

**Town of Blue Hill
Select Board Meeting
Monday, October 23, 2023
Minutes**

Call the meeting to Order at 5:30 pm

1. **Quorum and meeting attendance** – E. Best (Chair), J. Dow, S. Miller (online), S. Dooley (online and later in person), J. Atwell (Town Administrator), M. Rockwell (Treasurer/Tax Collector), members of the public and the press.
2. **Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2023** – S. Miller moved to accept the minutes with the following changes: add ‘the Board accepted B. Smythe’s resignation with regret’; add (Aga) ‘noted that the matter is not free from doubt. Brokerage accounts are not FDIC insured but SIPC does provide some protection up to \$500,000’; Item #6 – replace ‘Finance Director’ with ‘Treasurer’. J. Dow seconded. Vote: 4/0 Approved.
3. **Public Comments** – B. Frind spoke to the Board concerning the plowing of the Mountain Trails parking lot. She requested that it get plowed earlier on snow days as the public utilizes these trails regularly and it’s a public health issue. The Board explained the priorities and advised that with the new public works they would prioritize this.

D. Paine of Maine Scape, Inc. addressed the Board concerning the South Street sidewalk project. He advised that the contractor had been let go by the State and he would like to get the project completed prior to winter. There are many safety issues, and the project has been ongoing for two years. He feels that someone should be held accountable and that monies should be forthcoming. The Board advised that the Road Commissioner had spoken with MDOT about taking over the project. E. Best mentioned reaching out to see if they can push the project forward. D. Paine mentioned they had destroyed trees at his Nursery and drove off. He sent a bill for the damages, but it remains unpaid. The Board needs to review the contract with MDOT to see what dates and financial penalties may be awarded to the Town. J. Dow mentioned contacting the MDOT Commissioner and state representatives as the current construction company hired by MDOT are incompetent. They believe the project was scheduled to be completed last year.

D. Paine spoke to the Board about the old South Street Market and that the owner of Blaze had purchased it and provided housing to at least twelve employees in what was a small two-bedroom home. This property abuts his own and they have walked the property lines due to a ‘sewer’ smell. He found a pool of running water that looked like grey water about 6 feet from his property line. He had contacted the Code Enforcement Officer, B. Farnham, who has gone out and inspected the property and contacted the owner. The owner is sending a building manager to take care of the problem and possibly hook into the Town sewer. Currently, it is not on the Town sewer as the previous owner never hooked into it. There was a question as to whether the Town could mandate public sewer. D. Paine believes the DEP would condemn the current system. E. Best said she would contact the DEP. S. Miller agreed that the DEP needs to be informed. There was mention about contacting the Maine Plumbing Inspector and/or the CDC as well.

D. Paine asked the Board when they planned to hire a Town Manager. The Board advised that Julie Atwell had recently joined the Town as the new Town Administrator. J. Dow mentioned that the only significant difference between a Town Administrator and a Town Manager was the ability to hire and fire employees. D. Paine mentioned that in the past there was a Select Board member at the Town Hall daily and right now the Town is missing the ability to come talk about their concerns. J. Atwell advised D. Paine to come and talk to her anytime.

Allen Kratz spoke to the Board briefly concerning the Bragdon Brook project. He said that new grant monies would be available next week.

Business

- 1. Discussion – Proposed Work Force Housing – Darrell Cooper** – D. Cooper has proposed an 18-unit housing facility with 2 – 3 bedrooms each. He is looking for support from the Town. The Board advised that they welcome him to attend a meeting and spoke to the fact that we need housing. They would like to know what kind of support they might be able to offer. This item was tabled as D. Cooper was not available.
- 2. Discussion – Proposed Well Water Testing Day** – J. Atwell met with Alfred May from the State Lab concerning a well water testing event for the Blue Hill community. There are high levels of arsenic found in water samples from this area. Arsenic is a known cause of cancer. They would like to schedule an event sometime in November. They would have the test kits available at the Town Hall for community members to pick up on a Thursday or Friday. The test would be taken on Monday and A. May would have a courier pick them up and deliver them to the State lab the same day.

