

Town Council Meeting
August 13, 2024

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

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the minutes of July 16, 2024, seconded by Councilor Lugdon vote 5/0.

Citizens Request: Resident Ann Delaware and Anne Richard requested an update regarding 43 Highland Avenue. Manager Doane stated that the prior owner removed some personal items, however there is still a lot of stuff in the property. The property has been secured again. Manager Doane would like the Town Council to go to the property to decide on what to do next. She added that her recommendation would be that the property be declared uninhabitable and torn down. The Town Council has the authority to condemn the property, as it is vacant it is easier to do; no court order is needed. Mrs. Delaware stated she would like to have an opportunity to see if there are historical items in the home. The prior owner's father was the treasurer of the Town of Bradley for many years. Councilor's Hatch and Wade expressed concern regarding liability. Manager Doane agreed, adding that the property is full of garbage and would not recommend anyone enter it. She further stated that once the Council examines the property, she will contact the municipal attorney for further guidance. This guidance would include the condemnation process, allowing entrance and items to be removed and a what expenses are allowed to be deducted from the appraised value. She explained that the new foreclosure laws require that if the property is sold or kept by the town, any access funds from the value or sale be returned to the former owner.

Resident Ann Richard would like the Town Council to consider selling some of the property to them as they are abutters; their property is 8 feet from line.

Managers' Report: Melissa reported that the tax billing was completed on July 17, 2024. To date we have 6 requests to speak with the assessing agent Mark Gibson. He will be in the office on August 23, 2024, to meet with them. Melissa has fielded about 12 calls regarding the tax billing. She added information to the website which seems to be very helpful. She and April also created a spreadsheet that outlines sales from the last 3 years. That sales data has also been helpful.

Melissa provided a memo to the Town Council regarding the non-profit requests that were made for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Melissa explained that the budget included an appropriation of \$1000, the way in which it is spent is the Town Council's decision. Councilor Hatch stated that he works directly with Welcome to Housing through his work. They provide equipment to elderly people that are coming home from the hospital. They also aid young adults that are aging out of the foster care system. Councilor Clemons indicated that the Chemo Pond Association works with the Lake Stewards of Maine to help maintain water quality. Councilor Ketch noted that the Old Town Museum has 2 cases of historical items on display. Councilor Lugdon noted that a donation should continue to be made to Maine Forest and Logging Museum. Councilor Wade had concerns about donating to the project graduations, because of school choice there are several schools that will likely make requests. Councilor

Hatch stated that it would be wise to determine how many students from Bradley are attending which schools; adding that the donation would be supporting the students. Manager Doane suggested that the Council wait until further into the year to decide on what donations to consider. She will bring back the information later.

Melissa reported that she called around for prices to get the roads crack sealed and had only one response from Mainely Seal Coating the cost is \$14,850 which in line with what was budgeted. She also requested a price to do the municipal, post office, fire station, and salt shed parking lot as a lot of crack exposure. The price to do seal coat and re-stripe is \$14,950. The last time this was done was in 2022. The capital improvement plan calls for every 10 years; however, the condition of the parking lot dictates that it should be done sooner. The funds could be removed from the capital reserves account which has a balance of \$141,410 or instead of doing that, the amount could be removed from the budgeted \$21,000 deposit to be made to the reserves. The deposit would be for FY 24-25 \$6050.00. Melissa further explained that another option was to have at least the cracks in the driveway sealed for an additional \$7000. Councilor Clemons suggested that the entire seal be done, Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve expending the \$14,950, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 5/0.

Melissa stated that she will be installed as the President of the Maine Municipal Association on Thursday, October 3, 2024, at noon. Town Council members are invited to attend. If a member would like to go to Augusta, please let her know and she will prepare the registration.

Presented in the accounts payable warrant is the county tax in the amount of \$228,452.76. It is necessary for the Town Council to sign the assessor's return prepared by the County.

At the last meeting, there was discussion regarding the community resilience partnership. As explained, this program provides an opportunity for actions that will make Bradley more resilient to extreme weather events. The next step is to host a community workshop, in which residents will have an opportunity to provide insight into what things are needed in Bradley. This workshop is scheduled for September 11 at 6:00. Melissa has posted the flyer and is hopeful there will be a good turnout.

The Blackman Stream project has been completed. The payments have been made and the reimbursement has been received from the State. The next step that Melissa would like to attempt is to form a Blackman Stream Dam Commission, she is optimistic that if a representative from each entity involved; Maine Forest and Logging, the Town of Bradley, the Town of Clifton, the Town of Eddington, Chemo Pond Association, Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Maine Department of Marine Resources further repairs or adjustments to the dam can be done to protect the fisheries and the water levels. She has this on her calendar for the fall.

In completion of the project, she learned that DMR has submitted permits to allow the commercial harvesting of Alewives from Blackman Stream. They have been collecting the necessary data and believe this can be done without harming the fisheries. The Town can control the harvest, presumably in conjunction with the Museum as it would likely take place on their property. This is an opportunity for additional revenue to the Town. The Town of Benton received almost \$450,000 from 2009 to 2022. As more information becomes available, she will share it with the Town Council.

Champion the Cure will be using the parking lot on Saturday, August 17 as a stop for their challenge.

The fall clean-up has been set for October 12, 2024. The procedure and times will be in place as in the spring 8-12 and \$15.00 per resident.

Melissa also reported that it does not appear that the Town will be able to do voice of internet using Consolidated Communications. The internet available is DSL and is not fast enough to do the phone service and the regular internet use needed to operate. She met with Spectrum last week and is awaiting a final quote. In addition, she has spoken with HCP, the town's IT vendor, they have a service also available. She hopes to know more by the next meeting. The transition with consolidated unknowingly shut down the phones on Wednesday, August 7 for most of the day. Also, during this transition, Melissa learned that Consolidated is interested in bringing Fidium High Speed to Bradley, the date is however unknown. Councilor Wade also suggested that the Town look into Starlink.

New Business: Councilor Ketch noted that there was information on the Town's Website and Facebook page that requested residents to provide comment on the village sidewalk project. Manager Doane added that there is no actual hearing; the comments are to be provided online.

Unfinished Business: Councilor Lugdon asked if there was an update regarding 114 Cram Street. Manager Doane stated that she had emailed the attorney today to request an update, she did so late in the day, however she will have more information at the next meeting.

Resident Ann Delaware asked if there was an update regarding the town line signs. Manager Doane stated that Kevin Geroux, who is doing the restoration for free, recently had surgery. She has not requested any updated information as he is doing them for free.

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

Next Meeting: The next meeting is set for August 27, 2024. The Town Council will meet at 43 Highland Avenue before the meeting at 5:00 pm. Melissa will request that the Code Enforcement Officer, Dean Bennett be there as well.

Councilor Chair Ketch asked if there were any comments on Facebook. Resident Ed Jackson suggested that people have the opportunity to donate funds for flags, their names would be highlighted in the annual town report. Town Council and Manager Doane agreed that was a great idea. Resident Ruthann Guither asked if there could be a consideration for roadside pick up for the cleanup. Manager Doane stated that was done in the past, however residents from other towns were placing items and the clean up was very costly. She did suggest that the town could possibly hire someone to go around and assist with pick up. Councilor Lugdon suggested that that service be for elderly and disabled.

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