

**Minutes
Town of Skowhegan
Regular Selectmen's Meeting
5:30 P.M.
Tuesday, September 8, 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.

Paul York called the meeting to order.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Town Manager's Report/Department & Committee Reports

Town Meeting was on Saturday, August 29th. All 60 warrant articles were passed as written. Town reports, budget books, and warrant results are available at the Town Office and on our website. I want to thank Gail & her staff, Trisha, Jeff & his staff, Cara, Bryan, David, Denise & her staff, and especially Greg and his crew. The Town Meeting was very well organized because of the teamwork of our incredible employees.

The Maine Municipal Association Convention is October 7th – 15th and will be virtual this year. Selectmen interesting in attending should see Cara to be registered.

Department Reports:

Trisha Austin:

- Received a notice from Charles Bess that he is retiring from the Highway Department. His last day will be September 23, 2020.
- Received a notice from Tom Smith that he is retiring from the Solid Waste & Recycling Department. His last day will be October 30, 2020.
- Job Postings:
Fire Dept. – Utility Firefighter, Resumes accepted until September 11, 2020 at 4:00 PM.

Highway Dept. – Truck Driver/Laborer, Resumes accepted until September 17, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

Solid Waste & Recycling Dept. – Transfer Station Attendant, Resumes accepted until September 17, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

Highway Dept. – Administrative Assistant, Resumes accepted until September 18, 2020 at 4:30 PM.

Bryan Belliveau:

Transfer and Recycling Center

- We got a quote to fix the handrail in front of the demo bin. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting. We will continue to prohibit dumping of trucks and trailers to eliminate future damage. I still have not received a report from the engineer, but I did have a conversation with them. Their recommendation is that the damage to the retaining wall will need to be addressed within the next two years. There is no immediate threat of the wall failing completely at this time. We want to thank everyone for their patience as we understand that the jersey barriers make it much more difficult to get to the demo bin. Please understand that they are only there for your protection until the handrails are repaired.
- Household Hazardous Waste Day will be on October 3rd from 9AM to 12PM. The advertisement was posted on the Town's Facebook page today.
- The Textile Recovery program seems to be doing well. The bins are checked regularly and reports say that we send out a full bin every week. I am told that more of these bins from Apparel Impact will be popping up at a local business here in Town. I am not sure where or when at this point but asked that I be kept in the loop so that we can communicate the location to residents.

Code Enforcement & Planning

- We recently approved the Site Review Permit for the Galbraith solar project on Norridgewock Avenue. This is the second large scale solar project that has been approved in the last 9-12 months and we expect to receive a full application for a third project on the Eaton Mountain Road in the next month or so.
- Surprisingly we have seen just as many permit applications as last year at this point in the year. It's great to see the construction industry doing so well during this pandemic.
- We are currently tracking eight open property maintenance violations. All of which are in the early stages of compliance. Some of which are nearing completion within the 30-day order. I am currently investigating one potential violation on Madison Avenue that was brought to my attention this morning.

David Bucknam:

- School's back in session. Please watch your speed and pay attention to the school bus lights when they are loading and unloading.

Greg Dore:

- The contractor has begun the underdrain for the turn lane on West Front Street and is progressing with soil removal to prepare for the installation of gravel for the travel lane. We met this afternoon with First Light to move their lines and remove the poles. The foreman is hoping to have lines moved by the end of the week. The lane paving is scheduled for the week of the 28th.

- We have completed the removal of the hot top and damaged curbing for the sidewalk on West Front Street and the paving will begin Thursday, September 10th, weather permitting.
- The repairs to the garage are with the engineer that worked on the original quote, and the insurance company is waiting to hear back from the engineer to decide what to do next.
- I still haven't heard anything about the damages to the Wacker Neuson.
- I have met with Paint it Right Painters, and they hope to begin work on the garage the third week in September.
- The new fuel dispensers are in route, and I have completed the information needed to set up the fuel control system.
- I have met with Pike Industries, and we hoping to start the milling the week of the 21st and paving immediately after the milling is complete.
- Charles Bess III has physically worked his last day today. He will be retiring September 23rd. He is a very dedicated hard-working employee and has worked with us for approximately 18 years. We wish him the best of luck with his retirement and will miss him.

