

**Minutes
Town of Skowhegan
Regular Selectmen's Meeting
5:30 P.M.
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Municipal Building – Council Room**

Board of Selectmen:

Paul York, Chairman
Gene Rouse, Vice Chairman
Betty Austin
Roger Staples
Dennis Willette

Town Manager:

Christine Almand

Executive Secretary:

Cara L. Mason

Call Selectmen's Meeting to order.

Paul York called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited.

1. Town Manager's Report

The Town offices will be closed on February 17th in observation of Presidents Day.

2. Items by the Public

There were no Items by the Public.

3. Selectmen's Items

Betty Austin said that we have been in the newspaper a lot lately. She had two articles with her...one about the police department adding training and one about Kelly Hooper.

Paul York said he attended the Harlem Wizards event at the high school. It was packed and they had a great show. Denise LeBlanc put a lot of work into that.

4. Department & Committee Reports

Greg Dore said that he had a problem with the sidewalk machine. It is fixed and they are finishing the sidewalks now. We did rent a bobcat to try to get them done, but it doesn't work.

The last storm we had the 22 year old sander broke. The chain got caught up and bent the braces underneath. It did a lot of damage to the bearings. H.P. Fairfield looked at it today to give us an estimate of what it might cost to fix it.

Betty Austin said that the Highway Department worked awesome while Greg Dore was on vacation. We had some awful storms. They were working almost constantly.

Jeff Hewett said that the letter of intent was sent in for the Façade Grant. We will be submitting the full application in the next couple months. Now is the time for any interested businesses to come talk to us. The mandatory meeting will take place in April.

Gail Pelotte said that the Clerk's Office is busy with answering questions about absentee ballots. The Primary always raises questions and concerns. Anybody with questions should call the Clerk's Office at 207-474-6900.

Chief Bucknam said that the Police Department is doing some great things to help keep the community safe. Kelly Hooper was chosen to attend some specialized training. The department attended some mental health training. These training benefit our officers and our citizens.

Denise LeBlanc said that the Harlem Wizards event went very well. About 700 people attended. Our recreation cheerleaders did a halftime show. There were a lot of people involved to make it successful...Police Department, sports teams, sponsors and volunteers.

The ice rink is doing very well.

Winter Carnival and February vacation activities are coming up. All of the activities are on the Recreation Department Facebook page.

Consent Agenda:

1. Approve and sign Minutes from the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting – January 28, 2020

2. Approve and sign a Quit Claim Deed for:

Ezra Clark and Lomond Cooley, 82 Bigelow Hill Road (Map 8, Lot 36B).

Item 2 removed from the Consent Agenda. It was determined that it was not necessary.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Gene Rouse to approve the Consent Agenda, item 1 only.

Vote: 5/0

Recording Time: 13:14

Regular Agenda:

1. Discussion and decision to appoint David M. James as Warden of the State of Maine Presidential Primary & Special Referendum Election with a term expiring March 4, 2020.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Betty Austin to appoint David M. James as Warden of the State of Maine Presidential Primary & Special Referendum Election with a term expiring March 4, 2020.

Vote: 5/0

2. Discussion and decision to appoint Jacob Pierce as a full-time Police Officer with a term expiring June 30, 2020.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Roger Staples to appoint Jacob Pierce as a full-time Police Officer with a term expiring June 30, 2020.

Vote: 5/0

3. Discussion and decision to appoint Isaac Wacome as a full-time Police Officer with a term expiring June 30, 2020 and expend an amount not to exceed \$12,000.00 to the Somerset County Sherriff's Department for the buyout.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Betty Austin to appoint Isaac Wacome as a full-time Police Officer with a term expiring June 30, 2020 and expend an amount not to exceed \$12,000.00 to the Somerset County Sherriff's Department for the buyout.

Vote: 5/0

4. Discussion and decision to appoint Cara Mason as alternate Animal Control Officer with a term expiring June 30, 2020.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Roger Staples to appoint Cara Mason as alternate Animal Control Officer with a term expiring June 30, 2020.

Vote: 5/0

5. Discussion and decision to choose a recipient for the Spirit of America Award.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Gene Rouse to give the Spirit of America Award to Main Street Skowhegan.

Vote: 5/0

5. Discussion and decision to choose a recipient for the Annual Town Report Dedication.

Chief Bucknam recommended Somerset Public Health.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Gene Rouse to dedicate the Annual Town Report to Somerset Public Health.

Vote: 5/0

7. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for License for Incorporated Civic Organization to allow the Rotary Club of Skowhegan to hold the Annual Beer, Wine and Food Tasting event at the Skowhegan Armory on March 21, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Application for License for Incorporated Civic Organization to allow the Rotary Club of Skowhegan to hold the Annual Beer, Wine and Food Tasting event at the Skowhegan Armory on March 21, 2020 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Vote: 5/0

8. Discussion and decision to allow Christine Almand to place the following tax acquired properties out for sale bid:

33 Milburn Street (Map 27, Lot 15-2)
22 Waye Street (Map 37, Lot 102-1-ON)
51 Milburn Street (Map 27, Lot 11)

22 Waye Street has been paid in full.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Roger Staples to allow Christine Almand to place the following tax acquired properties out for sale bid:

33 Milburn Street (Map 27, Lot 15-2)
51 Milburn Street (Map 27, Lot 11)

Christine Almand thanked everyone that is involved in this process...the Clerk's Office, Cara Mason, Bryan Belliveau and the Police Department.

