vicki Lee. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz. Approved 3-0.

Selectboard Comments: Gordon MacArthur said he would like to recognize and thank Colin Powell for his 6-years service as a Castine Selectboard member. This is Colin's last mtg. Colin has been a crucial element and will be missed. Everyone applauded.

Upcoming Mtgs:

Thursday, 11/9/23 – Work Session at 9AM to welcome new Selectboard member.

Monday, 11/13/23 - Work Session at 9AM, if needed.

Tuesday, 11/14/23 - Work Session at 5PM with School Board; discussions regarding GSA.

Monday, 11/20/23 - Selectboard/Assessors & Overseers of the Poor Mtg at 4PM.

Gordon MacArthur made motion to adjourn. Second by Roberta Boczkiewicz.

With no discussion, Gordon asked for votes: approved 3-0.

Mtg adjourned at 4:46PM. Minutes by Susan Macomber, Town Clerk.



MEMORANDUM

To: Castine Selectboard
From: Shawn Blodgett
Date: November 06, 2023
Re: Town Manager's Report

1. Sidewalks. With the revised contract now in place, the scheduling of the work is the only issue remaining. If all falls into place, we should see the demolition of the sidewalk on the eastern side of Pleasant Street from Court to Perkins start next week. The intent will be for the concrete emplacement to take place the following week. As a reminder, over 75% of the cost of the sidewalk will come from American Rescue Plan money.

2. Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Water Rate Increases. The Utility Board has recommended to the Selectboard that Castine should take advantage of this new program. As a reminder, effective on the 25th of October, the PUC authorized municipalities the ability to conduct 1.5% water rate increase each year without having to go through a full rate case. To conduct a full rate case costs municipalities thousands of dollars each time one is conducted. The new PUC rule does not mean an automatic 1.5% rate increase, but only gives municipalities the ability to increase up to that amount without a full rate case. The Town of Castine has not conducted a water rate increase since 2017 and we believe that a more incremental approach to addressing increased costs would be better. I respectfully request the Selectboard's authorization to sign Castine up for this program.

3. Town Hall Doors. We have received word that the new doors for Emerson Hall will not arrive until approximately Thanksgiving. Once we have received



these doors and they are installed, we can finally close out the Community Resiliency Partnership, Community Action Grant which has funded over 90% of the work that has been, or will be completed on Emerson Hall, Witherle Library and the Adams School. We expect the release announcement for the next round of this grant program to be published next month and with the Selectboard's approval, we will apply. Our priorities for the next round will be smaller scale solar projects at Emerson Hall, Battle Avenue Water Treatment Plan and the Spring Street Water Treatment Plant. The grant will only be enough to fully fund one of these projects and possibly defray some of the cost of a second. I respectfully request that the Selectboard authorize me to apply for the next round of the CRP / Community Action Grant for \$50,000.

4. Congressionally Directed Spending / Community Project Funding Requests.

This is a good news / bad news update. The Town Dock expansion funding request cleared Federal Senate Appropriations last week, so the request is looking good on the Senate side. However, Congressman Golden voted against the bill on the House side. I spoke with Congressman Golden's staff this afternoon and received his reasoning for voting against the bill which would have funded the dock expansion. The reasoning is that the amount of funding had been reduced and he recognized that the bill as written was dead on arrival in the Senate. So, the bill will be returned to the house where the negotiations will continue and the Congressman is hopeful that will be able to negotiate the full amount into the reconciled bill.

5. Town Staff compensatory time off. As they do every year, Karen, Sue and Natalie will be working long hours tomorrow to ensure that the election goes off without a hitch. I respectfully request that the Selectboard authorizes a compensatory day off for the front office staff on Monday.

6. Policy Change. From a monetary outlay perspective, Castine has had the luxury of a small and very lean town staff for decades. Due to recent events, I



request the authority to lock the front door whenever a staff member is in the office alone. Having one of the town staff by themselves has been a common occurrence, though the duration is generally short lived.

7. Another Thank you to the Fire Department. For those that do not know, there was a home explosion / fire in Orland on Friday and the CFRD responded along with several other departments. For their ongoing efforts, I would like to take the opportunity to again, publicly thank the membership of our Fire and Rescue Department.

8. Civil War Monument Restored. In an initiative spearheaded by Lisa Simpson Lutts and the Castine Historical Society, the Civil War Monument on the Town Common was recently cleaned and restored. Dedicated in 1887, the town's monument had become soiled and somewhat covered in lichen. Through and anonymous donor, the CHS led the way getting this important piece of our history renewed. On behalf of the Selectboard and the Town of Castine, I would like to publicly thank Lisa and the CHS writ large for the generous and community minded support.