

Select Board Minutes

Date: January 23, 2024

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Multi-Purpose Room

Next Meeting: February 13, 2024

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Minutes: Approved October 23, 2024

Present: Dina Walker, Richard Doughty, Lisa Miller, Steve & Carol Conant, Tom Skolfield, David Rackliffe, April Demers, Coval Conant, Evan McIntire, Larry Fish and Carol Cochran

AGENDA ITEMS:

Department Heads:

Dan was not in attendance, but April said that he had looked over the personnel policy paperwork and said that retirement was not mentioned.

Dan said the exhaust stack on the 2016-wheeler was corroding and has been welded. A replacement would cost \$3,400. All equipment is up and running.

The heavy equipment operators' position is still open and to advertise through Indeed the cost is \$500, so Dan said that we could advertise in the Daily Bulldog and MMA in the Spring. Richard said that he seems to be getting along OK for now with the help that he has.

Weld Recreation:

Line dancing still twice a week, an air hockey game was donated and has purchased a basketball game. The birthday party for Bernard Rackliffe went very well. A wireless headset has been purchased, class on making Sourdough has been held and was well attended and the barn quilt class is this week-end.

A Weld resident was upset about the request for insurance to hold an art class. It was explained that if anyone is holding a class and is charging a fee that they must share the liability and provide a certificate on insurance

naming the Town of Weld as an insured. Anyone having questions about the insurance should be referred to the Select Board.

On February 1st is Weld Rec's next meeting and a google calendar has been created that will be-to-date with all events. April asked if at the Weld Rec meeting, they would be able to login on the WIFI. Yes, Weld Rec can use the WIFI, but with more people being able to login that the password would be changing and the new password would be given out as needed.

On February 24th being the full moon there will be snowshoeing at the State Park.

New Business:

1. Legal Update - Photo posting

Weld Recreation will be creating a Face Book account. Dina has checked with MMA Legal and they have advised that posting pictures of children cannot be done and April cannot post them on her personal FB account because she is the Weld Rec Coordinator. It is a gray area, and posting pictures of adults she would need to make sure that no children are in that posting and she was advised by the Select Board not to post pictures of adults or children on her personal FB or on the Weld Rec one. April said that it was hard to promote Weld Rec without pictures. Dina said that they say that she can only permute the activates by a sign.

2. Town Counsel update –

Dina has been talking with the office of Clint Boothby in Turner. This is trying to find an alternative for us of Bernstein and Shur because there were such a large firm, she was not sure if they were the best for use in terms of price and everything. The project that she has been talking to him about is Large Commercial Structure Ordinance and the Solar Farm one. He is in the process of looking at the turnaround time is and is aware of our turnaround time to Town Meeting. Dina spoke to him yesterday and he was not sure if he was going to have the time to look at the Ordinances, so she is waiting for his response. Mr. Boothby is \$225 per hour and Bernstein and Shur are \$280 per hour. Dina shared that she feels that the one good thing with Bernstein and Shur is that she believes they are on a retainer with us so when we ask them to do something they just do it, but it does not mean that we don't get charged. Dina wanted him to look at the big picture and let her know if it was going to be risking or if the way it is written there could be lawsuits, then they would want to

know. He will not be doing a line-item markup what Dina thought would be done. He did agree that there needs to be a Public Hearing and by that time it needs to be the final draft with legal review because there cannot be any changes after that. The only changes to take into consideration is the public comment so that does shorten our timeline. Dina said because this is important to them that she does not want a shorty job done on it and if need be, we wait and hold a special town meeting to present the Ordinance at a later time.

3. Re-appointment of CEO –

Richard suggested that they reappoint Mr. Stephenson as CEO, he has done a good job. Mike was unanimously appointed and the SB signed the appointment paperwork.

4. Animal Shelter Contract –

The agreement is with the Franklin Animal Shelter and allows the ACO to take stray animals there. The cost is \$902.45. and the Town will sign the agreement.

5. Tree Growth Compliance Letters – Richard said our Assessor told him that 95% of the property in Weld is in TG and reduces their tax burden, but they must have a plan undated every 10 years. There are property owners that have not updated their plan and there is a \$500 fine for not being in compliance. They are given 120 days to get in compliance before the fines are assessed. If the Town does not show the Maine Forest Service that we are in compliance with the State Law that Maine Revenue will not reimburse the Town for those revenues lost due to TG.

