

Town Council Meeting
11/7/2023

Open Town Council Meeting: Councilor Ketch opened the Town Council meeting; all members were present except for Councilor Hatch who was excused. Also present was Town Manager Melissa Doane.

Assessing Agent Mark Gibson-Re-Evaluation Options: Assessing Agent, Mark Gibson was present to discuss re-evaluation options, the Town is currently at 76% of the State of Maine Revenue Service value. He explained that each year a representative reviews the sales that took place in Bradley and compares them to the town's valuation, hence the difference. Due to the difference; residents do not receive the full amount of their exemptions. He stated that he could do a simple factor up; however, it would cause some property values to go much higher than others. His goal and the Town's goal should be to make the margin of difference at a median level. This median level would involve him looking closely at the sales and coming up with a quality rating. Mr. Gibson further explained that land value increases will be different than building value increases and neighborhood values will increase differently. Councilor Wade asked how close the town must be in line with the State value to be at 100%, Mark responded that a 10% variance is allowed. He further explained that if the market swings largely one way in the future he can make that change easily. Councilor Ketch verified that if the Town has a property valued at one amount, for example, \$280,000 and the property sells for \$300,000, this calculates the adjustment, and vis versa if a home is valued for example \$300,000 and sells for \$280,000 the property owner will take issue. Councilor Lugdon asked how the Town valuation affects the revenue sharing. Melissa reported that the revenue sharing is based on the State of Maine Valuation, as well as the RSU funding, and County Tax. Councilor Ketch noted that some bills will increase more than others simply because of their neighborhood, however, the mill rate will be the same for everyone. Melissa added when the last re-evaluation was done in 2009, it was a perfect storm. The revenue sharing had been cut and used to the State of Maine general fund, the voters had approved the fire station construction 2 years prior to the note was due, and the voters had approved joining RSU. While there was an increase in valuation, there was an increase in the budget, causing an increase in taxes. Melissa further stated that even with that storm the number of abatements was minimal; once Mark reviewed the valuations only small changes were needed. Mr. Gibson stated that it would take him 10 to 15 days to do the research and apply the data, he would have the numbers available for the April 1 deadline and the cost would be \$10,000. Councilor Lugdon stated that he did not want what happened in Old Town to happen in Bradley, it appeared that it was done quickly and people were very shocked. Melissa reported that Old Town did have a budget increase which added to the increases. She also reminded the Town Council that when they were doing the commitment, she provided sales comps that were way higher than the town valuations, the sales while crazy in number are real. Mr. Gibson stated that he would recommend that the word get out that a re-evaluation is in process explaining the process.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the minutes of 10/24/2023, seconded by Councilor Wade. Councilor Lugdon stated that he would like the minutes to reflect the discussion that took place with the Rocky Mountain Trail Riders in which it was reported that there is 8 feet of shoulder width on Route 178. After the meeting, he reviewed the area and there are many areas in which there is less than 2 feet; the ATV traffic in that area will be with vehicle traffic. He added that he does not want this request to be a reflection of non-support for the access, he is very much in favor of getting access for Bradley residents to the Milford trail system. Councilor Lugdon further stated that having a

bridge on the Back Mills Road to cross Great Works Stream would be a much better option, but he understood the desire for access sooner. Councilor Wade agreed that there were areas that were less than 8 feet, however, the request from the club was to give support for access. The safety of the access will lie with DOT as they are responsible for that road. Councilor Ketch stated that the Bradley access roads allow for ATVs to travel with the traffic it therefore may be possible on Route 178. The vote to accept with changes was 4/0.

Citizens Request: None

Managers' Report: Melissa reported that Route 178 will be closed from 11/8/2023 to 11/10/2023 for a cross-culvert repair at the end of Pleasant Street. A detour route will allow for passenger vehicles, EMS, and School buses through Pleasant Street and County Road; larger vehicles will be detoured to Eddington. The repair is very close to the Pleasant Street/Route 178 junction; therefore, it will be one lane with a flagger. Melissa also stated that the railroad crossing is going to be done on 11/13/2023 and 11/14/23. The detour will again be through Pleasant Street and County Road, however, both lanes of traffic will be open.

