

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 17, 2020**

Open Town Council Meeting: Councilor Ketch opened the Town Council meeting. Councilors in attendance were Councilor Ketch, Councilor Lugdon, Councilor Richard, Councilor Wade and Councilor Clemons. Town Manager Melissa Doane was also present.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 4, 2020 meeting, seconded by Councilor Wade. Vote 5/0

Citizen's Request: None

Manager's Report: Manager Doane indicated that she had been in touch with Steven Lane, Superintendent of Old Town Water District regarding the water fluoridation issue discussed at the last council meeting. He indicated that Bradley was not in the District's charter, so there is no need to bring it to a referendum in Bradley since there is no action that we can take.

Manager Doane updated the Council on the Ballfield Improvement project. Resident John Milligan had provided a preliminary estimate of a reduced vision of the property, which would include a softball field, a small practice field, and a trail around the property. There is currently material left from the dam removal on the site, as well as an unknown amount buried, which could impact the project. Manager Doane had been in touch with Andy Goode of NOAA who indicated that he is not sure what is left on the site. Due to the proposed plan differing greatly from the anticipated site improvements discussed at a prior council meeting involving residents, as well as a very high cost for site evaluation and planning by an engineer, Councilor Lugdon moved to table discussion on the project for a year, seconded by Councilor Ketch. Vote 5/0

Manager Doane has been in contact with Heidi Gifford of the Viola Rand School who indicated that they have received authorization from Superintendent Walker to do a Bicentennial celebration on May 30th. To help fund this, they have requested a donation of \$400.00 to cover a bounce house rental, snow cone machine, popcorn and face painting. Heidi Gifford has requested a donation of \$500.00 to cover the cost of the Fire Department's pancake breakfast for the celebration. In light of COVID-19 protocol, these activities are contingent upon being able to hold group celebrations. Melissa will be in touch with Heidi to make sure that any rentals of equipment are insured so as not to outlay funds unnecessarily. Councilor Lugdon motioned to provide funding of \$900.00 to cover these events, seconded by Councilor Richard. Vote 5/0

Maine Municipal Association has cancelled meetings for the foreseeable future, so there is no need to change the Town Council Meeting scheduled for April 28th.

Following Governor Mills' protocol, the Municipal Building is currently closed to walk in residents, and will have limited hours for phone activity. All new vehicle, ATV, snowmobile, and boat registrations still need to be done in person. This will require making an appointment to enter the office. At that point, residents will be asked if they are symptomatic, and will be required to use hand sanitizer and proper distancing while the transaction is conducted. Re-registrations can be done online or over the phone. Councilor Ketch noted that the town receives no agent fees for online transactions. The website, townofbradley.net, includes the links for online activities. The answer machine, website, Facebook, and email list will all be updated with office hours as they are determined.

Manager Doane has been in contact with Brian Thurston of Clear View Glass to discuss installing a glass partition on the service counter. The Council expressed their desire to have the added protection, and to design it so that it is still welcoming and not disconnected with the public. Doane will be in touch with a contractor to work in conjunction with Thurston to have the necessary work completed.

Past due tax reminders were mailed last Friday. Due to the closing of the office, tax payments will be credited as of the postmarked date on all mailed tax payments.

Online and phone transactions that are paid by credit/debit cards are processed through the State of Maine's InforME, which charges a 2.5% transaction fee. This fee currently can't be waived by municipalities.

Councilors questioned Chief Gifford about changes in his department. He indicated that he has shut down meeting and trainings until further notice, but that there is no change in their capabilities to handle calls. He will also contact the State regarding burn permits and will update accordingly.

Councilor Wade made a motion to have staff work hours as directed by Manager Doane following State guidelines for COVID-19 mitigation and for her to schedule as she feels necessary, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Vote 5/0

New Business: In response to new health guidelines, Councilor Lugdon asked if there was an ability to waive the gathering of signatures for Council elections. Manager Doane will contact Maine Municipal legal representatives for guidance. Nomination papers are due back on May 4th. Councilor Ketch questioned if the town had the ability to conduct "virtual meetings", but that is not currently allowed per State statute. We will be updated if that changes.

Maine Forest and Logging Museum has sent a sponsorship request for \$125.00. Councilor Wade has generously donated this amount for the second year.

Unfinished Business: The deadline given to Terry Coulter of 43 Highland Avenue regarding his unpaid real estate taxes was March 13, 2020. A certified letter was sent to him on February 5th.

He received notice from the postal service, however he did not claim the letter. As he has not responded to any certified mailings, it would be Manager Doane's recommendation that the Town move forward with the civil service of a letter giving him final notice with a deadline of 30 days from date of delivery. Louis Cates of 6 Parlin St. was served papers on February 13th and are due April 10th.

Councilor Wade has met with Jim Dill, State Senator and RSU #34 Board member regarding school choice questions. Dill feels that the prior Maine Superior Court ruling between Thornton Academy and RSU 21 is totally different than that of Bradley's situation. Councilors expressed confidence that Bradley should move forward, but no motions are made until further details are available. Doane will be in touch with Superintendent Walker before the town commits to any action.

Further discussion was held on the new budget proposal. Councilors discussed that municipal revenue sharing increased from \$115,000.00 to \$170,000.00 which helped close the gap between the budget as written and the self-imposed budget numbers created by the council. There is an increase budget request from the fire department to cover new equipment and increased costs of stipends, water and fuel. Manager Doane indicated that she didn't anticipate drastically reduced agent fees due to office closures so the anticipated amount will remain in the budget. Doane will also revisit the need for the budgeted Ballfield mowing to determine if that item can be removed as the renovations have been tabled for the year.

Manager Doane informed the Council that she anticipates an individual will be present at the next council meeting to discuss installation of a private solar farm in Bradley. The property is accessible through Baker Brook Road in Milford. The presenter plans on selling the power generated to the State of Maine through the PUC bidding process.

Councilor Lugdon asked about the town's sidewalks, specifically in front of St. Ann's Church on Main St. This is the responsibility of the State and if the town were to do repairs, they would need to be done to ADA standards and be maintained as such which would be costly.

Municipal Warrants: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the following warrants, seconded by Councilor Clemons: Vote 5/0

#65 in the amount of \$2591.51

#66 in the amount of \$9049.25

#67 in the amount of \$7403.58

The next Council Meeting is set for Wednesday, March 31, 2020.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Ketch, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Vote 5/0