

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 20, 2021**

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

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion, seconded by Councilor Wade to accept the minutes of the July 6, 2021 meeting. Councilor Delaware indicated that she thought the Council had voted to contribute \$100.00 to the Old Town Museum that was not included in the minutes. Manager Doane indicated that it had not actually been voted on and councilors agreed to address it in Unfinished Business. Vote 5/0

Citizen's Request: none

New Business: Melissa indicated that several different motions were needed regarding the 2022 Tax Commitment. Councilors reviewed three different scenarios for proposed tax rates. All scenarios contained different overlay amounts. Councilor Lugdon questioned why a larger overlay was proposed while the school budget came down. Melissa indicated that the overlay has held consistent for the last several years and has been used for capital improvements. She indicated that it can't stay flat this year due to voter approval of the budget. A \$10,400.00 overlay is the least that can be approved due to the budget. A higher realized income goes directly to the general fund. Councilors discussed what they felt they could support when speaking with residents.

Councilor Wade questioned whether the overlay funds could be directed to the new proposed fire truck/equipment. Melissa responded that the undesignated balance would not go towards these purchases, as it had already been approved with separate funding. The voters had approved a \$30,000.00 budget item as well as approved leasing terms.

After discussion of the different options, Councilor Lugdon felt that he could support a 15.2 mil rate as a middle of the road option. This would provide \$23,300.00 to the undesignated fund. Councilors agreed and the following motions were made:

Motion to set the tax rate (mil rate) for the 2022 Tax Commitment at 15.2 per thousand made by Councilor Lugdon, seconded by Councilor Wade. Vote 5/0

Motion to set the rate of interest for delinquent taxes for the 2022 Tax Commitment at a rate of 6% made by Councilor Wade, seconded by Councilor Delaware. Vote 5/0

Motion to set the interest rate payable on approved abatements for the 2022 Tax Commitment at 2% made by Councilor Wade, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Vote 5/0

Motion to set the interest payable on prepayments for the 2022 Tax Commitment at 0% made by Councilor Lugdon, seconded by Councilor Clemons. Vote 5/0

Motion to set the due dates for the 2022 Tax Commitment as September 24, 2021 and February 25, 2022 made by Councilor Lugdon, seconded by Councilor Wade. Vote 5/0

Councilors discussed RSU 34 budgeting and what is anticipated in the next year. Melissa will contact RSU 34 Superintendent to provide comment on their spending plans and plans for any surplus. She has also contacted Kate Dufour at Maine Municipal Association to review what options may be available regarding school choice.

Manager's Report: Melissa reported that Dean Bennett, Code Enforcement Officer, has taken a full-time position with the Town of Orrington starting August 1, 2021. He has agreed to stay on for a limited time, however he will not have set office hours. The office will direct inquiries to him via email and phone. He will stop in weekly to check for messages and will make appointments as necessary. He will begin working with the Planning Board in September to finish the Comprehensive Plan and he anticipates it being completed by the end of April. Melissa has spoken to the Town of Eddington and they are not yet sure what they will be doing, as Eddington and Bradley share expenses for the CEO. Melissa will begin advertising the position in September on the Maine Municipal Association website as well as local papers. Councilor Lugdon questioned if in the next budget more funding should be provided. Melissa stated that for a part time position it is a great wage and if shared with another town offers some benefits including health insurance. There is only so much work to do, so it is not realistic to have a full time position. Councilor Wade asked if the position could be shared such as an assessor. Melissa explained it was a possibility, however they have different skill sets. There is a huge void in Maine regarding Code Enforcement Officer, including Aroostook County which currently has 18 openings.

On July 14th, Cindy's computer was replaced and a new router was installed at the fire station. Melissa spoke with the HCP representative regarding the back up. He agreed that the amount of data that we are responsible for is minimal and an external back up is likely sufficient. It will be necessary for us to design a schedule and removal procedure. As was explained previously, we will have two back ups, one in the Municipal Building and one offsite. He felt that the weekly interchange would be appropriate. He did further explain the more costly service with the cloud back up which was \$630.00 initial set up with a \$75.00 per month fee incorporates an encrypted key when the data is sent to the cloud.

