

**Minutes  
Town of Skowhegan  
Regular Selectmen's Meeting  
5:30 P.M.  
Tuesday, October 13, 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

No Town Manager's Report for this meeting.

Department Reports:

Gail Pelotte:

- Office very busy with tax payments and absentee ballot requests and early voting in person.
- To date there have been 1,949 requests and 1,033 have been returned.
- The office will start dog licenses on Thurs. Oct 15<sup>th</sup>.

Bryan Belliveau:

**Transfer and Recycling Center**

- Reminder that we are now in our fall/winter hours. We are open 7AM-3:45PM Tuesday - Saturday.
- We had a great turn out for the Household Hazardous Waste day and we want to thank all of our staff, vendors and volunteers for making this day a success. We would like to remind everyone that we can accept paint throughout the year at our facility. You are allowed up to 5 gallons per day. Call our office if you would like more information about our Paint Care program.

- Due to COVID we will be keeping the bins outdoors for as long as we can this year. **Weather permitting.** Once we move them back indoors you can expect to see the same or similar setup as last year. Masks will be required when entering the building.

#### **Code Enforcement & Planning**

- We discussed the Comprehensive Plan at the last Planning Board meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>. The Planning Board will use the next meeting to discuss a schedule for updating this plan.
- KVCAP was granted an extension from the Planning Board on their proposed development on Mary Street. They plan to begin construction of a new 24 dwelling housing project in the Spring of 2021 along with a renovation of their existing building and converting that into more housing.
- The State Fire Marshal's Office have received and started their review of a construction and barrier free permit application for the proposed trampoline park in the Skowhegan Village Shopping Center. We are working together with Dana Cassidy to see this project through.
- We currently have 9 open Property Maintenance Ordinance violations. All of these violations are being remedied voluntarily and 5 of them are nearing completion.

#### **David Bucknam:**

- We are continuing to conduct traffic enforcement throughout Skowhegan and we are seeing signs it has started to help in certain areas. We are aware of the problem areas and will work those into the program as we continue to move forward.
- Saturday October 24<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2pm is drug take back day. Detective Bachelder will be here at the side entrance to the municipal building so bring your unwanted and used drugs and drop them off for destruction.
- I would like to thank the citizens who turned out for the Police department walk through and the question they presented.

#### **Greg Dore:**

- The insurance company has had the totaled Wacker Nueson taken away and Central Maine Equipment told me they have the new machine and it should be delivered one day next week.
- The new Hitachi wheel loader is at the dealership and once they have completed the final checklist it will be delivered Friday morning.
- Simard and Sons have installed the new fuel dispensers and fuel control management system I think it is very easy to operate and I am learning how to get the reports out of the system.
- I'm still waiting on word back from the insurance company about the status of the damage to the garage wall.
- Pike Industries have reclaimed, treated and graded Crescent Street. I am hoping to get the paving schedule within the next day or so.
- We are presently preparing the gravel roads for winter and we will begin hauling our winter sand next week.
- Our annual leaf pick up begins Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. We will have a schedule posted on our website and it will be in the Saturday's paper.

Recording Time: 08:53

3. Selectmen's Items

Betty Austin said that in Monday's paper, Maine Grains finds way to thrive in the Pandemic. There was a nice article about other businesses in the building. Positive things happening in Skowhegan.

Betty Austin complimented police department for trying to take care of speeders. That is going well. She congratulated Captain, Ty Strout for his promotion.

Roger Staples asked if some of the Rec programs had been shut down because of COVID.

Christine Almand said that she did email the Selectmen last week. We shut down the programs while the schools had shut down due to a COVID outbreak situation. We started the programs back up today. The schools reopened today as well. The outbreak is primarily at the Charter School. Any of the students involved in that outbreak will stay out of our programs for now. After a period of time, they will be allowed back in.

Roger staples said we should have an update from the Recreation Department.

Christine Almand said that typically there would be one, but Denise is on vacation.

Charles Robbins said that Chief Bucknam is out there catching speeders every morning at 6:00 or 6:30. He makes it fun with the Facebook posts.

Charles Robbins said that he wants to discuss having these meeting being open to the public. The Governor has opened it up to 100 people or 50% capacity, whichever is less.

