

**Town Council Meeting
3-25-25**

Open Town Council Meeting: Councilor Lugdon, acting as Town Council chair, opened the meeting. All members were present except for Councilor Ketch, who was excused. Also present was Town Manager Melissa Doane and Fire Chief Eric Gifford.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Wade made a motion to accept the minutes of 2-25-25, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.

Citizens' Request: None

Managers' Report: Melissa stated that the spring cleanup has been scheduled for May 3, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. She reported that in the fall, 72 property owners paid the \$15.00 disposal fee. The cost of the cleanup was \$2,655; therefore, there was a shortfall of \$1,575. Melissa asked the Town Council to consider increasing the disposal fee to \$20.00 for two loads. Councilor Hatch clarified that the increase would help cover a more significant portion of the cleanup costs. Councilor Clemons commented that the fee was still very reasonable. Councilor Wade made a motion to increase the fee from \$15.00 to \$20.00, which would still cover two loads, seconded by Councilor Clemons, voted 4/0.

Melissa stated Richard Campbell did not pay the outstanding real estate taxes owed on the property at Sucy Court, which was subject to automatic foreclosure in January of 2025. The Town Council provided him with an opportunity to make the payments in full within an additional 30 days. The amount outstanding as of today is \$7477.62, which includes the outstanding taxes for 2022, 2023, and 2024. Melissa has prepared a notice of intent to sell, which will be mailed to him, providing notice that if payment is not made in full within 90 days, the town will place the property up for sale through a real estate broker. If the property sells, the proceeds from the sale, minus the taxes owed and certain administrative costs, will be returned to Mr. Campbell. She added that the property must be listed for a minimum of 12 months and the Town must try to get the highest price.

Melissa met with the Maine Forest and Logging Museum. They are interested in learning more about the Alewife Harvest and plan to talk to the Department of Marine Resources to gain further knowledge. Melissa explained that she intends to visit sites where an active harvest is being conducted this spring to assess what is needed for a successful harvest. They were interested in the revenue potential as well as the educational opportunities for their Alewife event, which they have each spring. Melissa also spoke to them about the formation of a dam commission, which would provide them with funds, resources, and assistance with the maintenance of the Blackman Stream Dam located at the museum. As she has explained in the past, she would envision the commission being made up of partners that include Bradley, Clifton, Eddington, the Chemo Pond Association, Department of Marine Resources, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and the museum. Melissa has sent them information on research she has done regarding other Dam Commissions. She intends to meet with them again in June or July.

Melissa attended a court hearing on March 20, 2025, regarding 114 Cram Street. Unfortunately, nothing was done; the judge acknowledged that she did not know what to do, mainly because Mr. Wing was so erratic that she wanted to help him find an advocate. As always, it was a notable display of inappropriate behavior on his part. The judge, however, did encourage the Town to proceed with a property inspection. The municipal attorney's opinion was that the town should seek an independent inspector who holds certification. Melissa has contacted Carpentar Associates of Old Town, she explained the entire situation, and they have agreed to assist. Melissa has also contacted the Town's Licensed Plumbing Inspector, the Code Enforcement Officer, and Chief Gifford; they will also be part of the inspection. Melissa also arranged for law enforcement to be on-site. Melissa also noted that the Town attorney has asked her for documented complaints. She has contacted the neighbors of the property and asked them to submit written documentation highlighting their experience with the occupant of 114 Cram Street and how the condition of that property has affected their property value.

Melissa will begin working on the town report in April. She typically asks the Council for a recommendation for the dedication. She would like to dedicate the Town Report to the Viola Rand School. She has spoken with Heidi Gifford and Matt Cyr, and they both want to do a celebration to honor the school. She would like to ask residents to submit old and new pictures of the school and host them on the Town website. The Town Council was in favor of the dedication and also offered additional support for the school's celebration.

Melissa stated that nomination papers will be available on March 27 for one Town Council seat (Clemons) and one RSU Board seat. The papers are due back on May 6, 2025. Melissa explained that the RSU seat would only be in effect until November, as that is when the term expires. The board member Ms. Kennedy was appointed until the election in June.