A. May mentioned that landlords are required to test their water every five years. The Board will discuss and see if there might be a way of offering possible discounts on the fees. The Maine State Housing Authority does have remediation funding for those that do test high. There was discussion concerning a public relations plan and the Board noted that the press was present and this would seem to be a public service.

- 3. Blue Hill Sidewalk Project – Update** – The Board felt that this was thoroughly discussed in the Public Comments.
- 4. Abatement Review** – S. Miller moved to approve an abatement for property located on Map 23, Lot 14, due to the Homestead Exemption removed for 2023 in error; J. Dow seconded. Vote: 4/0 Approved.
- 5. Cemetery Rules and Regulations** – N. Sichterman spoke to the Board concerning the new rules and regulations for the Town cemeteries. His biggest issue was concerning dogs defecating in the cemeteries. He would like to see a rule in place that bans all dogs in the cemetery. E. Best mentioned the lack of enforcement. There was further discussion concerning the rules on planting. S. Miller stated this was to address the maintenance of the cemetery and when weed whacking, public works employees may unintentionally lob off plantings. The Board has recently worked and adopted new rules and regulations for the Town cemeteries and would need to review and make amendments later.
- 6. Planning Board Appointments** – S. Miller moved to appoint Matthew Martin in Mary Alice Hurvitt's position until her term ends in 2024. J. Dow seconded. He is the current

alternate for the planning board. Julie will reach out to Wilson (the Planning Board Chair) and Martin to advise. Vote: 4/0 Approved.

7. **Authorization to Establish Town Brokerage Account** – S. Miller moved to authorize the Town Administrator to purchase Treasury Bills for the Town of Blue Hill. She should deposit \$100 from the Town's general fund into the investment account. Adopt section 6 of the form which concerns Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), to make any necessary corrections, and to adopt section 12. J. Dow seconded. There was discussion concerning having only the Town Administrator and the Treasurer on the accounts and it was decided to add K. Herrick, Town Clerk as a third person. Vote: 4/0 Approved.
8. **Float removals at Town wharf and SBH wharf and new float planning** – The Harbor Master, D. Robertson, spoke to the Marine Resource Committee Chair concerning the removal of floats. They felt that the fishing community would be able to find the volunteers necessary to make this happen. There were funds committed for building new float and there is a great need to make this happen. J. Atwell will contact D. Robertson for further details.

Department Status Reports

1. **Miller: Chart of Accounts** – S. Miller would like to schedule a working session on Saturday, November 4th at 9am for approximately 1 – 2 hours to discuss the chart of accounts and what level of detail the Board is comfortable with. J. Atwell will contact Stonington to get a copy of their chart of accounts and the auditors to see what assistance or recommendations they may have.

Other Business

1. **Porta Potties** – The Porta Potties were vandalized again recently. J. Atwell contacted the vendor, and they will be picking them up for the season. They will not be reinstalled until approximately March. The Board discussed methods to alleviate vandalism and the possibility of building a paddock for them. They also discussed South Blue Hill Wharf and the fact that there are no porta potties currently at that location.
2. **Press Release for Basketball Court** – J. Dow will submit a press release in the next few days about the new public basketball courts.
3. **Select Board Vacancy** – The Board discussed the procedure for a vacancy on the Select Board. It was determined that the Board could request a special election or wait until the the next full Town meeting. They have decided to wait until April.

Meeting Updates/Reminders

1. **Solid Waste Committee Meeting** – Tuesday, October 24 @ 4pm – Town Hall
2. **Town Hall Closing at Noon** – Thursday, October 26
3. **Comprehensive Plan: Chapter Subcommittee** – Thursday, October 26 @4pm – Town Hall
4. **TBD – Select Board Meeting** – Wednesday, November 1 @5:30pm – Town Hall
5. **Falls Bridge Closure** – Monday, November 6 through Sunday, November 22.

Executive Session

E. Best moved to executive session at 7:10 pm; S. Dooley seconded. Vote: 4/0 Approved. Executive session ended at 7:30 pm. There were no motions.

Sign Disbursement Warrants

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 pm.