Christine Almand said that primarily the issue upstairs is the sound. She has looked at a new microphone system, to see if we could improve the sound. It is also difficult to stream the meetings from upstairs.

Some of the public is ready to come in for an in-person meeting, but some are not. She expects to stream the meetings regardless of what room and whether or not they are open to the public. She said she would like some time to be able to get something in place.

Betty Austin asked if maybe we could meet at the Community Center, until we can get something in place.

Christine Almand said that she will look into it. She feels that sound quality may also be an issue there. We have the sound system in the Council Room, so the sound quality works with the microphones and the camera. She is looking at the microphones that were used at the KVCOG annual meeting.

Roger Staples asked how social distancing would be handled.

Christine Almand said that we require that masks be worn inside the building. If we are going to be seating people we would do distancing similar to what we did for Town Meeting. People in the same household can sit together.

Cara Mason said that there is an issue with WiFi upstairs.

Betty Austin said that she believes that the capacity upstairs is 400.

Cara Mason said that the seating capacity upstairs is actually 840.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to move towards holding meetings in the Opera House or at the Community Center and opening them up to the public.**

Paul York said he doesn't have a problem working towards this. He doesn't want to just open up to the public. There are a bunch of things that we need to do first.

Charles Robbins said that we have been in this pandemic now for six or seven months. We all know what the CDC guidelines are. The Town Office follows these guidelines every day. He knows we won't be ready for the next meeting, but he feels that in a month... He said he feels that the public should be able to come in and voice their opinions. A lot of people don't want to post on Facebook, but they would come in and voice their opinions.

Cara Mason said that another thing to consider is that we don't heat the upstairs unless it is being used, so there will be an impact to the budget. It takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a day to get it up to temperature.

Betty Austin said that she is concerned that people wouldn't wear masks and socially distance.

Christine Almand said she isn't overly concerned about that. Daily we have people that don't understand that they need to wear a mask. Maybe every other day we have someone who really wants to pitch a fit about it. There is no exception. If you can't wear a mask in the building, we are more than happy to help you in some other manner. We do have somebody watching the only entrance into the building, to make sure that residents are wearing masks.

Roger Staples said some prep work needs to be done before we do this.

Betty Austin said that we don't want to be that place that does this and all of a sudden we have an outbreak.

Paul York said he assumes that WiFi and sound would be easier at the Community Center. The rest of it is manageable. We don't typically have a lot of people coming to meetings, unless it is a hot topic.

Cara Mason said that there are more people watching right now, than what we typically have at meetings. There are currently 18 people watching live on Facebook.

Charles Robbins said this should be able to be accomplished in a month. We follow these guidelines every day.

Betty Austin is really torn. She wants to make sure that we do what we should do. How do you make sure that people do what they should?

Paul York said that they won't have a choice. They can't come into the building without a mask on. We will have people monitoring. Paul York said that we also control the seating.

**Vote: 3/1 (Roger Staples opposed)**

Recording Time: 25:24

Christine Almand said that she would come up with a plan that takes all of the guidelines into account.

Paul York said that will be brought back to the Selectmen. This is just to start working toward that.

Betty Austin said she wanted to make sure that we have masks available.

Christine Almand said she has not been purchasing masks with taxpayer money. There has been an order in place for a long time now that people are expected to wear masks when they go onto places. Everyone should have one. She said she has a limited amount in her office that she purchased with her own money. Occasionally we will give one to somebody at the door. People typically have one in their car.

Paul York said that if we need to purchase some, we should have some. Sometimes people forget.

Charles Robbins wants an engineer to look at the basement flooding issues at the Municipal Building.

Christine Almand said that she would look into it. She wasn't aware that it was happening as often as it was. She was aware of two instances. She recently heard that there were more.

Charles Robbins said congratulations on hiring a new firefighter and congratulations to Ty for his promotion.

He wanted to know if the highway department and transfer station positions had been filled yet.

Christine Almand said that the resumes have been reviewed for the Administrative Assistant position. She will follow up with Trish Austin to see where we are at. The Transfer Station position...we got a very small number of applications, so we put it out one more time.

Paul York congratulated Ty on his promotion.

He also said that the traffic calming cones on Norridgewock Avenue are all over the place. He said Greg Dore might want to collect them. One is all the way down on the Canaan Road.