Melissa would like the Town Council to approve an expenditure of \$1,440 from the Town Council's surplus. Melissa applied for and received a grant through the Galen Cole Family Foundation; the funds would be used to purchase 48 flags, representing a 50% share. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve the expenditure, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.

Councilor Ketch requested a change in the meeting dates for April and May. Councilor Hatch asked if the entire Council was needed for public hearings, and Melissa stated that only a quorum was required. Melissa noted that moving the dates to every other Tuesday, starting on April 29 and continuing until July 1, would meet the statutory and charter requirements of holding public hearings and two meetings per month. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to have the Town Council meetings on April 8, 2025 as regularly scheduled, April 29, 2025 which will be the public hearing for the final budget, May 13, 2025, May 27, 2025 which will be the public hearing regarding the referendum and June 10, 2025 and June 24, 2025; there will be no meeting on July 1, 2025. The regular schedule will follow, starting on July 15, 2025, seconded by Councilor Hatch, vote 4/0.

Melissa reminded the Town Council that she will be leaving for vacation tomorrow and returning on April 1.

New Business: None

Unfinished Business: Councilor Hatch inquired about an update on the University of Maine students' progress on the ballfield project. Melissa stated she had not had any recent communication with them but would follow up.

Melissa provided the information received from the municipal attorney regarding her proposed changes to the Town of Bradley Dog Ordinance, which she completed in January. The comments included additional language specific to the statute and required information regarding wolf hybrid dogs and animals used in agriculture. However, it was the same as Melissa had submitted. If the Town Council is in favor of accepting this ordinance, she will include it for presentation at the public hearing scheduled for the budget at the end of April. Councilor Wade made a motion to present the ordinance in public hearing for acceptance, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.

Melissa provided a memo to the Council that provided an update regarding the closure of Viola Rand School. She explained that the RSU board voted to close the school. The RSU board will sign the notice of public hearing and referendum paperwork on April 9, 2025. The RSU will hold a public hearing on April 30, 2025, at Leonard Middle School at 6:30 p.m. There will then be a referendum vote for Bradley voters on May 12, 2025, held at the Fire Station from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm, with absentee ballots available starting April 11, 2025. If the voters approve the closure, the RSU budget will continue to be disbursed throughout the RSU. However, if the voters do not approve the closure, the \$315,348.66 cost savings will be the responsibility of only the Bradley taxpayers. Melissa estimates that this amount would incur a tax rate increase of at least \$1.75. Superintendent Cyr asked if the Town would like to share the cost of a mailing to distribute information to the voters. Melissa received a quote today for a 4x6 postcard mailing to be sent to all 04411 zip codes; the cost is \$427.07, which would be shared equally. This mailing would be sent out at the end of the 10-day comment period, which started on March 20, 2025. Councilor Lugdon asked why the voting hours were set for 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Melissa stated that is what is required by statute, and she wanted to capture a time that would be easier for voters who work. She also added that absentee ballots will be available. Superintendent Cyr also noted that the \$315,348 is in addition to the annual RSU assessment. Melissa indicated that she and Mr. Cyr had spoken, and they believe it would be beneficial if the Town Council would support the RSU Board's vote. Melissa prepared a resolution for the Town Council to consider. Councilor Hatch made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 4/0. Councilor Lugdon commended the RSU staff and board for their diligent work. Although the closure was indeed sad, due to declining birth rates and an increase in property valuations, the closure makes budgetary sense.

If the voters do approve the closure, the Town will be offered the building and the property. Melissa has contacted the Town's insurance carrier, and they will be sending a loss control specialist to the property to assess it and provide an estimate of the insurance coverage. Superintendent Cyr has sent copies of recent site inspections, which provide insight into the building's issues. The Council will have to make a decision, and some of the considerations include what to do with the building/property, whether the building will be winterized, left empty, and secured.

2025-2026 Municipal Budget: Melissa stated that she does not have any recent updates. While preparing the Treasurer's Report for February, she noted that there are some accounts in which additional carryforwards may be possible, such as winter salt and sand.

Municipal Warrants: Councilor Lugdon made a motion to accept the municipal warrants as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 4/0.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2025.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made by Councilor Wade, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.