Melissa announced the updated website last week. She has not yet received any feedback. The student intern who was recommended from UMaine did not work out. She is an international student who does not currently have permission to work in the United States. Melissa has done all the updates and improvements to the website herself by using online tutorials. The Town was the recipient of Maine Town and City Management Association Intern Grant in the amount of \$1500.00. She has placed an advertisement with UMaine in hopes of finding an intern with the return of students this fall. The Town has a full year to spend the grant. Councilors also suggested Husson University and UTC as a place to advertise.

Melissa provided a sketch of the proposed counter and office set up changes. She received an estimate from Mike Smith to do the counter work and working island in the amount of \$12,500.00. She had asked about networking when HCP was installing the new computer and that estimate is \$700.00. If the Town Council wants to continue to move forward, she will ask Terry and Cindy to look at new desks and shelves for their work area. These improvements don't yet have a time frame as they will be paid for using funds from the American Recovery Plan, which have not yet been received.

The 2020 tax liens will need to be filed this week. Melissa has started the preparation, however the 30 day notice expiration was on July 16th, so she has just started the work. She would like to have authorization to release a check to the United States Postal service for lien mailings and another to the Penobscot County Registry of Deeds for lien filings. She can provide the amount via email with approval to be signed at the next meeting. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approve this action, seconded by Councilor Delaware. Vote 5/0

Maine Municipal Association is in need of the Town of Bradley's approval for the Executive Committee Vice President and Executive Committee Members. As Melissa reported earlier, she was nominated. The official ballot was signed by all councilors.

Peter Currier has agreed to do the winter parking lot plowing for the 2021-2022 winter season for the budgeted amount of \$9,800.00. Town Council voiced their approval and Melissa will forward a contract to him.

Bradley resident and RSU educator, Jon Doty, has started working with the RSU regarding the Community Connections newsletter. Recently the Town Council had expressed interest in some Bradley articles. Melissa would like to know what the interest of the Town Council is at this point, if there is a cost limit they would like to impose, and if any member of the council would like to assist with the preparation of the articles. Councilor Delaware indicated that she would like to present something at the next meeting, so discussion was tabled until then.

Melissa attended the Chemo Pond Lake Association annual meeting on Saturday. The information presented was well received and the Association will be looking into possible

funding opportunities. Melissa did learn from the Maine Forest and Logging Museum that the dam is in worse condition than it was in June. Due to safety concerns, the bridge that was over the spillway had been removed. The recent heavy rain added pressure on the dam that was apparently assisting with holding the timber structure together. Melissa has been in contact with the Department of Marine Resources and they have agreed to work with the engineer who performed the dam assessment to get a cost estimate and priority list. Councilor Clemons indicated that he had just visited the site and the footbridge has been repaired and shored up and appears to be stable.

Unfinished Business: Councilor Wade stated that broadband in town is insufficient and asked what could be done to enhance it. Melissa has scheduled a speaker to address the Council in September who will be able to answer their questions. She has been told that COVID relief funds can not be used for broadband upgrades due to the fact that the Town already has broadband and only towns without broadband are allowed to utilize the funds for that purpose. Councilor Clemons stated that he had spoken to an employee of Verizon and he suggested that the town could purchase the poles and install and service them. Melissa also indicated that if the town purchased poles for this purpose, then they would be responsible for the poles and lines installation and upkeep forever. The Town is not equipped to provide this upkeep.

Councilor Lugdon questioned whether more thought had gone into whether or not to install security cameras at the Municipal Building and Fire Station. Melissa indicated they were approved in the budget, however she has not moved forward. Councilor Lugdon suggested doing it with the office renovation.

Councilor Delaware made a motion, seconded by Councilor Clemons, to approve a \$100.00 donation to the Old Town Museum. Vote 5/0

Councilor Delaware would like to begin work on a Great Works Stream historical booklet through the Maine Community Foundation. She is asking the Town to be a grant and fund receiver of the Community Building and Grant Program to avoid having to establish a 501c3 for only this purpose. The Council was in favor of supporting this project but will want more funding information as she researches it further.

Melissa asked if the August 17, 2021 meeting could start at 5:30 instead of 6:30 as she has an event later that evening. Councilors indicated that they would cancel that meeting, as there are already two other meetings scheduled for August.

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

#5 in the amount of \$4,523.89

#6 in the amount of 6,673.02

#7 in the amount of \$18,472.45

Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2021.

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