

**Minutes
Town of Skowhegan
Regular Selectmen's Meeting
5:30 P.M.
Tuesday, July 28, 2020**

****Public wishing to see this meeting may do so from the
Town of Skowhegan Facebook page****

Board of Selectmen:

Paul York, Chairman
Betty Austin, Vice Chairman
Charles Robbins
Roger Staples

Town Manager:

Christine Almand

Executive Secretary:

Cara L. Mason

Call Selectmen's Meeting to order.

Christine Almand called the meeting to order.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Organizational Meeting:

1. Appoint a Chairman/Finance Officer for the Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to nominate Paul York as Chairman/Finance Officer.

Nominations ceased.

Vote: 3/0/1 (Paul York abstained)

Paul York took over the meeting.

2. Appoint a Vice Chairman/Deputy Finance Officer for the Board of Selectmen.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Charles Robbins to nominate Betty Austin as Vice Chairman/Deputy Finance Officer.

Nomination ceased.

Vote: 3/0/1 (Betty Austin abstained)

1. Town Manager's Report/Department & Committee Reports

On June 30th we sent out 552 – 30 Day Lien Notices for the 2020 taxes. To date we have collected in full on 243 of those accounts.

I would like to schedule the Selectmen's goal setting workshop.

Selectmen's Goal Setting Workshop is scheduled for August 11, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

Trisha Austin:

- Jason Finley, Highway Dept. – Truck Driver/Laborer – Start date 8/17/2020
- Currently in the works to fill the second open Truck Driver/Laborer position, should know by the first of next week.

Jeff Hewett:

- Census bureau will be here Aug 11 from 10-1 outside on the street side. We will provide a table and chairs for them. They will be reminding people to fill out the census and if anyone needs help, they will help them do it at that time.
- Chargepoint has send the charging unit, which is being stored at the highway garage, until installation. The contractor has done dig safe and hopefully will be able to start the foundation end of this week or start of next.

Bryan Belliveau:

Transfer and Recycling Center

- Apparel Impact will be reaching out to confirm a date for the delivery of the textile containers. I am expecting them sometime next week. An update will be posted on the Town's Facebook page once a date is confirmed.
- We have been receiving a lot of trash mixed in with cardboard. It is vital for our cardboard to be clean and free of other contaminants. There is a potential for loads to be rejected or a reduction in the value of our baled material. Please be sure to use the correct collection bins and sort out all recyclables from solid waste. Please ask an attendant for help identifying these collection bins if needed.
- Please look for new signage regarding acceptable recyclable plastics at the collection bins outside the Recycling Building. Reminder that we only collect #1, #2 and #5 plastics. All others, at this time, are to be disposed of in the solid waste bins with your household trash. You can identify these plastics by looking for the recycling symbol. You should be looking for three arrows in the shape of a triangle. The triangle will have a number inside.

Code Enforcement

- There has been a lot of confusion surrounding the need for building permits for certain projects in town. If there is any question as to when a permit is required, please reach out to the Code Enforcement Office.

David Bucknam:

- July 31st is the deadline to have your vehicle registered in Skowhegan.
- Chief Bucknam would like to thank the community for their assistance on Facebook, identifying individuals and locating missing teens. This community sets the standard when it comes to working together.

Greg Dore:

- The turn ramp from West Front Street onto Main Street is almost complete.
- The left turn lane into the Community Center status to date is... Consolidated Communications has started moving their wires. We don't have a completion date yet.
- We have installed one of the speed tables on Elm Street. I will set the radar sign up to monitor speeds on Elm Street again in two weeks. The traffic analysis for Chandler Street showed that most of the traffic travels less than 25 MPH, but we did have one vehicle going over 50 MPH. We are presently doing a study on the Bigelow Hill Road.
- Chris Laney has filled in most of what he intends to do. He is now working on shaping the site and will be planting some trees to help prevent erosion and improve the looks of the site.
- The applicant I told you about at the last meeting has accepted the position and will begin working with us on Monday, August 17th. I interviewed another potential employee today and he has accepted the position. He is being scheduled for the drug tests and he is able to start anytime!

