

Town of Blue Hill
Select Board Meeting
Monday, September 25, 2023
Minutes

Called the meeting to Order at 5:30pm

- 1. Quorum and meeting attendance** – E. Best (Chair), B. Smythe, S. Miller, S. Dooley, J. Dow, M. Rockwell (Treasurer), and members of the public.
- 2. Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes of September 18th** – B. Smythe moved to approve the Minutes, S. Miller seconded. Vote: 5-0 Approved.
- 3. Public Comments** – There were no public comments.

Business

- 1. Public Hearings**
 - a. 2023-2024 Annual GA Ordinance Maximums** S. Miller moved to approve state provided maximums. B. Smythe seconded. Vote: 5-0 Approved.
 - b. Liquor License Renewal – Pub Ciao, LLC/DBA: Blaze Blue Hill (5:45)** B. Smythe moved to approve. S. Miller seconded. Vote: 5-0 Approved.
- 2. Discussion – Arborist for Cemetery** – J. Dow walked with Phil Norris, the Blue Hill Tree Warden. There is tree work that needs to be done. A large limb fell and toppled a headstone, with no damage. There are other trees that need to be trimmed. The cost estimate is \$2100 per day for a contractor to come in with all the necessary equipment. Norris advised he would happily help the Town hire an arborist if asked. J. Dow will talk with the Tree Warden to get things moving.
- 3. Discussion – Plowing Contract** – S. Miller is satisfied with both Ben Astbury's and Gary Runnell's contracts. He reminded the Board that there are other Town roads (Woods Point Road, Curtis Cove Road, and Wharf Road) and Town parking lots that are not covered by these contracts. Ben Adams has offered to plow/sand Woods Point and Curtis Cove roads for free, but S. Miller believes we should pay him. C. Kowalski (Public Works) will be responsible for the parking lots and Wharf Road. B. Smythe will talk with Ben Adams about compensation. S. Miller moved to approve both contracts. B. Smythe seconded. Vote: 5-0 Approved.
- 4. Discussion – Poverty Property Tax Abatement/Deferral Policy** – E. Best spoke to the Board concerning a couple of state programs for citizens over the age of 65. The first allows citizens to stop paying their taxes within income guidelines. It would cause a lien to be placed on the property and accrue interest. The second is a tax rebate in which rent is also qualified. Income guidelines are applicable; it allows for a "creditable" rebate on Maine state taxes. S. Miller mentioned adopting a policy that would require citizens to apply for such programs prior to the Board granting abatements. He also stated the Town should do something similar in which interest is accrued and a lien placed on the property in preference to an abatement, where the tax is forgiven, not deferred. E. Best will investigate the legalities and get back to the Board.
- 5. Discussion – New Town Administrator's first week priorities** – S. Miller said some of the priorities might include: an employee meet and greet; employee one-on-ones and

Select Board one-on-ones. Things on the horizon that she should know about include the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade, Road Reconstruction, Comprehensive Plan, Town Audit, Recharter Accounts, floats, Sol America. J. Dow suggested the Maine Municipal Association Conference. The Board felt they should leave that up to Julie as it would be in her first week of employment. E. Best suggested they would need to get her up to speed on these items and then focus on budgeting for next year.

6. **Discussion – Rainbow Smelt Initiative** – Allen Kratz spoke to the Board concerning an opportunity for restoring Bragdon Brook on Parker Point Road in a partnership with Brooklin, Sedgwick, Penobscot and Surry (and projects in their respective towns). He stated that a multi-site application would be more competitive. He provided the Board with a funding opportunity calendar and discussed the various opportunities in some detail. His focus was on the quickly looming deadline of October 13th for a NOAA Grant. There was discussion around a cost estimate that would need to be completed. Andrew McCullough had done one in December 2022. The Board decided McCullough might be the best bet as he is familiar with the project already. In order to apply for the funding, we need to develop a realistic budget; apply to other programs and work with other towns. When asked what other towns had done, Kratz explained that Surry had provided a biological study; Penobscot is currently being considered for a \$304,000 marsh mitigation grant; and Brooklin had submitted a warrant requested and may possibly utilize ARPA funds. S. Miller moved to approve Kratz's request. S. Dooley seconded. Vote: 5-0 Approved.
7. **Discussion – Heat Pumps and Furnace Repair** – B. Smythe mentioned that the heat pumps were not going to be on the horizon currently. The rebate programs have all been utilized. The furnace for the Town Hall is in need of repairs estimated at \$3,000. The Board voted to have R.H. Foster do the repairs pursuant to their estimate. Vote: 5-0 Approved.
8. **Discussion – Traffic Ordinance Update** – B. Smythe advised that there were many documents pertaining to traffic, and he's pulled 12-13 documents into one 3-page draft for the Board to review. The Board tabled the item until the 10/12 meeting [as Haley Ward should prep the documents].

Department Status Reports

J. Dow advised the Board to go watch the kids play soccer. According to him, the whole Town is showing up for the kids. It's a great success. He also mentioned that B. Adams had finished putting the hoops up at the new basketball area.

S. Dooley mentioned passing various responsibilities, slowly to the new Town Administrator, Julie Atwell. S. Miller mentioned assisting her for a while as she acclimates to her role.

Other Business

1. E. Best mentioned possibly finding a contractor to complete the Town Hall front steps.
2. The Wastewater Treatment Plant has hired bond counsel but now needs local counsel for title work. J. Dow moved to hire Ellen Best's law firm to do this work. S. Miller seconded. Vote: 4-0-1 (E. Best abstained). Approved.
3. There was discussion about a request letter from Anne Rioux for support for a community holiday party, to be held December 3rd. It was agreed to defer a decision until after J. Atwell's employment has begun.

Meeting Updates/Reminders

1. Reminder: Tuesday, September 26 the Falls Bridge will be closed near Wharf Road on, while MDOT installs new underground piping
2. Solid Waste Committee Meeting – Tuesday, September 26 @ 4PM Town Hall
3. Board of Appeals – Thursday, September 28 @ 4pm Town Hall
4. Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee Meeting – Thursday, September 28 @ 4pm (Bass Room) Blue Hill Public Library
5. Select Board Meeting – Monday, October 2 @ 5:30pm Town Hall

Executive Session

Sign Disbursement Warrants

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15pm.