6. Select Board approval of the Town Budget.

Richard said the Budget Committee met final time and approved the budget. Members of the Board are familiar with the procedure and can agree or the Select Board can have a different recommendation.

Overall, Not including County Tax and School Tax the budget is \$806,400 is the recommended budget up \$68,000 from last year.

Public safety requested set money aside for new equipment what is already pretty significant \$50,000 in that account towards a new fire truck. The BC met with the fire chief and there were no imminent plans to purchase a truck. The one that they have is old but is in good shape and maybe they would purchase a used apparatus from a bigger city which the Town has done in the past and had pretty

good luck with. It was suggested that no money be set aside for equipment. The \$5,000 would offset this year and the pump on the newest Fire Truck needs to be replaced this year of a cost of \$10,000 to \$15,000 this year.

PW doesn't have a second employee so this reduced payroll because the 2nd employee is not working a 40-hour week. There was 19 overtime hours for 19 weeks which was based on Wilton and that it could be trimmed to 10 hours for 17 weeks.

Laurie and others looked for money sitting around to allocate to reduce \$475,000. It included \$150,000 in surplus which has more money in it than was last year.

The school formular has changed which increased our amount that we have to pay to RSU 9. Richard will be meeting with the finance committee at Mt. Blue High School

Richard moved that the Select Board adopt the recommended Budget of the Committee, Dina seconded the motion and the voter was unanimous.

7. Discussion of Kennedy Bridge Article for Town Warrant

Richard said that he had received an update from Eric Calderwood. They were finalizing the bid package and will be ready to send it out. He that the Board want to review it first. If we want to do the Kennedy Bridge this year we need to get approval from the Town. They did not have the estimate ready when Richard talked to them but thought it would be less than \$200,000. Richard said that we could have an article in the Warrant authorizing the Select Board to precure funding. We have some money set aside nut not very much set aside for the engineering cost so we would need to finance it by borrowing money to do that. We could have an article to authorize the SB to borrow the money up to a limit. They said that they could email us proposed design and the SB could see what the bid package looks like and make comment on it. They could send it out next week to the contractors and have the bids in before the SB's second meeting in February would be able to open the bids and have a real price to share with the voters at Town Meeting. Dina asked if we would have the figure when Carol printed the Town Report so that the amount would be in the article. Richard said that we would not have the figure before the Town Report was printed but would have it Town Meeting.

8. Lise Bofinger – Grant Writing

For the past 2 days Lise has been attending a grant writing conference. She stopped at the SB meeting on her way back from the conference. Lise received a bunch info that could be helpful with public government funds and private money most in private which is more of what we are looking at. Lise will be in contact with the SB what she finds out.

9. Food Sovereignty Ordinance –

David Rackliffe said that he understood that the Food Sovereignty Ordinance was brought before the Board. Richard said that there was some preliminary discussion on the Ordinance. Lisa had brought it before the board with a draft that some other Towns had. Dina had talked to some attorneys at MMA and it was the opinion of them it was unsettled law and that it may potentially open the Town to Lawsuits. So, they thought where they had so much going on that they would wait and do it at a later time.

David asked if the Town have an existing policy on Petitions from residents to have an article to be considered for inclusion in the Town Warrant. Dina said no but he could do that, it is State Law that you can present a petition with the article asking that it be put on the Town Warrant with the required signatures. David referred to State Statue Title 30-A Sub-section 5 state that if they wanted to push the article before the Town as a democracy before the towns people, are their required to go forward with the Petition? Richard said no and 1 reason that they did not move forward was that they had not heard from citizens that they had heard from Lisa but not from others. Richard said certainly if the Town was interested in having a Food Sovereignty Ordinance, he thought that there could be an article on the Town Warrant that would authorize the SB to move forward or to draft an Ordinance.

Dina said that they could go back to the minutes where it was discussed in great length and to see what Lisa proposed. She agreed the Richard that the SB had considered it. She could also give the opinions of MMA at the time of why we did not go forward as a Board, because that was something they were going to go forward with it.

The reason why the majority didn't want to go forward with it was that the Food Ordinance Act came out 2018. There was a vote by the Maine constitution for the right to food. The conflict between the Food Sovereignty Act and the Constitution for the right to food could open the Towns to lawsuits. If we pass the Ordinance, we would be amending it very soon because it is not legal.

David asked if they want this article on the Warrant then they would have to do it by petition? Dina said yes. David said that is not what Richard said.

