

Town Council Meeting
July 2, 2024

Open Town Council Meeting: Town Manager Melissa Doane opened the Town Council meeting all Town Council members were present.

New Business: Councilor Lugdon made a motion to nominate Councilor Ketch as the Town Council Chair for FY 24-25, seconded by Councilor Clemons seconded, vote 5/0.

Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve the Treasurer Disbursement for Employee Wages and Benefits and payment for State of Maine Fees, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Melissa further explained that the policy is approved each year, allowing payroll warrants and state fees to be released with one signature of the Town Council. Councilor Ketch also noted that in the event of a meeting not taking place, the Town Council has approved disbursements via email, vote 5/0

Councilor Ketch asked if there was an update regarding the water main break on Boynton Street. Melissa stated that Old Town Water District notified the municipal office that there was a break and they were going to repair it in the morning on June 28. Councilor Ketch stated that there are still metal plates on the road where the repair was. Melissa stated she had not had any further communication with the water district, however, was confident that they would return and repair the pavement. Chief Gifford also noted that the water district had contacted him to let him know there would be reduced pressure and if more would be needed for fire suppression to contact them.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the 6/18/2024 minutes as presented, seconded by Councilor Hatch, vote 4/0 (Councilor Wade abstained as he was not presented on 6/18/2024).

Citizens Request: None

Managers' Report: Melissa reported that she filed the tax liens for outstanding 2023 real estate liens today, there were 38 accounts affected.

Melissa noted that she had provided the Town Council with a letter from the Maine Department of Labor concerning the recent visit by the Department to the Fire Station. As the letter indicates the fire department complies with all required standards.

Melissa reported that the end-of-fiscal year process went very well, she had the closeout done at 3:45 pm.

Melissa also stated that she has contacted assessing agent Mark Gibson and she hopes to have all the information needed to complete the tax commitment for the next meeting which will be on July 16, 2024.

Melissa also provided an update regarding the automatic real estate tax foreclosure of 43 Highland Avenue. She has spoken to the previous owner and he cannot redeem the property. He has requested an opportunity to enter the property to remove his personal property. Melissa spoke with the municipal attorney and was guided that Maine Statute requires a letter be sent to the prior owner by certified mail, offering 21 days to remove personal property. Melissa informed Mr. Coulter of the impending letter, noting that he will be required to sign for the letter and the 21-day timeline will start; she presented the letter to the Town Council for signature and approval. Once the property is removed the Town Council will need to decide on what to do with the property. If the property is to be kept for municipal purposes, an appraisal will be needed and that amount less allowed expenses will be paid to the prior owner. If the Town wishes to sell the property the sale must be done using a real estate agent. The proceeds of that sale less allowed expenses will need to be paid to the prior owner; she noted that the outstanding taxes are estimated to be \$7000.00. Melissa added that she has been to the property a few times, it appears a large amount of household trash has been left so it will be interesting to see how much the prior owner removes. She also noted she had walked the land and was not able to find pins but did note that it did not appear to be wet as previously reported. Councilor Lugdon confirmed that the property was listed on the municipal insurance, Melissa acknowledged that she added it to the policy in January or February. Councilor Wade made a motion to approve the letter presented, seconded by Councilor Lugdon, vote 5/0.

Councilor Ketch confirmed that the tax liens that were referenced were for the 2023 tax year. Melissa stated that they were, the law requires that a 30-day notice be sent within 1 year of commitment, then at the end of the 30 days, a lien is placed on the property, and 18 months from the lien date if left unpaid the property is automatically foreclosed upon.

Councilor Lugdon asked how big the lot was on 43 Highland Avenue. Melissa stated it was 1.47 acres. Councilor Wade suggested that if the property is deemed not to have any value and is torn down, the cost of that could be subtracted from the appraised value. Melissa said that she had asked the attorney about that he responded that an appraisal would be needed and the appraisal would be low because of the condition of the property. The attorney also advised that the Council could go through the process of a dangerous building. These are discussions that are going to happen to determine the best direction forward. Councilor Ketch remarked that the Council had a previous discussion about developing the lot into a cemetery, regulations on that type of development will need to be investigated as well. Melissa stated that the new process would be very interesting, adding that the process before was easy and served Maine municipalities well. Councilor Hatch asked if there had been any discussion with abutting property owners regarding what was happening with the property. Melissa stated she has received inquiries from the abutters and provided them with the information that is discussed at the Town Council meetings. The concern from one property owner was that if it was developed into a cemetery would there be privacy provided, Melissa informed them if that were developed, she would imagine some type of fence or tree line to provide boundaries.

Unfinished Business: Melissa asked the Town Council if they have had an opportunity to review the candidates for MMA's Legislative Policy Committee. Town Council asked if Melissa had any recommendations; she stated that she has worked with each of them and has a great amount of respect for each of them; adding that regardless of the outcome the district would be served well. Councilor

Ketch asked for an overview of what the LPC Committee did. Melissa stated that there are 2 members from each senate district, the advocacy team from MMA brings to the committee bills that will have a municipal impact, and the committee provides directions to MMA on what opinion the advocacy team will take on the bill. In addition, the LPC may draft a bill that will provide a resource or advantage to municipal government. Councilor Hatch suggested that the vote be tabled to the next meeting, the time would provide Town Council members an opportunity to read the profiles provided.

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

Next Meeting: The next meeting was set for July 16, 2024.

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