2. Selectmen's Items

Betty Austin said that Maine Grains was in an article in the New York Times. Somerset Economic Development is working on helping businesses. Farmers, bakers and brewers use stuff from Maine Grains. Main Street had a congratulations to Hight Ford for winning the Presidents Award and best in class customer service and experience. Only 1% of Ford dealers in the nation won this combination of awards. Amy Rowbottom, owner of Crooked Face Creamery, received an award for her Applewood smoked ricotta cheese. Aaron Bolder, of Allied Realty, was named realtor of the year. New Dimensions Federal Credit Union was best in the state. The Rotary Club's annual lobster bake is Friday, August 7, 2020.

Charles Robbins said that he thinks we need a Do Not Enter sign on Main Street where the new turning lane is.

Christine Almand said that Greg Dore had said that we will be putting a sign there. It has been ordered.

Charles Robbins asked if the Town of Skowhegan has applied for any of the COVID-19 grants that are available.

Christine Almand attended a webinar last week. She had hoped that we would be able to upgrade the sound system and our ability to do multiple things in this room. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The first round of funding had requirements that were a deterrent for many communities. Some of those requirements have been lifted for this round of funding. If it is not directly related to COVID-19 education and/or enforcement, they are not going to fund it.

Some communities are hiring ambassadors to walk the beaches and encourage social distancing and hand our masks.

Betty Austin said there are a lot of rules with all of those grants. The schools are getting money, but there are specific things that the money can be spent on.

Charles Robbins said that a lot of the changes because of COVID are costly for businesses.

Christine Almand also said that the funding cannot be used retroactively.

Paul York welcomed Charles Robbins to the Board.

Paul York thanked the highway department for all of their work. Things are looking a whole lot better.

Paul York said he owed the Selectmen an apology. We had a discussion about stone in front of the Chamber, which was voted down. There was a strip in front of the building that was supposed to be mulch. He wanted to put crushed stone there instead. Paul York told him that he could.

Consent Agenda:

1. Approve the minutes from the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting July 14, 2020

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Consent Agenda as written.

Vote: 4/0

Regular Agenda:

1. Discussion and decision to appoint Gene Rouse as a member of the Cemetery Committee with a term expiring June 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Charles Robbins to appoint Gene Rouse as a member of the Cemetery Committee with a term expiring June 30, 2021.

Vote: 4/0

2. Discussion and decision to create a one-time local Façade Grant Program using the remaining Sappi TIF Funds in the amount of \$100,000.00, and expend \$31,947.05 from the Sappi TIF Account, Undesignated Projects Designation and \$68,052.95 from the Sappi TIF Account, New Activity.

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Paul York said he has an issue with grants...just giving out money.

Recording Time: 22:37

If we are going to do it...he would like to see it go to new people. We have a lot of repeat people getting this money. It is ultimately taxpayer money that we are giving out.

Roger Staples asked if there is a lack of applications for this.

Betty Austin said that Jeff Hewett advertises it and lets people know. Maybe more people will hear it with our meetings on Facebook.

Jeff Hewett said that it goes out on the Town Page and the Facebook page. We also send it out through Main Street and the Chamber. We all work together to get the information out there. Grants are hard to get new people to apply for. People are hesitant because of what you have to go through. New people will come in with a small project, because that is all of the money that they can raise for the matching funds. Every dollar has to be matched by a dollar that they put into it as a minimum. Some are 2 to 1.

The last round we were able to do all of the new projects and then 80% of the repeat project people. Everybody that was qualified and made application got funded.

Christine Almand said that it states that first time applicants will be given priority. The historical and slum & blight requirements have been removed from this grant, since they are not state funded. Those requirements are a deterrent for first time applicants.

Paul York said that we have more control over this because they are our funds. There is nothing to say that we have to spend the entire \$100,000.00. He would like to see new people, rather than these people repeatedly grabbing these funds.

Jeff Hewett said that any new applicant is a priority over a repeat applicant. We can set it so that 10% goes to repeat...or nothing goes to a repeat. He tried to use the same parameters because people are used to those parameters.

The hardest part is getting them in to do the application. We do a lot of hand holding on these projects. Jeff Hewett said if there was somebody who was interested he would be happy to go talk to them.

Vote: 3/1 (Paul York opposed)

3. Discussion and decision to redesignate \$3,280.00 from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Stone Repair Designation to the Cemetery Reserve Account, Cemetery Maintenance Designation.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to redesignate \$3,280.00 from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Stone Repair Designation to the Cemetery Reserve Account, Cemetery Maintenance Designation.

