

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
APRIL 14, 2020  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK LIVE

**Open Town Council Meeting:** Councilor Ketch opened the Town Council meeting. Councilors in attendance (virtually) 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 31, 2020 meeting, seconded by Councilor Wade. Vote 5/0

**Citizen's Request:** none (the "chat" option functionality was open for anyone wishing to participate)

**Manager's Report:** Melissa indicated that things are going well through the COVID-19 office closure. The majority of calls coming in to the office are residents concerned about registering their vehicles. Last week forms were added to the municipal website that will hopefully allow this to happen easily without in person contact. These registrations are being done through the mail as well as email. The spring clean up is still scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Melissa indicated that she felt confident that a safe event can be accomplished. Protective clothing will be worn and residents should be able to be kept at least 10 feet apart. Councilor Ketch indicated that there is still another council meeting before the scheduled clean up so a final determination will be made at that time.

Last week's snowstorm brought down several trees in town and also created power outages. Melissa has been in touch with a contractor and the downed trees have been removed and a damaged culvert will be repaired as well. She feels that the overall cost will be less than \$500.00.

Terry Coulter has picked up his letter providing the notification that he was granted until May 30, 2020 to pay the remaining amount due for his outstanding real estate taxes to avoid further action on the January foreclosure. Louis Cates, owner of the parcel at 6 Parlin Street that was also subject to foreclosure was served on February 13, 2020 and was provided a date of April 10, 2020 to make payment. There has been no communication or payment from Mr. Cates. It is Melissa's recommendation to wait until the first of June to make a determination on what further action will be done with the property. If Mr. Coulter doesn't make his final payment, it may be prudent to place both parties out to bid at the same time. Councilors agreed with this recommendation.

Melissa spoke with Mark Gallagher of EDF Renewables. He will be presenting to the Town Council on April 28<sup>th</sup> information on the proposed solar project on land located off the Baker Brook Road. This will be done via Zoom. Melissa will be requesting that CEO Dean Bennett and possibly the planning board members join the meeting.

Councilors discussed the office closure and how long it was anticipated to be closed. Melissa is waiting for additional guidance from Maine Municipal Association, but reiterated that services are still available to residents via mail and email.

**New Business:** Councilor Wade made a motion, seconded by Councilor Clemons to appoint the following Town of Bradley Election Clerks to a new two year term: Marva Cote-Democrat, Ruthann Lucas-Republican, Ruth Shorette-Democrat and Ann Delaware-Republican. Vote 5/0

Melissa provided information to the Town Council regarding the procedures outlined by Maine Municipal Association Legal department regarding how to cancel scheduled town meeting once public hearings and election warrants have been posted. Rather than go through that process, Melissa recommended that the Town of Bradley annual referendum be rescheduled until July 14. Last week Governor Mills stated that she is considering rescheduling the State of Maine primary as well, though nothing has been formalized as of yet. The public hearing that is required to set the municipal budget and establish the municipal warrant would be scheduled for May 23<sup>rd</sup> or June 2<sup>nd</sup>. With this new election date, the nomination papers would technically be available May 1<sup>st</sup> and due back on June 10<sup>th</sup>, with absentee ballots available June 12<sup>th</sup>. The emergency legislation that was enacted on March 17<sup>th</sup> provides municipalities with the authority to spend funds, essentially having the prior year's approved budget carry forward until a final budget is approved. In addition, elected officials will remain in office until their successors are formally elected and sworn in. Councilors discussed the ramifications of delaying the election. Melissa indicated that contracts for summer, such as mowing and grounds work, are already in place by contract. Changes in wages will not be made until after the budget is approved, and Melissa's contract is part of the appointment process which will still go forward. Other than that, things should continue as is with no issues. Councilor Clemons made a motion to move municipal elections to July 14<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Councilor Lugdon. Vote 5/0

**Unfinished Business:** Budget discussions continued. During the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, Melissa expressed concern regarding the municipal revenue sharing decrease. She provided councilors with a memo from Maine Revenue Service expressing the same concern. In review of the information, Melissa made a recommendation that the decrease the municipal revenue sharing budget item from \$170,000.00 to \$70,000.00. It's also her recommendation to request taking \$70,000.00 from the municipal undesignated fund balance to offset this loss. It would be her expectation that in the fiscal year 2021-2022, municipal revenue sharing will be at the original level, thereby creating a net zero increase in the budget. With this transfer, the increase on the tax rate for the municipal budget would be less than ten cents. Councilor Ketch questioned whether "carry forwards" is a separate warrant article, and Melissa indicated that she will speak to the Maine Municipal Association attorney for further clarification. If the town does

not approve the warrant for the transfer, the funds will need to come from a property tax increase. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to reduce the municipal revenue sharing amount from \$170,000.00 to \$70,000.00, seconded by Councilor Wade. Vote 5/0

Melissa added that there was additional relief funding provided to local governments from the CARES Act, but is only being distributed to populations of 500,000 or more. It was noted that Maine may receive 1.25 billion in funding, however the allocation of those funds is at the discretion of the State and municipalities are not guaranteed any funding.

Councilor Lugdon has been working on some health care plans to help reduce insurance costs for the town's hourly employees. Melissa has been in touch with the Health Trust regarding a budget item to help offset the hourly's staff high deductible costs, though there are some complications there and suggested hiring a service to administer the benefit. Melissa is still waiting for information regarding this service and should have more information by the next scheduled meeting. Councilors determined to wait until the next meeting to make any motions or take any actions, until further information is received.

Melissa will be emailing RSU 34 to let them know of the change in election date, she had previously emailed Mr. Walker to get an update on the previously discussed school choice item, however due to this current COVID-19 situation that will have to be discussed in the future. She will have more information to report at the next meeting. Councilors discussed whether the school budgets were changing and whether there were any savings due to school buildings being closed. More information may be forthcoming at the next meeting. There were some small changes in expenses compared to last year, one of them being a reduction in streetlight expense. Melissa indicated that there has been approximately a \$200.00 per month reduction in street light expense due to the changeover to LED lighting.

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

#71 in the amount of \$6024.00

#72 in the amount of \$148,694.39

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2020.

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Ketch, seconded by Councilor Wade.