Have a great evening – Greg Dore

3. Selectmen's Items

Paul York reminded everyone to speak up. The biggest complaint is that they can't hear us.

Betty Austin said that people out there that are concerned about going into a grocery store...Hannaford To Go works great.

Betty Austin said that from the last meeting we have 22 pages of Minutes that Cara has to do. Now it is being taped, it is on Facebook and will continue to be on Facebook. She would like to see Minutes as just the recording of the vote and not word for word.

Cara Mason said that it is a pain, she does all of these Minutes. When it has been discussed in the past...we use them to research what was said. It is an easy way to find it. It is very time consuming to go through all of the video or audio recordings.

Betty Austin said that doing it the way she is talking about, you do have the vote. You know what was voted. Sometimes, even when we have written down what happened, it's not necessarily that way we thought it was going to come out. She said she doesn't know that it is always helpful.

Christine Almand said that we could certainly think about it. Cara Mason is absolutely right...internally (multiple department heads and herself), whenever we are looking for the conversation the last time this came up, we are going to the Minutes. It is an easier way to see what the exact conversation was. We go back to the Minutes on a regular basis.

Betty Austin said that when she was first a Selectwoman, we didn't do that and there wasn't really any problems. 22 pages, hours of work that isn't necessary and reams of paper.

Roger Staples and Paul York said they hadn't given it much thought and they didn't have an opinion on it.

Paul York said if it is easier in the long run. He has come in to have Christine and Cara refer back to a particular topic. It has helped in the past. We can bring it up again at the next meeting.

Roger Staples thanked everybody involved in setting up Town Meeting this year.

Charles Robbins said that it was very different. He doesn't usually attend Town Meeting. It was a wet and slippery day, but we all made it through.

The Skowhegan Fair is doing the Agricultural Fair September 19th and 20th.

Paul York wished the best of luck to Charles Bess and Tom Smith in their retirement.

Consent Agenda:

1. Approve the minutes from the following:

Special Selectmen's Meeting	August 18, 2020
Regular Selectmen's Meeting	August 25, 2020

2. Accept the repairs to truck T-11 in the amount of \$7,855.49. These repairs were done with insurance funds.

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

Vote: 4/0

Regular Agenda:

1. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for On-Premises Malt, Wine License for:

Brick House Kitchen
147 Madison Avenue

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Application for On-Premises Malt, Wine License for Brick House Kitchen.

Vote: 4/0

Recording Time: 16:08

2. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for On-Premises Malt, Wine, Spirits License for:

Barticus Inc. d/b/a SouthSide Tavern
1 Waterville Road

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Application for On-Premises Malt, Wine, Spirits License for Barticus Inc. d/b/a SouthSide Tavern.

Vote: 4/0

3. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for Parades & Processions to allow the American Legion Auxiliary to use a 20' by 30' area in the Municipal Parking Lot (by the Chamber Building) to sell burgers and hotdogs as a fundraiser on September 19, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Application for Parades & Processions to allow the American Legion Auxiliary to use a 20' by 30' area in the Municipal Parking Lot (by the Chamber Building) to sell burgers and hotdogs as a fundraiser on September 19, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Vote: 4/0

4. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$14,230.00 from the Administration Reserve Account, Information Technology Improvements Designation for an infrastructure upgrade project.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to expend an amount not to exceed \$14,230.00 from the Administration Reserve Account, Information Technology Improvements Designation for an infrastructure upgrade project.

Vote: 4/0

5. Discussion and decision to waive the bid process and expend an amount not to exceed \$29,542.98 from the Recreation Department Reserve Account, Building Designation to replace piping at the Community Center.

A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to waive the bid process and expend an amount not to exceed \$29,542.98 from the Recreation Department Reserve Account, Building Designation to replace piping at the Community Center.