Paul York said that he talked to Gene Rouse. He explained that they wanted to do this so that they could do all of the flags at one time. The stone repair bid came in lower than anticipated, so this money is available.

Vote: 4/0

Recording Time: 35:03

4. Discussion and decision to award the Flag Poles Bid. The following bids were received:

Sign Store & Flag Center	\$7,280.00
Gorham Flag Center	\$8,215.00

The Cemetery recommends awarding the Flag Poles Bid to Sign Store & Flag Center with a total bid price of \$7,280.00 and expending that amount from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Cemetery Maintenance Designation.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Charles Robbins to award the Flag Poles Bid to Sign Store & Flag Center with a total bid price of \$7,280.00 and expend that amount from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Cemetery Maintenance Designation.

Vote: 4/0

5. Discussion and decision to allow Chief Bucknam to go out to bid for a new cruiser.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to allow Chief Bucknam to go out to bid for a new cruiser.

Charles Robbins asked if we were adding a cruiser, or replacing one.

Paul York said that we try to replace one every year. A few years ago we didn't do that and got ourselves in a major bind...then we needed to replace three cruisers at the same time.

Charles Robbins asked whether the vehicles replaced earlier this year was through insurance.

Christine Almand said that they were both insurance. One of them, the full amount was not covered by insurance.

Charles Robbins asked how many cruisers we have.

Paul York said he was pretty sure it is five.

Christine Almand said we have two officers on plus a utility position and typically we have one at the school and one at the hospital.

Paul York said we also have an administrative car.

Christine Almand said that it is contingent upon Town Meeting vote. This is just to put it out to bid. The vote to award the bid would be contingent upon Town Meeting vote. We do votes like this all the time. Especially with equipment. We do the same thing for paving each year.

Chief Bucknam said that we have six cruisers and the admin. car.

Roger Staples said that he is not sure we should be doing this with so many people out of work and being furloughed.

Charles Robbins said that as long as it is pending Town Meeting vote. You are not going to get a cruiser in a week. If this is something we do every year, he is fine with it.

Paul York said that hopefully by the time these bids come in we will have some better answers. He just doesn't want to get into the position we were in before. These cruisers build up miles so fast that they nickel & dime you for repairs.

Christine Almand said that the anticipated award date would be September 8, 2020. Hopeful that we have things figured out by then. Our largest revenue that we collect, other than property taxes, is excise tax and we are doing fine. We weren't really sure at the beginning of the pandemic. This year's number of 30-day notices for tax liens is the lowest number since she started recording that.

Vote: 4/0

Recording Time: 43:24

Chief Bucknam said that it took ten months to get last year's cruiser.

6. Discussion and decision to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for painting and repairs to the highway garage.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for painting and repairs to the highway garage.

Paul York asked if this was something that needed to be done.

Betty Austin said that the paint is peeling and there is some minor damage.

Greg Dore said that it will be contingent on Town Meeting vote for the funds.

Paul York asked where we stand with the repairs to the garage that we incurred not too long ago.

Greg Dore said that the bids would be approved at the next meeting. Those are repairs to the inside of the building.

Roger Staples asked if we had a bid for painting a while back.

Greg Dore said that the building has not been painted since 1996. Donald Lowe got that bid.

We painted the secretary's office, but that was not a bid. It was a few hundred dollars.

Vote: 4/0

7. Discussion and decision to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for a new Loader.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for a new Loader.

Charles Robbins asked if we spent \$20,000.00 last year on this machine that we are replacing.

Greg Dore said that we did...bushings and arms needed to be replaced. It is a specialty that not just anyone can do and it is very expensive.

Paul York said that he feels we should tread very lightly. We need a better understanding of where we are going to be at. Hopefully we have had a Town Meeting to know where we are with budget. He said he knows that the funds are there for this...but if funds are not replenished come Town Meeting, then there won't be anything there.

Charles Robbins asked if we have two or three loaders.

Greg Dore said that the highway department has two loaders. The Town of Skowhegan has three. There is one at the transfer station.

Charles Robbins asked if we need two loaders year round. There is a option of leasing a loader in the winter.

Greg Dore said that we do need two loaders. In the summer they don't get used every single day, but they get used quite often. In the winter they also get used a lot. We put together a schedule to replace equipment. When the schedule was put together we justified the need for that equipment. We can't get away with leasing for the winter because of all the different jobs that we do.

