

## **Town Council Meeting November 5, 2024**

**University of Maine Civil Engineering Students:** Students from the University of Maine's civil engineering program were available to listen to the public's suggestions and wishes regarding the development of the ballfield area. The students have taken this project on for their senior year capstone and will present a plan for development to their professors and the Town. Council Chair Mark Ketch invited public members to comment on improving the parcel of land located on Broad and West Street, previously used as a ballfield. Manager Doane explained that the mill in Old Town owned the land; when the removal of the Great Works Dam process started, the Penobscot River Restoration Group gained ownership; the area was used as a construction site during the dam removal, and it is believed that timbers were buried onsite. Melissa further explained that the town gained ownership when the dam removal was complete and that there are covenants within the deed that restrict the use of the land to be "river friendly" and for recreational purposes.

Public members favored developing a walking path on the property's perimeter, including the wooded area. They desired lighting, bathrooms, benches, parking, and a wide path that was easily and safely accessible. Public members also supported the land's development back into a ballfield. Other uses mentioned were a municipal playground, water access, and a gazebo. The priority set by those in attendance was developing a walking path, and further development would be done in stages.

Members of the Town Council and Manager Doane stated that once the plans are developed, it would be necessary to determine how to proceed and secure funding, whether through grants, donations, or taxation. The students anticipate having the first stage of the plans completed at the end of December, though the complete presentation will be done in May 2025.

**Open Town Council Meeting:** Council Chair Mark Ketch opened the Town Council meeting, attended by all Town Council members and Town Manager Melissa Doane.

**Review of Minutes:** Councilor Ketch motioned to accept the October 22, 2024, Town Council Minutes as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade. Two small changes regarding the date of the next meeting were noted via email, and a misspelling was corrected. The vote was 5/0.

**Citizens Request:** Resident Ann Delaware stated that someone had simultaneously taken numerous books from the municipal library. Manager Doane indicated that she had looked at the camera footage and verified that one person took the books, noting that they did not seem like they were doing it mischievously. It was also said that the library has a sign that asks people to take and leave one, but there is no limit as the books are donated and are free for use; the library has been there for several years without issue. Members of the Town Council stated that they would donate books to replenish the library.

**Managers' Report:** Melissa presented the audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, to the Town Council. She asked that the Council review it and let her know if they had any questions or

comments. She added that the fund balance as of June 30, 2024, was \$1,825,249.72, an increase of \$77,471.87 from the prior year.

Melissa presented a resolution asking the Town Council to consider assessing submerged wasteland. This resolve will confirm the agreement that the Town Council made with Jeff Morin regarding parcels located on Tax Map 9 Lots 1-2, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, which will designate them as submerged wasteland and hold an appraised value of \$100 per acre until another full re-valuation is completed. The resolve also notes that the re-evaluation will prompt a discussion of future value. Councilor Lugdon suggested that wording be added to indicate that the designation of submerged wasteland will remain if it is submerged.

Melissa also presented a resolution regarding the Community Resilience Partnership. This partnership is a program offered through the State of Maine that provides funding to municipalities to assist with climate resilience. The first part of the program was a public workshop, which was done on September 11, 2024. This workshop allowed public members to set priorities needed in the community. The priority was developing green space, specifically walking trails, and conserving open space. The resolution is the next step in securing funding for further funding through the Community Resilience Partnership. Councilor Lugdon motioned to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by Councilor Hatch, and voted 5/0. It was noted that the funding opportunity is \$75,000 and would hopefully be obtained to assist with the improvements at the ballfield site.

Melissa presented to the Town Council three policies that the Town is now required to have to be eligible for funding through FEMA. The policies include a Policy of Notice of Nondiscrimination, a Grievance Procedure for Discrimination Complaints, and a Reasonable Accommodations Statement. The policies are derived from a class Melissa was required to take through the Department of Homeland Security. The Department provided templates; however, Melissa did try to customize them to suit the town and the requirements of FEMA. Once the Town Council approves, she will submit them to the Department of Homeland Security. Councilor Lugdon motioned to approve the policies as presented, seconded by Councilor Clemons, and voted 5/0.

Included in the information provided to the Town Council was an agenda for the November 20, 2024, planning board meeting. The planning board tries to meet once per month; this month, a resident requested that the Planning Board consider changes to the animal husbandry provisions in the Land Use Ordinance. Melissa brought forward this information to notify the Town Council that there has been some public discussion on social media and through email; there will likely be public members in attendance. Melissa will be at the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting and plans to have it live on the Facebook page for viewing. Melissa reminded the Town Council that typical changes to the land use go through the Planning Board and are vetted with a public hearing with the Planning Board. The final recommendation from the Planning Board goes to the Town Council and is again vetted by a public hearing. The Town Council has ordinances and policy authority.

**New Business:** Councilor Ketch asked how the Election was going; Melissa reported that she had not been to the Fire Station, which is a good sign that her presence is not required. She believed that over 300 absentee ballots were processed and that there had been a steady number of voters all day.

**Unfinished Business:** Melissa presented an abatement request recommended by assessing agent Mark Gibson regarding the property of Richard Ouellette of Great Works Stream. The abatement was for \$3500 due to the condition being worse than initially listed. The tax revenue loss equates to \$38.50. Councilor Lugdon motioned to approve the abatement as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade, and voted 5/0.

**Municipal Warrants:** Councilor Ketch motioned to accept the warrants as presented and seconded by Councilor Wade with a vote of 5/0.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting was set for November 19, 2024.

**Executive Session:** Councilor Ketch motioned to enter executive session pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405 6a for discussing personnel matters, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 5/0. Councilor Ketch motioned to exit the Executive Session, seconded by Councilor Wade, and voted 5/0.

**Adjourn:** Councilor Ketch motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Wade, and voted 5/0.