**Public Hearing:**

1. Public Hearing: Discussion and decision to approve the General Assistance Ordinance, Appendices A through I effective October 1, 2020.

Paul York opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Christine Almand said that every year we are required to update our General Assistance Ordinance based on the State's Ordinance. There are adjustments to the income limits, food maximums, housing maximums, travel reimbursement. There was a statute amendment on the definition of misconduct, to address marijuana use. These are changes that happen each year. We have to adopt these in order to receive the 70% reimbursement from the State.

Paul York closed the Public Hearing at 6:02 p.m.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the General Assistance Ordinance, Appendices A through I effective October 1, 2020.**

**Vote: 4/0**

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Approve the minutes from the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting                      September 22, 2020

2. Approve the Application for Parades & Procession to allow Secha Rich to hold a Walk to End Alzheimer's on October 3, 2020 @ 9:00 a.m. Approved via email on September 25, 2020 and waive the insurance requirement.

**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 Officer Jacob Pierce as Corporal with a term expiring June 30, 2021.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to appoint Officer Jacob Pierce as Corporal with a term expiring June 30, 2021.**

**Vote: 4/0**

2. Discussion and decision to appoint Officer Ashley Smith as a full-time police officer with a term expiring June 30, 2021.

**A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to appoint Officer Ashley Smith as a full-time police officer with a term expiring June 30, 2021.**

**Vote: 4/0**

3. Discussion and decision to appoint Laurie Greenleaf as Warden of the State of Maine General Election with a term expiring November 4, 2020.

**A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to appoint Laurie Greenleaf as Warden of the State of Maine General Election with a term expiring November 4, 2020.**

**Vote: 4/0**

4. Discussion and decision to approve the renewal Application for On-Premise License for malt liquor, wine and spirits for:

The Dore Group, LLC, d/b/a The Old Mill Pub  
39 Water Street

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to approve the renewal Application for On-Premise License for malt liquor, wine and spirits for The Dore Group, LLC, d/b/a The Old Mill Pub.**

Christine Almand said a correction to the application had been received.

Cara Mason said it was in the Selectmen's paperwork, because she had hand written the correction on the application before receiving the corrected form.

**Vote: 4/0**

Recording Time: 37:59

5. Discussion and decision to accept a donation of stuffed animals and two 3-foot dolls from the estate of Grace Roberts for the Police Department to be distributed at Chief Bucknam's discretion.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to accept a donation of stuffed animals and two 3-foot dolls from the estate of Grace Roberts for the Police Department to be distributed at Chief Bucknam's discretion.**

Betty Austin said that it was wonderful that the family decided to do this. She belonged to Eastern Star for years and this is a great legacy.

Christine Almand said that she specifically stated in her will that she wanted this.

**Vote: 4/0**

6. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$4,565.00 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, SCBA Designation to purchase a 5-year contract for maintenance of the Fit Test machine.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to expend an amount not to exceed \$4,565.00 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, SCBA Designation to purchase a 5-year contract for maintenance of the Fit Test machine.**

Charles Robbins asked if we have one of these. He was confused by this.

Paul York said that we have the machine. The five-year contract is up, so it is time to purchase another five-year contract. We save money by doing it this way. Every individual has to be tested every year.

**Vote: 4/0**

7. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$2,300.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Cruiser Replacement Designation to purchase a patrol laptop.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to expend an amount not to exceed \$2,300.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Cruiser Replacement Designation to purchase a patrol laptop.**

Charles Robbins asked if this was for the new cruiser.

Christine Almand answered, yes.

**Vote: 4/0**

8. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$6,500.00 from the Mary C. Brainard Trust Fund to assist Skowhegan residents who do not qualify for General Assistance for the period of October 2020 through April 2021.

**A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Betty Austin to expend an amount not to exceed \$6,500.00 from the Mary C. Brainard Trust Fund to assist Skowhegan residents who do not qualify for General Assistance for the period of October 2020 through April 2021.**

**Vote: 4/0**

9. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00 for the Code Enforcement Reserve Account, Office Upgrades Designation to purchase office furniture/equipment for the Code Enforcement Office.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to expend an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00 for the Code Enforcement Reserve Account, Office Upgrades Designation to purchase office furniture/equipment for the Code Enforcement Office.**

**Vote: 4/0**

10. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$6,000.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Cruiser Replacement Designation to purchase an in-car WatchGuard camera system and accessories.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Roger Staples to expend an amount not to exceed \$6,000.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Cruiser Replacement Designation to purchase an in-car WatchGuard camera system and accessories.**

Charles Robbins asked if this was again for the new cruiser.