Recording Time: 51:30

Greg Dore said he stands by replacing it this year. This reserve account was created and built for this.

Charles Robbins asked what the warranty is.

There are different option when you purchase them. Typically we buy an extended warranty for the length of the financing. Everything that we purchase now, we pay cash. We intend to purchase a warranty that lasts the life of the machine. We will be looking at a 7-year extended warranty.

Paul York said he is glad that we are at the point where we can purchase to get the debt down. Hopefully it doesn't become an issue, because hopefully we have had Town Meeting by then. We have worked hard to keep our reserve accounts up. He does agree with purchasing instead of leasing.

Charles Robbins asked about a service contract.

Greg Dore said that the service contract would be in the maintenance budget. That would not be part of the purchase of the vehicle.

Vote: 4/0

8. Discussion and decision to approve the Selectmen Appointments and Selectmen Subcommittee Appointments with terms expiring June 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Selectmen Appointments and Selectmen Subcommittee Appointments as amended with terms expiring June 30, 2021.

Vote: 4/0

Recording Time: 01:09:50

9. Discussion and decision to move forward with the Needle Exchange Program & Needle Disposal Ordinance.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to move forward with the Needle Exchange Program & Needle Disposal Ordinance.

Charles Robbins asked if this was all in accordance with the Chief and the Planning Board.

Paul York said that he had a discussion with Chief Bucknam today. He was all on board.

Vote: 4/0

10. Discussion and decision to vote for two candidates for the MMA, Legislative Policy Committee.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to vote for the two candidates on the ballot.

Vote: 4/0

11. Discussion and decision to appoint Christine Almand and one Selectman to the KVCOG, General Assembly.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Charles Robbins to appoint Christine Almand and Betty Austin to the KVCOG, General Assembly.

Vote: 4/0

12. Discussion and decision to pre-approve a Warrant in an amount not to exceed \$6,802.00 for the filing of tax liens.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to pre-approve a Warrant in an amount not to exceed \$6,802.00 for the filing of tax liens.

Vote: 4/0

13. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#100	\$	55,975.14 (FY 2020 Accounts Payables)
#4	\$	42,768.35 (Payroll #29)
#5	\$	44,317.03 (Payroll #30)
#6	\$	30,902.04 (State Payables)
#7	\$	82,095.27 (FY 2021 Accounts Payables)
Total	\$	256,057.83

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger staples to approve the Treasurer's Warrants as written.

Vote: 4/0

14. Other Business

Christine Almand said that since the beginning of COVID-19 she has been waiting for information from the State regarding Revenue Sharing and guidance for Town Meeting. She was told that we should have guidance by the end of July. We need to move forward with or without. We still need to vote on operational revenues, surplus and if there is a LD1 override.

Right now we could have groups of 50 in separate rooms. Potentially the high school. Typically we have more than 150 people here. We cannot turn people away at the door. We have to plan for four spaces. The library is asking for a significant increase and they are also what draws a lot of people to Town Meeting.

Another option is a drive-in style meeting where people stay in their cars.

Another option would be to approve our budget through referendum vote.

The moderator is the Town's attorney. His preference is for the multiple-room meeting.

If the restrictions are lessened, that would make this easier, but she said she is not confident that will happen in time.

Certain dates won't work because of vacations and availability of the location. We also need to deal with sound issues. The Moderator will be in one room. Each of the other rooms has to have a Deputy Moderator. Each room needs ballot clerks. All rooms need to be able to hear each other. Hopefully we will have all of that worked out by the next meeting.

We have to hold a Town Meeting before tax commitment. We have been operating since July 1st without an approved budget. The Selectmen could decide to go with last year's budget. That creates a lot of issues for us. You can't spend from one article to another. We don't want to have tax commitment any later than mid September.

15. 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
- Foreclosure Sales – August 11, 2020 meeting

Christine Almand said that this will be looked at during the Goal Setting Workshop...to see if there are any additions or deletions.

Paul York said that most of these are in play and being worked on. We haven't worked on Policies and Ordinances in a while, but we were working through the list, one at a time, to see if they needed to be updated.

Christine Almand said that we try to have a list of Ordinances that we might like to see before we have our joint meeting with the Planning Board.

Cara Mason said that the Foreclosure Sales are on her list for the Agenda for August 11, 2020, in order to work on any changes to the process before Foreclosure letters go out.

16. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.

Approved and signed on August 11, 2020.

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