

## Town Council Meeting

July 18, 2023

**Open Town Council Meeting:** Councilor Chair Mark Ketch opened the Town Council meeting; all Town Council members were present. Also present was Town Manager, Melissa Doane.

**Review of Minutes:** Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the 7/5/2023 Town Council minutes as presented, seconded by Councilor Hatch vote 5/0.

**Citizens Request:** Christy Perkins provided Town Council information regarding a backpack program that will be on August 23 at Viola Rand School. She is looking for volunteers to work the event and or donate items for the backpacks. She provides the supplies to each student at the Bradley and Alton schools. The cost for each filled backpack is approximately \$13.00 to \$14.00. Melissa will post the flyer on the Town's Facebook page.

**Managers' Report:** Melissa reported that she contacted Maine Municipal Association's legal department to get clarification on the statutes as written in regards to school choice. As they do not provide legal counsel, only interpretation of the laws, the information and guidance were not very helpful. She did however obtain the name of Paula Gravelle who is the Director of School Finance with the Department of Education. Melissa contacted her and Paula agreed the voters should be able to determine if school choice is right for their community. Paula was not aware of any other municipalities that were having increased costs for tuition, however, did note that many school units combine the price with the municipal assessment rather than a separate billing. Paula stated that she would very much like to work with our representatives in crafting a bill that would perhaps offer what is needed. She stated she was not sure she could offer testimony in support of the bill, however, would certainly talk to the commissioner and ask for authorization to do so. Melissa was encouraged and plans on reaching out to Representative Dill and Senator Lyford in early September.

Melissa noted that included in the accounts payable warrant was the bill from Premium Choice Broadband for the \$50,000 in ARPA funds. As is known the funds were used to expand broadband in the Chemo Pond area. The remaining ARPA funds of \$77,745.00 has been designated for the village sidewalk improvements. Melissa called DOT last week for an update on that project; the survey work is still being completed.

At the last meeting, Melissa stated that she had reached out to Robert Wing of 114 Cram Street asking him to contact her as he was once again in non-compliance with the land use ordinance. Mr. Wing responded with a letter that she received on July 12. The letter repeats his previous claims of him filing multiple lawsuits and his refusal to remove the signs. Included in the letter was a statement that his septic system is not working and is filled with water. Melissa has always received the legal guidance that the home cannot be considered a nuisance according to the Maine statute as it did have a functioning septic system that could be used with hand-carried water. The letter prompted Melissa to contact the municipal attorney for further guidance on how to deem the building a nuisance and have the building rehabilitated or a court order to destroy. Admittedly, Melissa has not been through this process and would like to meet with the attorney to formulate a plan. Mr. Hamer is on vacation this week, however

before he left, she did request that a meeting be scheduled with herself and Dean Bennett. Melissa provided documentation received from the attorney and information provided by Maine Municipal Association. The memo from Dean included in the information is dated August 1, both she and Dean presume they will have more legal information and will need action from the Town Council.

On Friday, June 21, Melissa will be filing liens for the 2022 unpaid real estate taxes. Melissa would like to have the Town Council approve the disbursement of the check to the registry of deeds for filing and the USPS for mailing. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve the disbursements, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 5/0.

Melissa provided to the Town Council the ballot for the Municipal Association Annual Election. In the past, the Town Council provided Melissa with the authorization to approve the ballot as presented. As Melissa is the proposed Vice President, a motion to approve the ballot as submitted and signed by the majority of the Town Council would be more appropriate. Councilor Wade made a motion to accept the ballot, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 5/0.

Melissa communicated with Mark Gibson yesterday regarding completing the tax billing, he is still waiting for Trio to complete the updates, he anticipates it will be complete by the end of this week.

**New Business:** Councilor Clemons asked if Melissa had any further information on the senior property tax stabilization bill. Melissa reported that she believed that that program would not be in effect for next year, however, seniors would be eligible for an increased homestead exemption.

Melissa provided a memo to the Town Council that detailed the non-profit requests the Town of Bradley received during the budget preparation for 2023-2024. The Town Council appropriated \$1000 to distribute to non-profits. The Town Council discussed the non-profit requests (Community Health and Counseling \$100, Eastern Area Agency on Aging \$150, Maine Public \$100, Northern Light Home Care & Hospice \$300, Penquis \$7446, Lighthouse \$766 and Maine Forest and Logging Museum \$200). Councilor Ketch asked if any funding had been done in the past for the backpack program, Melissa stated the Council had approved donations for project graduation and turkey baskets in the past out of a recreation account; however, that funding is now completely gone. Councilor Lugdon asked if Melissa had any recommendations regarding non-profit donations, Melissa stated she would very much like to support Maine Forest and Logging Museum and likes the programming that Eastern Agency on Aging offers. Councilor Hatch stated Northern Light Home Care and Hospice receives a large portion of their funding through insurance. Councilor Hatch made a motion to approve non-profit funding of \$250.00 to Maine Forest and Logging Museum, \$150.00 to Eastern Area Agency on Aging, and \$100 to Community Health and Counseling Services, seconded by Councilor Lugdon. Councilor Wade noted that the Northern Light Hospice detailed the services that were given to Bradley residents, he would like to amend the motion to include a \$100 donation to them, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 5/0.

Councilor Ketch asked if there had been any damage in Town due to the heavy rains, Melissa reported there was not. Councilor Ketch also noted that the roadside mowing had been completed today. Melissa added that she may have him come back in the fall to do some bush-hogging in specific areas.

**Unfinished Business:** Councilor Ketch noted that CEO Dean Bennett had provided the Council with a memo regarding the switching station on Route 178, he asked if a start date was known. Melissa stated that Versant had submitted an application to Dean and therefore prompted the memo, she was not sure if a start date had been set.

Councilor Ketch also noted the memo from Dean regarding campers that appear to be living quarters. The memo summarized that he did not see any violation. Councilor Ketch asked if there were a certain number of campers allowed before it was considered a campground. Councilor Wade stated that one camper had been at Spencer's Ice Cream for a long time with no movement. Melissa will follow up with Dean to obtain more information.

Town Council discussed the 395 expansion in Brewer and Eddington which was sparked by comments by Councilor Wade that the Day Road in that area that had been chip sealed is holding up much better to heavy truck traffic than the overlaid pavement.

**Municipal Warrants:** Councilor Wade made a motion to accept the municipal warrants as presented, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Councilor Ketch noted the payment for road work, Melissa provided information that several driveway culverts have been replaced and work has been done on Elm Street where the snow plow turns around. That area is set to be paved as well as the entrance to the absentee voting box. Councilor Wade stated that pavement should be added to the driveway where it abuts Route 178. Vote 5/0.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting was set for August 1, 2023

**Adjourn:** Councilor Ketch made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Clemons vote 5/0.