

**Town Council Meeting**  
**7/16/2024**

**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 motioned to accept the 7/02/2024 minutes as presented, seconded by Councilor Lugdon vote 5/0.

**Citizens Request:** Resident Ann Delaware stated that on Jul 28, 2024, Saint Ann Church will have a 90th-year celebration. There will be a special mass and a brunch in which they will display historical pictures of the church.

**Managers' Report:** Melissa reported that she has been in contact with Greg Harvey, the contractor who plows the municipal roads, and Peter Currier, the contractor who plows the municipal parking lot. Both contracts have been prepared and are awaiting the contractors' signatures. The municipal road contract is for \$55,000 and the municipal buildings plowing is \$12,075. Both amounts are within the budget. Melissa also reported that as she has done in the past, she participated in the State of Maine bid for the salt and received a bid amount of \$77.10 per ton; she has completed the paperwork for the bid approval.

Melissa sent the letter to the prior owner of 43 Highland Avenue providing him 21 days to remove his items. He signed for the letter on July 5, 2024, and picked up the key on July 10, 2024. She has spoken to him to notify him that he is only to be in the property to remove his items and he is not to stay. In addition, she told him that she would be having a permanent lock on the property on July 30, 2024.

Melissa has been in communication with David Huntress who is the engineer that was hired to do the repair work on the Blackman Stream Dam. He has been in contact with Mike Thornton and the project is expected to be completed by July 22. She reminded Town Council that the project had a small amount of work that was needed however it was not completed last year due to high water. Mr. Huntress has suffered a medical emergency and cannot be on-site as often as he would like but will be able to review the work when complete. Melissa intends to visit the museum frequently to monitor the progression.

Bradley resident Ann Delaware presented a check that was given to her from Nancy Nolette for \$200.00 to be used for a donation to the Bradley Historical Committee. Ann would like to have these funds deposited into the Bradley general fund and kept for historical committee events. Melissa requested the Town Council's authorization to do so. Councilor Clemons made a motion to accept the funds that will be used for the historical committee, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 5/0.

Melissa participated in a webinar recently focused on Smart Growth for Small Communities. She became aware of a potential funding opportunity from the Maine Community Resilience Partnership. The funding is focused on assisting communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to clean

energy, and become resilient to climate effects. Some other communities have used the funding to have energy studies completed on municipal buildings, create a heat pump program for low-income households, construct community gardens in town-owned parcels, and create green open space. Melissa has completed the first part which includes answering 71 questions about Bradley, the second phase is a more in-depth essay which she will complete if the Council votes to move forward. The final phases include having a community priority-setting workshop to get feedback for the suggested uses for funding and then finally a resolution by the Town Council. Councilor Lugdon asked if there was a possibility that some funding could be used for the development at the ballfield, Melissa was hopeful that would be the case. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to authorize Manager Doane to move forward with the application process, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 5/0.

Councilor Ketch asked if there had been any update on the ballfield capstone project with the University of Maine. Manager Doane stated she has received confirmation that the project is listed as one for the students to choose. More information will be known in September.

**New Business:** Manager Doane presented 3 options for the Town Council to consider for the 2024-2025 tax commitment. Option 1 was to set the rate at \$11.00 per thousand, use the remaining RSU Surplus of \$54,913, and have an overlay of \$39,783. Option 2 was to set the rate at \$11.30 per thousand, no use of the RSU overlay, and have an overlay of \$43,999. Option 3 was to set the tax rate at \$11.20 per thousand, with no use of RSU surplus, and have an overlay of \$24,289. Melissa further explained that she would recommend a higher-than-normal overlay as the additional funds would be used to offset abatements should there be any. She noted that a re-evaluation had been completed there could be abatement requests. Councilor Wade suggested option 2, as it is always good to have funds in reserve. He further explained that the difference between \$11.00 and \$11.30 was very minimal. Councilor Hatch asked what the RSU reserves had been used for prior. Manager Doane explained that the reserves have been available since the consolidation in 2009, the original amount was \$472,522 and it has been used to offset the RSU assessment. She further explained that it was the only use for the reserves; it could not be used for a specific project for Bradley. Councilor Lugdon requested a review of the history of RSU assessments, Melissa provided the data. Councilor Lugdon reported that the assessments have been consistent with no concerning increases. Councilor Ketch noted that the RSU has been mindful of the budget. Manager Doane agreed stating that there have been hard sometimes unpopular discussions regarding the future of Viola Rand. Councilor Wade reported he had visited Leonard Middle School and there were a lot of improvements being done. Manager Doane stated that Superintendent Cyr has tried to meet with her twice at the school, presumably to discuss the condition and future use. The meetings have not occurred for various reasons, but she is confident one will occur. Councilor Lugdon confirmed that when the RSU does not use the building for educational purposes it will be offered back to the town. Councilor Clemons stated that he would be in favor of option 1. Councilor Lugdon asked what the implications would be to use only \$25,000 of the RSU surplus. Melissa provided that the tax rate would be \$11.20 per thousand with an overlay of \$49,290.

Melissa further added that it is difficult to compare to last year because of the re-evaluation, however, she did do calculations using last year's values, and she would estimate the tax rate would increase from \$16.50 per thousand to \$17.25 with no surplus use. She also noted that the homestead exemption would be \$17,250, not the full \$25,000. Both the RSU and the municipal budget are below the cost-of-

living increase, however regardless of the new valuation, there would be a slight tax increase. Melissa stated she has the new valuation numbers and she has done random testing, the greatest increases are those that have significant land or those that are classified in an improved neighborhood. Councilor Clemons made a motion to set the tax rate at \$11.00 per thousand and to use the \$54,913 RSU reserve, seconded by Councilor Lugdon, vote 5/0. Melissa noted that she will include a letter from Mark Gibson with the tax billings explaining the re-evaluation.

Councilor Ketch made a motion to set the interest for delinquent taxes for the 2024-2025 tax commitment at a rate of 8.5%, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 5/0.

Councilor Ketch made a motion to set the interest rate payable on approved abatements for the 2024-2025 tax commitment as a rate of 4.5%, seconded by Councilor Lugdon vote 5/0.

Councilor Ketch made a motion to set the interest rate payable on prepayments on taxes collected at 0%, seconded by Councilor Wade vote 5/0.

Councilor Ketch made a motion to set the due dates for the 2024-2025 tax commitment as September 27, 2024, and February 28, 2025, seconded by Councilor Lugdon vote 5/0.

**Unfinished Business:** Councilor Ketch made a motion to vote for Melissa Doane and Benjamin Bredmore to the Maine Municipal Association Legislative Policy Committee District 10, seconded by Councilor Clemons vote 5/0.

Resident Ann Delaware asked if there was any update regarding the town line signs. Manager Doane stated that the last she knew they were looking for gold weather resistant paint for them.

Councilor Ketch asked if Manager Doane had received an update regarding the water main and street repair on Boynton Street. She stated she had not, however noticed that there was dig safe work done; she is assuming the Water District will be doing further work, she will follow up with them.

Councilor Ketch asked if there had been any updates regarding 114 Cram Street. Melissa stated she had not received any additional information, however did note the legal bill included in the warrants presented; she believed the total legal for this was up to \$10,000.

**Municipal Warrants:** Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the municipal warrants as presented, seconded by Councilor Lugdon vote 5/0.

**Next Meeting:** Manager Doane will inform the Town Council next week if a July 30, 2024 meeting is necessary. Councilor Ketch noted he would not be available.

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