These two properties are owned by people who are deceased.

Vote: 5/0

9. Discussion and decision to approve the Cemetery Sexton Contract from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Dennis Willette to approve the Cemetery Sexton Contract from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Roger Staples asked about the amount on the contract.

Christine Almand said that last year it was \$83,353.00. The Sexton has requested 2% plus \$1,000.00 increase. He is dealing with minimum wage increases and other increases.

Gail Pelotte said it is his equipment, he pays for the gas, for his workers and taxes and insurance.

Paul York said that he thinks that we are paying a lot of money. He does do a great job. It is a lot of money. Not sure why he is asking for 2% plus \$1,000.00.

Gail Pelotte said without Mark as Sexton the front office would have a lot more work. He is in once or twice a day when the cemeteries are open. He deals with the funeral homes.

Paul York said that the Town needs to look forward. At some point he will not be doing it anymore. We shouldn't just keep throwing money at it because it is going to keep him longer.

Roger Staples said he does a good job and it is hard work. He would like to see justification for the increase.

Gail Pelotte said that he also has a report in the Town Report every year with his expenses.

Vote: 4/1 (Paul York opposed)

Recording Time: 24:20

10. Discussion and decision to allow Jeff Hewett to hold a Public Hearing on February 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the 2020 CDBG, Community Enterprise Grant Program (Façade Grant).

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Betty Austin to allow Jeff Hewett to hold a Public Hearing on February 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the 2020 CDBG, Community Enterprise Grant Program (Façade Grant).

Vote: 5/0

11. Discussion and decision to accept \$16,217.50 from the insurance company for the totaled 2017 Ford Explorer (VIN 1FM5K8AR7HGB00722) and sign the title over.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Gene Rouse to accept \$16,217.50 from the insurance company for the totaled 2017 Ford Explorer (VIN 1FM5K8AR7HGB00722) and sign the title over.

Vote: 5/0

12. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$2,000.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Drug Forfeiture Designation to purchase two AR-15 Rifles and accessories.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Roger Staples to expend an amount not to exceed \$2,000.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Drug Forfeiture Designation to purchase two AR-15 Rifles and accessories.

Vote: 5/0

13. Discussion and decision to award a Downtown TIF Grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 to Island Avenue, LLC (Jeffrey & Pamela Powers) and expend that amount from the Downtown TIF Account.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to award a Downtown TIF Grant in the amount of \$50,000.00 to Island Avenue, LLC (Jeffrey & Pamela Powers) and expend that amount from the Downtown TIF Account.

Paul York said that this is a very enthusiastic venture. He has an issue with how the TIF money is spent. At some point we need to look at the criteria again. This project does fit with what is in place right now. Overall, once they get through all of the stuff, it is going to be an improvement to Skowhegan. In the long run, the money will be well spent.

Gene Rouse said he doesn't see how we can lose on this. The money being spent will enhance the facility. Worst case scenario the place is worth more, if they were to walk away from it.

Jeff Hewett spoke with DOT about potential issues. It is his understanding that in Phase I of the project, since there will be only five employees...no traffic study will be necessary. They definitely will need that when they get to Phases II and III.

This is a big project. We also have the second bridge project going on. We do not know what DOT will require for this project.

Roger Staples said he agrees with the TIF Committee's decision and he wishes the Powers all the luck in the world.

Vote: 5/0

14. Discussion and decision to write-off the RLF Loan to Amanda Clark-Quirion (The Maine Barkery) in the amount of \$18,836.00.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to write-off the RLF Loan to Amanda Clark-Quirion (The Maine Barkery) in the amount of \$18,836.00.

Paul York said that hopefully we look at these a little closer in the future...to be able to recoup the money that we are lending out.

Jeff Hewett said that this was a little different than most. Normal loans we do secure better than this. There was a lot of support for this one. We went through the legal procedure to get as much as we could out of it.

Vote: 5/0

15. Discussion and decision to waive the bid process and authorize Chief Bucknam to negotiate with Hight Ford to purchase a Police Interceptor Ford Explorer.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Betty Austin to waive the bid process and authorize Chief Bucknam to negotiate with Hight Ford to purchase a Police Interceptor Ford Explorer.

Paul York said he doesn't like to forgo the bid process. Right now they are struggling to get these vehicles. We are in dire straits and we need one.

Vote: 5/0

16. Discussion and decision to allow Jeff Hewett to send out the Phone RFP.

A motion was made by Gene Rouse and seconded by Roger Staples to allow Jeff Hewett to send out the Phone RFP.

Vote: 5/0

17. Discussion and decision to allow Chief Howard to apply for the 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of \$109,188.00. There is a 10% match for this grant.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Gene Rouse to allow Chief Howard to apply for the 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of \$109,188.00.

