

Select Board Minutes

Date: September 12, 2023

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Multi-Purpose Room

Next Meeting: September 26, 2023

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Minutes: Minutes for August 8th were approved.

Present: Richard Doughty, Dina Walker, Lisa Miller, Mike Stephenson, CEO, Dan Demers, Road Commissioner, April Demers, Weld Recreation Coordinator and Carol Cochran

AGENDA ITEMS:

Department Heads:

Public Works:

Dan said that they are finishing their ditching, working on the Center Hill road and trying to get the water off the road. There are new ditches down both sides of the road now.

Dina asked what the flags were in front of her house. Dan explained that when they are doing any road work they need to contact DIG Safe. They will come out and will mark, with flags, wherever there are underground cables so the road crew will not disturb them when ditching or grading of the road. Dig Safe will mark the road with paint and flags and if they have not responded within 3 days the Town may proceed with their work. The flags remain for 2 months before removing them.

The 2016 International wheeler is back, now the crew will put the undercoating on it. The 2010 International is at Morrison Motors and on the driver's side the springs are being replaced and the turbo cam sensor. The air canister for the tail gate needs replacing, after putting one in 2 months ago. The truck will be back in a few weeks.

Dan said that Dylan Orff, Electrician will begin next week wiring and putting up the updated lighting at the Town Garage.

Weld Recreation Committee:

April said that there is a group that are having a Veteran's Luncheon on October 11th.

Dennis Cleasby, artist will teach 4 adult classes every other week for adult water color for \$50 and 2 children's classes for masks for \$25.

April is asking for guidance from the Select Board whether Weld Rec should purchase the supplies or ask individuals to purchase them. April wants to open it to all and not charge a fee and some not able to participate because of the fee.

Richard said that Weld Rec is not a department that should make money, however it is nice to have fund raisers to help in the funding.

The class limit for Art Classes 20, so if there are more there can be 2 classes.

Richard said that his grandson is participating in Wilton Rec and Wilton has a fee for residents and a higher fee for nonresidents. Lisa said she felt anyone from Weld, be first, then others if there are other spaces to fill.

Vera Johnson of Wilton, has been on Maine Life and she is another person who will be coming to Weld for to teach classes. She does metallic jewelry, pottery and much more. April asked if she does a class and ask \$10 per child, does Weld get a percentage of what is charged? Dina felt that because this is new ground that we don't need to charge immediately but we should be thinking about setting up a fee schedule harder to start charging fees the longer the classes go on. April will come back to the Board after talking to her and discuss it again.

April wants to have a Christmas Party where each child in Weld to receive a personal gift, and wants to be sure that she has a list of all of the kids in Weld. It was suggested that April send out a mailing asking for this information. Dina will help her with it.

Kevin Cochran has agreed to be Santa.

September 23: band, line and possible square dance at the Town Hall.

TDS Fiber Optic:

April said that Steve Folsom TDS Rep stopped by to let them know that fiber optic lines have been installed and 300 MB for the first 2 years of internet will cost \$39 then \$76 per month.

The Select Board all agreed to upgrade the Town email through TDS to fiber optic.

New Business:

Stockpile Bids-850 Yards needed:

Stockpile bids will be mailed out on Thursday to the 13 different venders.

Dan said that we have 800 yards.

Budget Request for Franklin County U.T. Service (due by 9/25):

Richard will update the information from last year for the Budget Request for Franklin County Unorganized Townships for Perkins Township Fire Protection and Perkins and Washington Townships for Transfer Station services.

Follow up on Kaspersky switch (Russian antivirus software):

We have checked into SOPHO Intercept X as an alternative antivirus to Kaspersky and have communication with MMA Risk Management and they have confirmed that this is an acceptable antivirus.

Carol as requested a price for 6 users and we are waiting for the estimate and will proceed with the purchase.

LPI – Manual:

Mike Stephenson, CEO attended a Local Plumbing Inspector training a few weeks ago. There is a State LPI Manual that the Town needs to have in house. The Manual is \$300 and there is one for 2024 that will be available soon and Mike is suggesting that we wait for the newer version. Richard moved that the

Town purchase the State 2024 LPI Manual when it becomes available. Dina 2nd the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Preliminary 2024 State Valuation:

Richard explained that State Valuation of the Town depends on our tree growth, which is valued at a lower value than other land per acre which is determined by the State of Maine and the State Ratio. The State also takes into consideration the sales for the previous year and what value the Town has for valuation. This impacts the State Ratio of what our fair market value is for the Town of Weld. At some point when our valuation drops below 70% of fair market value we will need to do a Real Estate Valuation, which is expensive.

Dina will call Property Tax Division so that she can get a better understanding of how this works and make contact with Paul Binette, Assessor.

