

**Town Council Meeting  
December 21, 2009**

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** Oscar Emerson, Audrey Wilcox, Fred Gifford, Lillian Coulter, Nicholas Wood. Town Office staff present, Town Manager Melissa Doane

**REVIEW OF MINUTES:** Councilor Gifford made a motion to accept the 12/08/09 minutes as presented seconded by Councilor Coulter, no discussion vote 4/0 (Wilcox abstained not present at meeting).

**CITIZENS REQUEST:** None-no citizens present (Chief Eric Gifford in audience)

**MANAGERS REPORT:** Manager Doane stated that she has been working on the fiscal year 2010-2011 budget years. She reported that there was no COLA raise this year therefore making for a very difficult budget. A few items that she knows have increased are the cost of water service, the increase is expected to be 30.08% increase on the hydrants and residential water increase is expected to be 16.22%. Manager Doane stated that currently the Town pays 14,900 on the hydrants. The County Tax increase appears to be between \$5000 and \$6000. It is apparent that some tough choices will have to be made this year. Manager Doane will provide a budget to the Town Council on what she thinks is needed and appropriate and Town Council can make the decisions from there. Manager Doane may suggest using some revenue from un-appropriated surplus. She further explained that the Town operates on so little now and the budget is made up mostly of fixed cost such as insurance and contracts, the only items that can be adjusted is staff and road repairs.

Manager Doane reported that the following residents were summons by the Penobscot County Sheriff Office for alleged land use violations:

- Gerald and Diane Roy 650 Main Street
- Michael Hayden 114 Cram Street
- Edward Buck 784 Main Street
- Gerald and Diane Roy Heirs of Chanel Roy 657 Main Street

Manager Doane placed copies of the complaints in the Town Council boxes. The court date for the preliminary hearing is January 15, 2010. She is not exactly sure what occurs at these hearings, however the court only has 15 minute time allotted for each complaint, she is presuming there will be a guilty not guilty plea and another date established for a hearing. To date she has not heard from these residents.

Manager Doane did have a lengthy conversation with Mr. Hayden and Mr. Wing of 114 Cram Street on December 11, prior to the summons delivery. Manager Doane explained that the gentlemen had come to the municipal building in a non-threatening manner and she was able to explain the Towns prospective regarding their letter and concerns. She offered to visit their property on their terms and see if a resolve could be reached before a complaint was issued. Once Manager Doane explained that there was a pending complaint to the court they became upset and were asked to leave. They did leave another letter, which Manager Doane provided copies. At this time there is nothing further to report.

Manager Doane stated that at the last Town Council meeting she had explained that a letter had been sent out to Muriel Besse with pictures attached to assist in her clean up. The letter was returned for an incorrect address; therefore Manager Doane sent another letter providing the same information. Manager Doane reviewed the property, while it is difficult to tell exactly what is on her property; it is Manager Doane's opinion that little to no clean up has occurred. She will therefore report this to the Town attorney and ask for a complaint to be drafted. Code Enforcement Officer, Charles Norburg reported that the Tinkham property was now cleaned up.

Manager Doane reported that Thomas Macho the contractor hired for the lot clearing had returned to the site on December 14 and broke down again on the same day. He has been in direct contact with Manager Doane on a daily basis. Apparently the break down this time was a motor problem. Obviously no funds have been released and Manager Doane feels confident that the site will be cleared, however not in the desired timeline.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Town Council reviewed the mowing bids which were due today at 4:00, six bids were received. The bids were as follows: Blue Collar Yard Pro's Bradley for 7055, Morin Fuel Bradley for 8100 (offered a 3 year contract), Streets Landscaping-Old Town 8350 year 1, 8600 year 2 and 8875 year 3, Hermon Landscaping 10,000 year one and two, Bangor Abatement 12,999 year one (no further contracted offered and Harbor Shore for 23,510 year one (no further contracted offered). Councilor Wilcox stated that references should be checked for Blue Collar and Morin Fuel, Streets a reference check was not necessary as they had worked for the town for 9 years. Councilor Gifford agreed, also adding that Morin should be told a one year contract would be most likely as they would be new to the Town. Councilors Coulter and Wood agreed. Councilor Emerson noted that Morin did not complete the bid package as required; they should fill out the necessary paperwork to be considered.

Manager Doane asked if the Town Council would be issuing year end bonus to the staff, in the past Terry received 150 and Ann received 50, the other staff member, Virginia no longer works for the Town, and Manager Doane added she did not care about a bonus for herself. Councilor Emerson stated that during the Mark Gibson and Jeff Morin incident, Mr. Gibson was considered an employee. Manager Doane stated that was the Town Council chose to treat him as an employee; the attorney had given them that option. The hearings conducted could have been done in open forum should the Town Council chosen to do so. She clarified that Mark Gibson had a contract to provide the services; Councilor Wilcox asked about Charles, Manager Doane stated he was an employee adding he had not received a year end bonus since working for the Town. Councilor Gifford asked if the Town could afford to give the bonus, she stated that they have done so consistently and the funds are taken from the contract account; she added that the bonus are not a budgeted item. Councilor Coulter stated it would be nice to do, Councilor Wood agreed. Councilor Gifford made a motion to give the staff year end bonus, Councilor Wilcox amended to have the bonus be \$250 for the Town Manager, \$100 for Terry and \$50 for Ann.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** Councilor Emerson stated that he had asked the Town Council to review the road before tonight's meeting, Councilor Coulter stated she forgot, Councilor Wilcox stated she had been up there in the summer and it was a mess, Councilor Wood agreed. Manager Doane explained

that she had spoken to Peter Currier regarding repairing West Street. He stated that he felt it was too late to repair as the gravel that was placed down would not compact. He did not offer a price to repair; it is Manager Doane's opinion that the issue be addressed again in the spring. It was added that the road is fair now because of the snow, emergency vehicles can pass easily.