Roger staples asked how old the radios are that are currently being used.

Chief Howard said that some of them were there before he was. He has been there for 23 years. Some of them are only a few years old. We are trying to get more interoperability. Radio systems have changed dramatically over the last 10 or 12 years. Communications is always an issue. The hope is to have radios in common with multiple fire departments. We have been working on it little by little for several years.

If we went for this grant by ourselves there would be a 5% match. Because we are doing a multi-town application for this grant it is 10% match, but it gives us a better chance of receiving the grant funds.

Vote: 5/0

Recording Time: 35:33

18. Discussion and decision to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow CMP and Northern New England Telephone Operations, LLC to place a pole on Center Street, 315' south of where Center Street intersects with Mount Pleasant Avenue.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow CMP and Northern New England Telephone Operations, LLC to place a pole on Center Street, 315' south of where Center Street intersects with Mount Pleasant Avenue.

Gene Rouse asked where we stand with the poles on West Front Street.

Greg Dore said that they have the permits and easements.

Dennis Willette asked if this is replacing an existing pole. There are 100s of poles that haven't been pulled. Why is this?

Greg Dore said there are several reasons. One of the major reasons is if all of the companies that have their stuff on the pole have not moved all of their lines to the new pole. The other reason is that the company that owns the pole has not removed it yet. We can have them remove some if there are concerns about a particular pole. When we are doing a project, we will have them remove the poles in that area before we complete the project.

Vote: 5/0

19. Discussion and decision to allow the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at the Community Center for the April 25, 2020 boxing event.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to allow the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages at the Community Center for the April 25, 2020 boxing event.

Paul York said that this goes against what we are trying to promote up there. This is a community center...we cater to kids. He does not like the idea.

Dennis Willette said there is a policy in place that does not allow it. By allowing this one, would we then be allowing others.

Roger Staples said that we have approved alcohol sales and consumption on other town-owned property.

Betty Austin said there is a difference because this is a community center. It is focused on children. The policy for that building already says, no alcohol.

Christine Almand said that most recreation programs support a healthy lifestyle, which includes not allowing tobacco or alcohol.

Betty Austin said that we have youth that don't have a healthy home environment. This is the one place that they have...we need to keep it that way.

Brandon Berry has been involved with boxing his whole life. He started promoting it a few years ago. He is thankful that he is welcome at the Community Center. He has rented it six or seven times. We have 700 to 800 people at our shows at times. We bring quite a bit of business to the hotels and restaurants in town.

He understands the policy and the environment that the town intends to have there. He feels that when he rents the facility it is not necessarily for the kids...it is a sporting event. In the beginning we brought in big crowds. Now that the newness has worn off, less people attend these events. The main feedback he has gotten is that there is no alcohol. More people would come if they could have alcohol at the event.

He is fully insured and hires police officers for the event.

Roger Staples asked if he has looked at any other venues in town that may be more susceptible to serving alcohol.

Brandon Berry said that he couldn't find anything that would meet the needs. He loves the Community Center, it is the perfect venue for this.

Roger Staples asked about the Armory.

Brandon Berry said that there are no bleachers.

Vote: 0/5 (motion failed)

20. Discussion and decision to take immediate action to implement rules for large commercial solar arrays in the Town of Skowhegan.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Gene Rouse to take immediate action to implement rules for large commercial solar arrays in the Town of Skowhegan.

Paul York said that he would recommend holding a joint meeting with the Planning Board. We have three right now. These new rules would not affect them, since they came in under the rules that are currently in place. We may want to look at future rules.

Christine Almand said that Steve Conley could not attend tonight. He invited the Selectmen to attend the Planning Board Meeting on March 3rd at the Community Center.

The draft that Joel Greenwood sent contains things that he could come up with that the Selectmen may want included in an ordinance. You can review them and decide how much regulation you want.

Betty Austin and Roger Staples both said that they could not attend the March 3rd meeting.

Christine Almand said that she would work with both boards to come up with a time for a joint meeting.

Motion withdrawn

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Gene Rouse to table this item and schedule a joint meeting with the Planning Board.

Vote: 5/0

Recording Time: 55:52

21. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#61	\$	47,875.54 (Payroll #5)
#62	\$	41,447.23 (Payroll #6)
#63	\$	20,953.38 (State Payables)
#64	\$	329,628.51 (FY 2020 Accounts Payables)
Total	\$	439,904.66

22. Other Business

Officers Jacob Pierce and Isaac Wacome were sworn in.

23. Unfinished Business

- Review Policies and Ordinances
- Run of River/Economic Development
- Utilizing Outside Services
- Marketing/Celebrating Skowhegan
- Vehicle Charging Station
- Public Safety Building
- Sidewalks and Bike Trails/Lanes
- Second Bridge
- Solar Power

The next Public Safety Building Committee meeting is scheduled for February 24th.

There will be another Second Bridge Committee meeting sometime in March.

24. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.

Approved and signed on February 25, 2020.

A True Copy Attest: _____
Cara L. Mason, Executive Secretary