Paul York said he is not typically a fan of waiving the bid process. This particular one he is in favor of. They have done a ton of work up there and they know what the issue is. They have repaired some of the issues as they were doing some of the other work up there. It makes sense to let the finish up what needs to be done.

Roger Staples asked if this is the completion of this piping project.

Christine Almand and Paul York said that they believed it would be.

Charles Robbins said he is not a fan of no bids, but if it breaks tomorrow we will be spending the money to fix it. It is in dire need of repair.

Vote: 4/0

6. Discussion and decision to award the Winter Sand Bid. Only one bid was received.

Laney's Construction	\$6.00 loaded in Norridgewock
	\$8.40 loaded in Skowhegan
	\$10.75 delivered

Greg Dore recommends awarding the Winter Sand Bid to Laney's Construction and expending an amount not to exceed \$40,500.00 from the Highway Department Winter Roads Account, Sand, Salt, Cold Patch Designation to purchase 4,500 yards of winter sand.

A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to award the Winter Sand Bid to Laney's Construction and expend an amount not to exceed \$40,500.00 from the Highway Department Winter Roads Account, Sand, Salt, Cold Patch Designation to purchase 4,500 yards of winter sand.

Vote: 4/0

7. Discussion and decision to award the Cruiser Bid. Only one bid was received.

Hight Ford	\$36,900.00
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Chief Bucknam recommends awarding the Cruiser Bid to Hight Ford with a total bid amount of \$36,900.00 and expending that amount from the Police Department Reserve Account, Cruiser Replacement Designation to purchase a 2021 Ford Police Interceptor.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to award the Cruiser Bid to Hight Ford with a total bid amount of \$36,900.00 and expend that amount from the Police Department Reserve Account, Cruiser Replacement Designation to purchase a 2021 Ford Police Interceptor.

Roger Staples asked if one was being traded or sold.

Christine Almand said that it wasn't part of the bid. She is not sure what his plans are.

** Chief Bucknam's answer to this is in the Minutes toward the end of the meeting.

Charles Robbins said this is three new cruisers in a year, instead of one per year. We could potentially need to replace three cruisers at once, which is what we tried to avoid.

Paul York said this one will be a while before we get it. It seems like we just got one, but the process is so long.

Vote: 4/0

8. Discussion and decision to approve the application and fees for the Needle Exchange Program permit.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the application and fees for the Needle Exchange Program permit.

Paul York said he had asked what would happen if they violated the permit.

He was advised that if they violated the permit that the permit would be taken away and they would not be able to operate in Skowhegan.

Vote: 4/0

9. Discussion and decision to move forward for a referendum vote on November 3, 2020 regarding the Public Safety Building. Exact language for the ballot questions will be brought back to the Selectmen on September 22, 2020.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to move forward for a referendum vote on November 3, 2020 regarding the Public Safety Building. Exact language for the ballot questions will be brought back to the Selectmen on September 22, 2020.

Christine Almand said that there is some draft language. She is working with Bond Counsel on this. This language has been shared with Gail Pelotte and the Architect/Engineer. What we are looking at is a ranked choice vote for the location. From the survey results, three of the locations were so close. We felt that we wanted a larger pool of people to tell us where they wanted it to go, so the Committee decided to put all three options on the ballot. Option 4 was thrown out, because very few people chose that in the survey. There will also be an option of "No Build" on the ballot.

The referendum vote must be a yes or no vote, so that is the binding question. That will be for the Selectmen to secure a bond for whatever option is chosen in the ranked choice advisory vote. It would also give the Selectmen the authority to purchase land, if applicable, depending on the location.

Paul York said that the Committee met last week to go over the survey results. The majority felt that we wanted to capture and let everybody be heard. We know that cost and location were issues for some people. We are not trying to push the East Madison Road location, but wanted people to see what the difference in price would be to choose another location. The options on the ballot will include...the East Madison Road location as a combined police and fire building; the police station on Water Street and the fire station on Madison Avenue (where Whits' End is currently)...and Memorial Field with a combined police and fire building (this option also includes building a new field by the Community Center).