Manager Doane asked if the Town Council had made the consideration regarding the 4 day work week. Councilor Emerson stated he was receptive to the idea and would entertain the 4 day work week, however following the Glenburn model which is Tuesday-Friday, with later hours on Tuesday and Thursday, as that seems to work. Manager Doane stated the only reason she had chosen Monday-Thursday is because the State of Maine currently is closed one Friday a month for furlough days. Councilor Emerson stated he did not see how that would affect the Town of Bradley, Manager Doane stated that the staff frequently calls Motor Vehicle and Inland Fisheries. Councilor Gifford stated he would like to have the office open the 5 days, however if a change is needed to provide better coverage then he would approve the change. Councilor Coulter stated she would like to keep the office open 5 days a week and she did not want the office closed on Fridays, as she feels that is when people get paid and do their errands. Councilor Wilcox stated she was not in favor of a four day work week at all however would be willing to change the hours to 8-4. Manager Doane stated that having the four day work week gives customers and residents more availability to the Town Office, and also may solve the staffing problem that Town has had for several years. She explained that having the four day work week, the town would still have two part-time staff workers each would work half days, therefore if one is sick, has an emergency or on vacation coverage is only needed for a half day. The way the staff is structured now is that one person works 3 full days the other works 2 half days and two full days, adding the 2 half days are really not necessary and she was planning on cutting those out at the beginning of the year. Councilor Wilcox asked why Manager Doane was cutting hours, she stated that the way the office is run now, coverage for two people isn't really necessary, the motor vehicle report does not take as long as it did as the Town is now electronic, payroll is easier as the school is not included and business is slower. She did not feel there was enough work to keep the other hours. Councilor Wilcox asked why now, because the money was budgeted until June 30. Manager Doane stated any monies that is left over in the account can be used to offset the next year budget, she did not feel keeping the hours was the best use of taxpayers money. Manager Doane added that the coverage for the office has always been an issue; it hasn't worked for the 10 years she has been with the Town. It is hard to expect the part-time staff to be available on short notice to cover for sickness or emergencies, vacation can be planned. Manager Doane explained that what happens is that she ends up working the counter, which she doesn't mind however that is not what she is paid to do. Manager Doane added that when the City of Old Town gets there new municipal building things will change drastically here, as they will likely offer plates, their residents will not have to come here, the town office will be serving only Bradley residents. Councilor Wilcox stated that an Administrative Assistant is needed so if something happens to Manager Doane, that other person knows what is going on and can cover and knows what is going on. Manager Doane stated that for \$10.00 to \$12.00 per hour it is hard to find the right person to do that. The perfect solution would be to have a full time person with one part-time. A full time person however will expect higher pay and better benefits and that is something the Town can not afford. Manager Doane stated that Terry now is available to do more work and she will begin learning more. Councilor Wilcox

stated that in the past Terry wasn't interested in more responsibility, Manager Doane stated she has had this conversation with Terry and she is interested now that her workload has changed. She added that things have changed a lot in the office since she has come back; the staff generally knows what is going on and providing Terry with a little more workload her absence would not effect the general operation of the Town. Manager Doane stated that when she purposed this before, she did not have overwhelming support from the staff and therefore did not push hard for the change, however now with the changes that have been made Terry feels it may be a viable solution. Councilor Wood stated he would entertain a 4 day work week, adding he did not want to loose Terry.

Chairperson Emerson stated that it has been proven that a 4 day work week does save money on energy and staffing. He suggested putting something on the sign or website, has he would like to know what the public think about the change, perhaps do a survey. Councilor Wilcox stated that she has done a survey herself and no one has been in favor of closing on Fridays, Councilor Emerson asked what the people thought of extended hours and maybe closing another day, she stated she hadn't asked the that. Manger Doane stated she likes the idea of doing a survey and she would do that and bring the information back to the next Town Council meeting, she would like to have an idea before conducting interviews for the other part time position.

Councilor Wilcox asked if the Code Enforcement Office hours should be looked at, she added that the building market is really low and she is not sure if 15 hours a week at \$20.00 per hour is necessary. Manager Doane stated that she agrees that it should be looked at, adding that Charles is actually authorized to work up to 20 hours per week. Councilor Emerson agreed stating that there is no commercial development in Bradley and residential building is down substantially.

**MUNICIPAL WARRANTS:** Councilor Coulter made a motion to accept warrant 48 in the amount of \$4173.43 and warrant #49 in the amount of \$15,999.28, seconded by Councilor Gifford, no discussion, vote 5/0.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is set for January 5, 2010 at 6:30 pm.

**ADJOURN:** Motion made Councilor Wilcox to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Coulter, no discussion, Vote 5/0.