

**Town of Blue Hill
Select Board Meeting
November 1, 2023
Minutes**

Call the meeting to Order at 5:05 pm

1. **Determine quorum and meeting attendance** – E. Best (Chair), S. Miller, S. Dooley, J. Dow, J. Atwell (Town Administrator), M. Rockwell (Treasurer/Tax Collector), members of the public and the press.

Executive Session

1. **Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. §405(6)(C) - Town Attorney**
 - a. J. Dow moved to go into executive session; S. Dooley seconded. Vote: 4/0 Approved.
 - b. Executive Session ended at 5:58. No action was taken.

Business

1. **Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2023** – S. Dooley moved to accept the minutes with J. Dow’s edits; J. Dow seconded. Vote: 4/0. Approved.
2. **Public Comment** – There were no public comments.
3. **Discussion – Proposed Work Force Housing – Darrell Cooper** – Darrell Cooper currently owns the Harborview Apartments here in town. He is applying for a Work Force Housing Grant from the Maine Housing Authority for \$1.5 – \$2 million. He is looking for support from the Select Board in the form of a letter to the Maine Housing Authority. He stated that, “there are many in the area that are too rich to be eligible for assistance and too poor to buy” ...in the current housing market. There is a real need in this community. He proposed to build on adjacent land to the current Harborview in two phases. Phase I would construct 8 units with two- and three-bedroom apartments and phase II would construct another 8 units with two- and three-bedroom apartments. They would be both functional and energy efficient with heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. The cap on rental rates is currently \$1500 for a 2-bedroom and \$1700 for a 3-bedroom. Harborview rates are \$975 for 1-bedroom and \$1150 for a 2-bedroom. Maine Housing will restrict rent levels for forty years.

He plans to utilize local contractors for the work. The application deadline is December 7th and he hopes to break ground in June of 2024. S. Miller stated he would be in favor of writing a strong letter of support stating work force housing is a huge problem in Blue Hill. D. Cooper said he was grateful to have been in Blue Hill for his first project and looks forward to this next project.

4. **Cemetery Rules and Regulations** – Tabled for now.
5. **Sale of Cemetery Plot – Seaside** – Cynthia Becton would like to purchase lot 112 at Seaside Cemetery for \$1,000. J. Dow moved to approve; S. Dooley seconded. Vote:4/0 Approved.
6. **Town Park – Lights** – Tabled for now.
7. **Town Office Schedule** – J. Atwell requested to change the Town Hall hours to Monday through Thursday from 8am to 6pm open from 8am to 5:30pm. She stated that the staff

would be interested in this change and feels that it would allow community members to utilize the town office in the later hours each day. They would like to keep everyone on a similar schedule to cover for paid time off and sick days. The staff also advised that they would be willing to move from a one hour paid lunch to a half hour paid lunch. S. Miller stated that the policy wasn't clear in the language but that he believes it should only be a half hour currently. The Board expressed some distaste for closing on Fridays and wondered if they could be open the full five days and stagger employee schedules to accommodate this. J. Atwell stated they could try to work around this and suggested doing a resident survey to find out what residents might prefer.

More discussion is needed. J. Atwell will have staff gather data to see if we can determine the busy times. She also suggested that this may be difficult or skewed data as there are seasonal swings. The Board recommended cross training for all employees so that anyone of them can take responsibility in case of absences. They recommended looking at the towns of Stonington and Castine as they are currently open five days, like Blue Hill. The Board would prefer to be open five days a week but are willing to have employees scheduled for four days as long as coverage would allow being open.

Department Status Reports

Other Business

1. **South Street Sidewalk Project** – Aurele Goreau from the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) is the project manager for the South Street Sidewalk. The Board would like to invite him to a meeting to discuss the project in a public forum. S. Miller reviewed the lengthy contract specifically looking for the project timeline. He stated that SKS was selected as they were the lowest bidder at less than \$500k; the other bidders were a million plus. S. Miller was unable to find the deadlines but believes the penalty to the contractor is about \$650 per day. He asked the Treasurer how much the Town has paid towards this project. He also wants to understand if the contract was suspended for a winter break.

The Town is 20% financially responsible for the project, but the state is responsible for administering the project. The Board wants to know how much of a voice the Town has. They are supposed to let the Town know if there are any major changes, but communication has been very limited.

2. **Mountain Road Project** – J. Dow spoke about the pre-bid meeting for the Mountain Road project. There were six to seven contractors present. Justine Drake of the engineering firm Haley Ward and Ben Adams, the Town Road Commissioner ran the meeting. There was discussion concerning closing the road and keeping it open. The cost would increase if it were kept open. The Board wanted to know how long the road would be closed for. The contractors also wanted to know if they would be able to utilize the Town's parking lot on the Mountain Road for staging equipment. S. Miller suggested they need to identify how much less it would cost to close the road and how long it would be closed for.
3. **Town Hall Phone Upgrade** – J. Atwell met with Consolidated Communications concerning upgrading the Town Hall phones. There would be a monthly increase of \$100 to rent the phones, but they could be purchased outright for approximately \$3k.

Purchasing would come with a one-year year warranty; whereas, renting would put the responsibility on Consolidated Communications. They would upgrade and/or replace any equipment as part of the \$100/month fee. The contract would be for five years. S. Miller would like to review the data and discuss it further with the Board at a later date.

4. **Saturday, November 4th Special Select Board Meeting** – S. Miller suggested postponing the upcoming meeting until the following week.

Executive Session

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 405(6)(C) – Real Estate – S. Miller moved to go into executive session at 7:07 pm; S. Dooley seconded. Vote: 4/0 Approved

The Executive session ended at 7:22 pm.

Adjourn – Motion to adjourn after warrant signing. Vote: 4/0 Approved.