Betty Austin said that that meeting is on Facebook, if people still wanted to see that meeting.

Christine Almand said that Cara Mason has included all of the information on the Town's website as well. The previous referendum vote information and surveys are also there. On the Town Manager's page there is a link to a Public Safety Building page. On that page there are links to all of this information, as well as the graphics for all of these locations.

Betty Austin asked why we couldn't just do up to \$10,700,000 on the referendum question.

Christine Almand said that this is language from Bond Counsel. They are very particular on how this language is drafted. This is drafted by Bond Counsel.

Charles Robbins asked what happens if Option D "None of the above" is selected, but the \$8,900,000 bond is approved.

Christine Almand said that this was discussed with Bond Counsel. It is unlikely that you would vote to not build and then vote for the funding. We do not expect that the Selectmen would take the advisory vote to not build and then try to go get a bond. Bond Counsel certainly wouldn't approve that to go to the bond bank. He doesn't know of any bank that would allow it. We would have to take further steps.

Charles Robbins said that he has mixed feeling about this. We need a new building, but he does not think that we can afford this. The bond amount is not the final price. We were concerned with the East Madison Road location, because it was going to raise homeowners insurance for some people. What is \$10,000,000 going to do to property taxes? We are in a pandemic. A lot of people are struggling. We are not ready for a November vote.

Christine Almand said that the total cost will be included in the Treasurer's Statement that will be on the ballot. The ballot will be one larger piece of paper. By law it has to be on there. As far as the insurance, some insurance companies might use the location of the fire station. Not all insurance companies do.

Betty Austin said that she doesn't know of any insurance company that doesn't look at how far away from the fire department you are for homeowners insurance.

Paul York said that his insurance company does not.

Christine Almand said that she got that information directly from an insurance agent.

Betty Austin said that all that she has worked with, she has worked with several, they all look at how far away you are from the fire station.

Christine Almand said that the Assessors have a meeting this Thursday to set the mill rate for the coming tax year. Prior to the Public Hearing she will have what the impact of this bond would have on the future mil rate. These are things that are currently being worked on with bond counsel. We are looking at October 1st for the Public Hearing for these ballot questions as well as the appointed versus elected questions. The Public Hearing will be before people start absentee voting.

Charles Robbins asked what happens if this get shot down in November. What is the next step?

Christine Almand said that we would be back where we were at the last referendum when it didn't get approved. The last time the Committee had one location. We found that primarily it failed because of the location. Some people also didn't like the cost. We went back to the drawing board to come up with multiple locations. That work resulted in what you are seeing here.

Christine Almand said that we need, at the very least, a fire station. From the engineering report, we know that we cannot fix that building to make it work for our needs. We can't fit new fire trucks in there, unless we spend an exorbitant amount of money to have them made smaller. We have a building that is over 100 years old. In order to fix what is falling apart we would have to spend a lot of money to bring it out of the flood plain. She understands when the people say no that we have to make changes to make a project work. That is why we went to the people to get input and used that input to come up with options. That is also why we changed the type of construction to bring the cost down. However, as time passes, construction costs continue to increase.

Charles Robbins said that people are being conservative right now. He appreciates the Committee's work. They have been working on this for a long time. This is an automatic tax increase for all of us. He is guessing, a substantial tax increase.

Paul York said that with our current building, the costs just keep getting higher. The generator is on borrowed time. We are still trying to figure out the basement flooding issue. These things just keep adding up. We are spending a lot of money trying to fix something by putting a bandaid on it. It is not very good for a safety building, to be putting a bandaid on it and trying to get by. People think that we have rushed this. We certainly have not rushed it. We have been working on this for a long time. The issues are increasingly getting worse. Eventually we are going to be forced to do something because we have no choice...or we will end up spending a lot of money that is just being thrown away.

Paul York said he agrees that it is a lot of money. He doesn't like spending it either...but sometimes you have to spend the money in order to save money in the long run.