Lisa said that her understanding of their discussion was that they were not going to include it in this Town Meeting because of time and that she was going to do some more research and talk to people in the Town of Wilton to see why they thought it was safe for them to pass the Ordinance. It was not being taken off the table and that we could have a special Town Meeting later to vote on it.

After discussion on whether or not and the pros and cons of an article for a Food Sovereignty Ordinance Richard will have an article for the next meeting for the SB to vote on whether or not to include it in this year's Town Meeting Warrant.

Old Business

1. Continue discussion of Personnel Policy (SB Draft #2)

Dina did not have time to work on the PP because she was working on the Large Commercial Structure Ordinance.

Also, the Fire Department needs to be included in the Policy.

Lisa said on Page 1 number 2 it should say physical disability not handicap

Retirement – do we want to consider it?

After some discussion it was decided to delete retirement.

Lisa said she thought Bereavement in general 3 working days, but if someone lost their spouse 3 days is not very much. It gives the SB the discretion to increase the number of days, so 3 days will stay.

This is important, the SB wants to make sure it is done right so it will continue to be worked on until they feel it has been completed. Dina will make the changes and send out draft #3 to everyone.

2. Begin discussion of Draft Large Commercial Structure Ordinance (SB Draft #1)

Richard did read through the draft that Dina did put together. He said that it does as Dina said, it seems like we are hurry this. They started out with large commercial solar projects and changed it to Large Commercial Projects in general. We don't want to through something together and go before a Public Hearing and not being prepared for it. He feels that there need to be some direction given to the Planning Board on how to deal with large commercial projects including solar farms and need to define it as to what they are regulate and there is gaps, but how to decide in size?

Legal Council does not have time to go over both Ordinances in time that is needed to hold a public hearing and come back the input received sat the hearing. Both the Solar Ordinance and the Large Commercial Ordinance was sent.

Lisa asked if the Solar Ordinance would be a separate one. It has been completed. Dina agreed that it could be a separate. There is time to have a Public Hearing on the Solar Ordinance before Town Meeting. The Public Hearing has to be 2 weeks before Town Meeting so February 24th was set if we need the Public Hearing and the Ordinance has to be published before the Public Hearing.

Planning Board authority was changed in Section 12. This draft was not sent to the Planning Board.

3. Veteran Memorials – Mike Pratt –

Mike said that they have had 3 meetings and made some decisions and some preliminary decisions with the criteria going to be that the person enlisted while a resident of Weld, served within the time frames that the Department of Veterans affairs which they call times of war. They have to have an honorable discharge, personal permission to put their name on the stone. They have contacted an engraver that does for stone in Weld for Sean and has given them a ballpark, but as soon as they have given to him the names and exactly what they want it to say and the design they will give them a quote.

On the back side of the Vietnam Monument, they will have an eagle engraved at the top of the monument and below the eagle it will read

"Persian Gulf Conflicts". The veteran's name will be engraved followed by their branch of service.

In the future there need to be a procedure to keep track of names, etc that will need to added in the future. It was suggested that either the Select Board or the Town Clerk be responsible for this. Every 3 to 5 years this needs to be on the SB's agenda so any names that have been added since this was started can be added. A form will be made for veterans to fill out with the information needed to add their name to the monument and give that written information to do so.

Form available committee printed there and slip into the tax bill

Coming forward will be a sign or plaque given to the Town to be placed at the Town Office that will list of those from Weld that were in the Civil War of 1812.

Carol Conant suggested that an article from the Monument Committee be written and added to the Town Report.

As soon as the quote comes from the engraver the Committee will need half of the money needed to engrave the stones. The Committee are in hopes to have this completed by Memorial Day. There will be a ceremony on Memorial Day and those veterans' names that are being added have been asked to be present at the dedication. Town Meeting is March 9th and there is no authority that can be given for payment for the engraving until the budget has been approved.

There are plans being discussed about the Memorial Day Parade. The committee would work with April for a Parade or Memorial Day celebration.

3. 2022 Audit Draft

- Colleen found a truck listed as an asset that is fully depreciated that we no longer own that needs to be removed.
- There was money in the fund balance in there is money set aside for Kennedy Bridge and in another fund was the money for the Maxwell Road in another category, so he will be asked to move them into the correct category.
- He stated that he was not given any comments on the Management Discussion and Analysis Section. Richard asked Colleen to ask for clarification of what it is.

Town Report Cover – If anyone has any ideas, please let Carol know.

Flaggs in the center needs to be replaced. Steve Conant will get a quote and have it for the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

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

Carol J. Cochran