Paul York answered, yes.

**Vote: 4/0**

11. Discussion and decision to allow Chief Howard to apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of \$4,500.00 to purchase 9 sets of forest fire personal protective equipment. There is a 50% match for this grant.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to allow Chief Howard to apply for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of \$4,500.00 to purchase 9 sets of forest fire personal protective equipment.**

Charles Robbins asked oif we were spending \$2,250.00 or \$4,500.00.

Cara Mason said that the match is \$2,250.00.

**Vote: 4/0**

12. Discussion and decision to approve the "Treasurer's Disbursement Warrant Policy Regarding Employee Wages and Benefits and Fees Paid to the State of Maine".

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the "Treasurer's Disbursement Warrant Policy Regarding Employee Wages and Benefits and Fees Paid to the State of Maine".**

Christine Almand recently found out that we are supposed to have a policy approved each year. This was voted by the Selectmen years ago. This authorized the Finance Officer or the Deputy Finance Officer to approve Warrants for payroll and state payables, instead of having the whole board approve them at a meeting. The Selectmen had also determined that the Chair and Vice Chair would serve as the Finance Officer and Deputy Finance Officer. So we created a policy which we expect to be approved each year as regular business at the Organizational Meeting. This is just housekeeping.

**Vote: 4/0**

Recording Time: 44:17

13. Discussion and decision to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow CMP and Northern New England Telephone Operations to place one pole on the Bigelow Hill Road, 7,549 feet south west of the intersection of the Bigelow Hill Road and Main Street.

**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 to place one pole on the Bigelow Hill Road, 7,549 feet south west of the intersection of the Bigelow Hill Road and Main Street.**

**Vote: 4/0**

14. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#105	\$	435.14 (FY 2020 Accounts Payables)
#25	\$	44,098.87 (Payroll #39)
#26	\$	7,797.60 (State Payables)
#27	\$	43,416.63 (Payroll #40)
#28	\$	44,154.49 (Payroll #41)
#29	\$	16,539.63 (State Payables)
#30	\$	<u>4,174,363.35 (FY 2021 Accounts Payables)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,330,805.71</b>

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Treasurer's Warrants as written.**

**Vote: 4/0**

15. Other Business

There was no Other Business.

16. Unfinished Business

Review Policies and Ordinances – Traffic Ordinance amendment will be brought to the next meeting.

Run of River/Economic Development

Utilizing Outside Services

Marketing/Celebrating Skowhegan

Public Safety Building – See below

Sidewalks and Bike Trails/Lanes

Second Bridge

Solar Power – Agreement sent to Ken Lexier for review. Working on contract language.

Charles Robbins had a concern about the possibility of purchasing three buildings depending on what was voted. Nobody knows what the cost of these building is going to be. Nobody knows what the actual cost for Option B would be. He doesn't understand what the secret is. It's public money.

Paul York said it is a line in the information that went out on the Flyer.

Christine Almand said that she has had those conversations with the property owners. We are starting with a high price, and that it will only go down from there. We will later negotiate a price if that option is chosen by the voters. If and when that is selected, there are negotiations that need to be ironed out. We don't have a purchase price, we have an estimated purchase price. These estimates have been worked into the estimates for the project. It is premature to have a purchase and sales agreement. That would be approved by the Selectmen. We still have three different options on the table right now. She has been very clear in her communications with all three property owners.

Paul York said he has talked to the owner of the Madison Avenue property. He is looking to sell. Skills has been actively trying to sell their property as well. The Somerset Reporter building...he wasn't actively looking to sell. That was something that we approached.

Christine Almand said is response to our surveys, and talking to citizens...they want a downtown option. No matter where we put it in the downtown, we will be in this situation. We do not own any more property in the downtown. We have to purchase property. Because we are asking the voters what their p[reference is, it is premature to have a purchase and sales agreement in place.

Paul York said that we are not trying to hide a price. Those price estimates are included in each option. We had to find properties that were for sale, or that people were willing to sell. This is how we ended up with the locations that we have.

17. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

**Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.**