Christine Almand said that she had hoped that it would pass in 2018. We had a lot of things changing in regards to the mil rate. The last two years we have been able to reduce our mil rate. If it had passed in 2018 the mil rate still wouldn't have been as high as it was three years ago. We are well below where we were three years ago.

Charles Robbins asked if there would be a n option of "none of the above" on the ballot.

Christine Almand answered, yes.

Recording Time: 43:15

Paul York said that we are giving everybody options.

Charles Robbins said that 340 people answered the survey, that is just 5% of the population.

Christine Almand said that is actually a pretty good response to an online survey. It is actually multiple times the amount of people that were at Town Meeting and passed a much larger amount of money.

Each of the options were very close one was 27%, she believes the other two options were at 35% and 33%. She said she may be off by 1% or 2% on a couple of those.

Vote: 3/1 (Charles Robbins opposed)

10. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$6,000.00 from the Administration Reserve Account, Legal Fees Designation for Bond Counsel regarding the Public Safety Building.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to expend an amount not to exceed \$6,000.00 from the Administration Reserve Account, Legal Fees Designation for Bond Counsel regarding the Public Safety Building.

Vote: 3/1 (Charles Robbins opposed)

11. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#103	\$	604.67 (FY 2020 Accounts Payables)
#17	\$	47,251.75 (Payroll #35)
#18	\$	45,615.23 (Payroll #36)
#19	\$	9,779.02 (State Payables)
#20	\$	1,247,537.27 (FY 2021 Accounts Payables)
Total	\$	1,350,787.94

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

Vote: 4/0

12. Other Business

Vehicle Charging Station fees will be on the next agenda.

Greg Dore said that First Light will be at the turning lane tomorrow morning.

Chief Bucknam said that they are currently using that other cruiser for the Hospital Resource Officer.

Paul York said that he had asked Greg Dore a question earlier about the sidewalks on West Front Street. He noticed that not all of the curbing was being replaced. In his opinion it all looks bad and he is concerned that we could damage our new sidewalks while removing snow this winter. The answer he got was that it was a matter of the amount of money it would cost to replace all of the curbing.

Christine Almand said that it would have been an additional \$55,000.00 to replace all of the curbing. The sidewalk project is a \$45,000.00 project, so it would have more than doubled it.

Paul York said that maybe we need to pay closer attention during budget. He thinks we should budget to do the whole project. He doesn't want to have to replace hot top.

Greg Dore said that that project is on a State Highway. The curbing should actually be replaced by the State. They won't replace it until they are doing a capital project through there. He doesn't want to spend any more taxpayer money than he has to. That sidewalk definitely needs to be replaced. He asked Paul York to meet with him tomorrow to go over what he thinks should be replaced. Greg Dore budgeted 500' of curbing to be replaced. We have taken out everything that he feels really needs to be taken out. If there is a certain area that Paul York thinks we should replace, we have another 130 feet that can be replaced. If we look at it tomorrow, we can have it ready for Thursday...when the work is scheduled to start.

Greg Dore said when we do these projects, we only have so much money. If we can get by, we need to take that into consideration when you are spending the taxpayers' money. If we spend more money on one project it takes away from another. For instance, if we had included all of the curbing in this project...we wouldn't be able to do the Wallace Farm Road or the work we have planned for Crescent Street. Those projects would have to be pushed off another year. That is the juggling game that he plays all the time. He did what he thought was best for the Town. He said he is more than willing to meet with Paul York tomorrow morning to get his input, if he thinks we should do more.

Paul York said he would give him a call.

13. Unfinished Business

- Review Policies and Ordinances
- Run of River/Economic Development
- Utilizing Outside Services
- Marketing/Celebrating Skowhegan
- Public Safety Building
- Sidewalks and Bike Trails/Lanes
- Second Bridge – Study Team meeting in October. Public Meeting pushed back to November.
- Solar Power – Jeff and Christine working on this next week.

14. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.

Approved and signed on September 22, 2020.

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