TRIO Webb:

Carol received a letter from Harris Computers saying that TRIO SQL that they are supporting the SQL version of TRIO at this time, but are making us aware that only state mandated changes and critical fixes are being considered for SQL. Moving forward all of their product enhancements and any new functionality are only being made available in TRIO Web.

We are waiting for an estimate of the cost to change from TRIO SQL to Trio Web. If we confirm that this is something we are planning for 2023 or 2024 that are offering a pricing incentive for us to be upgraded by the end of 2024.

Franklin County Hazardous Mitigation Plan:

Franklin County and municipal officials has been working to update the Franklin County Hazardous Plan. A plan is updated every 15 years and with the updates for each Town on potential project areas in case of a disaster, a plan has been completed for each Town within Franklin County which has to be approved by each Town. After a disaster the County can apply for reimbursement of damages through Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA. After the Select Board has gone over the plan a letter of approval will be signed at the September 25th SB meeting.

The Select Board will review the 2023 plan sent out by Franklin County Emergency Management Agency (the "Agency") against the Franklin County Hazard Mitigation Planning Municipal Survey 2023 completed by Richard to see if the data we submitted has been incorporated by the Agency. That information can assist the Select Board to approve and accept the plan.

Old Business

Center Hill Cemetery-Update: No Update

Bridges-Update:

Richard has not received a call back from Eric Calderwood. As soon as we hear back a date will be set up for Dan to dig 6' to 8' down to check the abutments to see if they can be reused. Eric or an associate will be present to see if they can be reused.

Richard has talked to Carol about sending out a letter to the residents beyond the Kennedy Bridge to give them a heads up that the road will be closed part of a day.

Deciding to go forward did not require a written document only verbal.

Lighting Update:

As stated above Dylan will begin the wiring and change out the lights at the Town Garage next week.

There is not going to be new lighting at the Town Office. There will be less lights and the lamps will be changed to LED.

Food Sovereignty Ordinance:

Lisa thought that this needed to be brought to the Town's attention and see what other Towns have done. Enacting this Ordinance would give town citizens the right to produce, sell, purchase and consume local foods promoting self-reliance, the preservation of family farms and local food traditions.

This is an enactment ordinance, that, if approved by the Town, will put enact the State's Maine Food Sovereignty Act. To implement the right to produce, sell, purchase, etc. we need to pass a Food Sovereignty Ordinance. This would enable people in town, if they wanted, to sell direct to people food locally produced foods. The producers and processors of local food may enter into private agreements with patrons to waive any liability for consumption of local food.

Dina wants to look over the ordinance and research the background further before the SB makes ad decision. Lisa will get other Ordinances and send them electronically to the Board Members within the next couple of weeks to a month. This will discussed at a future meeting.

Continue Discussion on Solar Farm Ordinance Draft:

The Select board continued their discussion of the Draft Solar Farm Ordinance (SB Draft #3).

Dina raised the question of whether the ordinance should include a section on the Operating Permit, do we even want one and, if so, how broad do we want it?

Richard said he did read up on Section 5- Permit Fees and spoke with the Town of Farmington and they said that they were doing revisions on their current Ordinance and do not have any operating permit and do not do any inspections.

Dina said that her personal view is that we do not need an operating permit. This subject of this Ordinance is narrowly focused to give the Town a mechanism, a say, in whether to allow a visibly large commercial structure, such as a solar farm, to be installed in Town. The operation and maintenance of the solar farm is not of the Town's concern to regulate. We trust that there are experts better equipped than the Town who will regulate that. The draft already includes a decommissioning section that take care of the end-of-life phase of the solar farm.

Richard agreed with Dina as what she said last meeting about it be burdensome for annual inspections for Mike or someone else to do it.

Lisa was concerned about the maintenance of the Solar Farm. Mike Stephenson said that it should be on the application by listing the items that they are agreeing to.

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After some discussion it was decided that the Applicant agrees to maintain the proposed facility when they fill out the application and sign it. If the CEO finds that they have violated the ordinance a fine could be imposed.

Department of Environmental Protection has written in the law decommissioning of Solar Farms that are no longer in use. Richard provided the citation to the relevant to the State Law.

Dina made a motion to remove Section 9 – Operating Permit and Inspection in its entirety. Richard 2nd the motion and it was passed unanimously.

The Select board agreed that Section 10 will stay in. Lisa proposed that a new application will be required of the Applicant for modifications to their existing Solar Farm. The board agreed on this and Dina stated she will revise the Draft Solar Farm Ordinance incorporating the changes the board discussed tonight into the next draft (SB #4) for further discussion.

Adjourned 8:15

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol J. Cochran".

Carol J. Cochran, Town Clerk