Melissa provided the Town Council with a memo that outlined the status of the solid waste pickup contract. As was noted, Sullivans reported to Melissa on Friday, October 27, 2023, that they would no longer be providing service and they had sold their assets to Casella Waste; those assets did not include the contracts. Melissa was able to secure pick-up service with Neil Bonneville who performed the service prior to Sullivans. Neil has agreed to continue Sullivan's contract which was set to expire on June 30, 2024, for an additional \$4140.00. The contract with Sullivans does have a termination clause that basically states that the Town Council may withhold funds that were needed to secure pick-up due to the contractor's failure to execute. Melissa stated that Sullivans has not been paid for the Spring Clean Up tonnage or October services. It would be Melissa's recommendation that the Town contract with Neil, using the additional funds needed from the unpaid amounts to Sullivans. It would also be Melissa's recommendation that an administrative fee be charged to Sullivans as she spent a great deal of time finding a contractor over that weekend. These fees would total the costs of what would have been due to Sullivans. As she reads the contract the amount due to Bradley could be as high as \$31,500 as there are 35 more Thursdays, 900 dwellings @ \$1.00 per dwelling. Councilor Wade made a motion to move forward with Neil Bonneville's proposal, using the funds left unbilled by Sullivans to pay the additional, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.

Melissa added that Neil has also offered to provide a contract for an additional 3 years if the Town Council would like to move forward with the pricing provided, \$86400, \$90000, and \$91200. Melissa reported that the purchasing allows for Town Council to waive competitive bidding. Melissa would recommend it as she believes it will be difficult to find fair pricing. Councilor Lugdon asked if there was going to be a change in the pick-up schedule. Melissa stated that the day would remain on Thursday and the trash will begin pick up at 7:00 am, the routes may change, therefore trash needs to be curbside at 7:00 am, there will not be any return pick up. Councilor Wade made a motion to accept that contract, seconded by Councilor Lugdon voted 4/0. As required in the purchasing policy, Melissa provided a letter of Circumstances to Waive Competitive Bidding for Curbside Solid Waste Pick Up and Hauling Contract 2024-2027 for the Town Council signature. The letter outlines the abrupt cancellation of Sullivan's Contract and the fair pricing that was received from Neil Bonneville.

Bradley resident Ann Delaware has been working on another booklet "Growing up Bradley". She would like to have the book published. To print 300 books the cost would be \$550.00; \$1.83 per book. If the

Town Council would like to move forward with the print, the books could be sold for \$2.00 per book. Before printing Melissa would use the email list and Facebook to request more stories. Councilor Ketch asked what the timeline for more stories would be; Melissa thought 2 weeks was sufficient. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve the expense for printing, seconded by Councilor Wade, and voted 4/0.

Melissa contacted the municipal attorney regarding 114 Cram Street, there has been no date established for the court date, he assumes that is due to the amount of time it is expected to take. The resident at 108 Cram Street reported that Mr. Wing was summoned to court for littering on December 12. Melissa wrote a letter to the district attorney outlining Mr. Wing's behavior and history with a summons with no prosecution. She plans on attending the court hearing. Town Council commended Melissa in a well-written letter.

The cameras have been installed in the Town Office, Fire Station, and Post Office. The Town Office is online, and the others are expected to be operational by the end of the week. Melissa did note that the one covering the Post Office is in the lobby.

The RSU 34 Facilities Planning Committee met yesterday via Zoom. The only discussion about Viola Rand was that the engineering assessment had been completed and the upgrades needed were estimated to be 4 million dollars. Other items discussed were a decreased in enrollment by 17 fewer students and the increase in students having special needs, the RSU has partnered with PCHC to have a School Base Health center in which students will have straightforward medical needs done at the schools, such as illness screening, sports physicals, and vaccinations.

New Business: The Town Council requested that Melissa review the budget and find funds for the \$10,000 needed for the re-evaluation.

Unfinished Business: Melissa asked the Town Council if they had any comments on the updated foreclosure policy she presented at the last meeting. Town Council asked that she present the document to legal for opinion.

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

Next Meeting: The next meeting was set for November 21, 2023

Adjourn: Councilor Ketch made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Clemons voted 4/0.