

Town Council Meeting
March 15, 2022

Open Town Council Meeting: Council Chair Ketch opened the Town Council meeting all Town Council members were present except for Councilor Delaware who was excused. Also present was Town Manager Melissa Doane.

City of Old Town Ambulance Service: Representatives from the City of Old Town were present to discuss the ambulance serve contract. City Manager Bill Mayo explained that in 2017 the Old Town City Council started to look at the contracted ambulance services in an attempt to balance the service with the revenue. At that time the Town Council determined that they would provide a gradual increase in the contract. The formula is currently based on the ambulance cost divided by per capita. In the past year the city has added a 4th crew, this was needed as staff was forced to work overtime and therefore has become a tool for employee retention. The City of Old Town recognizes that this year's increase is significantly larger, however the additional crew and additional costs associated with the service contribute to the increase.

Councilor Lugdon asked about the insurance reimbursement and billing. Manager Mayo stated that they use a collection agency and collect an estimated 60% of the revenue the remaining 40 % is written off. Councilor Wade suggested that a breakdown be provided detailing the loss of revenue for each town and the loss assigned to the specific town rather than the entire population. He also suggested that it be noted in each town who did not pay so attempts could be made locally to collect.

Manager Doane asked if there had been any consideration to perhaps change the formula to capture perhaps 50% per capita and 50% call volume. She added that in 2017 she and Chief Gifford started looking for alternatives and the quality and effectiveness of the Old Town service was hard to beat. Manager Mayo stated that he believed the Town Council would listen to any considerations. He added that an additional service that contracted towns receive, if when the ambulance is dispatched from Old Town and it is discovered that law enforcement is need, Old Town Police will respond. This in an effort to protect the Old Town staff. In addition, the towns that are serviced by Old Town such as Orono will provide mutual aid to Bradley is for some reason Old Town is not available.

Councilor Chair Ketch asked that if the Old Town Council was to decrease the ambulance budget, would that amount trickle to the contracted towns. Manager Mayo stated it would, however he doubted that the City Council would make any cuts there. The City of Old Town is proud of their Emergency Management Department and recognizes the importance of the service it provides.

There was further discussion regarding the need for increased federal and state funding and insurance reimbursements. Manager Mayo stated that it is the intent of the City of Old Town Ambulance service to offer quality services to the city and the contracted communities.

Review of Minutes: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the Town Council minutes from March 1, 2022, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 4/0.

Citizens Request: None

Unfinished Business: Municipal Budget 2022-2023- Chief Gifford stated that the increase in his budget was due to his addition to 4 new thermal image cameras at a cost of \$3400. He stated that he would like to eventually have all PAC gear which the department currently has 10, have these cameras, however this is start. He also added that the 2015 brush truck has received some damage as it is used in wildland areas. He has added equipment to his budget to increase the height of the bumper to prevent this damage in the future. He added that the other increases are due to items he can't control such as fuel and electricity charges. Councilor Wade asked if ARPA funds could be used to purchase the cameras, Manger Doane stated that according the recent training those funds could be used. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to purchase 4 thermal image cameras and accessories using the ARPA funds, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 4/0.

Melissa reported that the only change she had made to the budget included the increase in revenue sharing that was just released by Maine Revenue Services. With the \$30,000 increase, the budget is \$3966.84 below the budget cap. She did provide information that presented information on the budgetary change if single family dental coverage was added as a benefit for the staff; this amount would represent a \$1080 increase in the budget. Councilor Wade made a motion to add that benefit to the budget, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.

The Town Council further discussed the ambulance contract price and came up with a list of additional questions to ask Manager Mayo. These included why depreciation of almost \$100,000 is shown as a budgetary amount when it is not a cash entry, what is the federal/state funding they discussed, are all calls actually billable and additional data on the debt collection. Melissa stated she will work on getting those to Manager Mayo before the next meeting.

Councilor Waded asked if there had been any updates regarding the fire truck. Chief Gifford stated he had not heard anymore; adding that manufactures are having a hard time with supplies.

Managers' Report: Melissa provided a memo that outlined the latest information regarding ARPA funds, Councilor Lugdon had participated in a webinar as well as Manager Doane. The memo outlined that the municipal attorney had provided guidance in October that the Town Council had received voter approval in June to expend grants or other funds from State, Federal and other resources. The update also included that there is now a standard allowance of up to 10 million obviously not to exceed the award. Thus far the Town Council as dedicated funds for the office remodel, Chemo Pond broadband, conference room streaming and the sidewalk grant. There is estimated to be \$42,000 remaining. Also outlined was not expending the funds through the general budget but as a special purpose so not to change the tax rate.

At the March 1 meeting the Town Council approved the new fee schedule however it was not done in a formal motion. The new fee schedule reflects the updated amounts from the Policy Governing Public Records. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to approved the updated fee schedule as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade, vote 4/0.

At the March 1 meeting Town Council approved offering the abutters of 13 Pine Street and 440 Main Street the properties in which were subject to automatic real estate foreclosure. Those sales have been completed, the deeds were received today and will be processed to the Penobscot Registry at the next meeting.

Melissa provided copies of the Engagement Letter from Dummond Woodsum regarding the school choice change. She found nothing out of the ordinary, she also had our regular municipal attorney John Hammer review the engagement letter and he too found it to be appropriate. Councilor Ketch asked if any information was provided on how the voting would have to work, he questioned if Old Town was required to vote and voted in favor of the phase out, however Bradley voters did not would it still pass. Manager Doane stated that issues such as that would be part of the discovery. Councilor Ketch also asked if a cost estimate was provided, Manager Doane stated she thought it was \$5000. Councilor Lugdon made a motion to enter into an engagement with Dummond Woodsum, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.

The MRC held a Town Hall meeting on March 10. Melissa did not attend, however watched it yesterday. Councilor Lugdon did attend and did provide an email highlighting the meeting. The new items that were discussed was the amount of the stalking horse bid which is approximately 1.5 million. If MRC does become the highest bidder, which is unlikely they will need to finance up to 20 million to get the facility running and operational. MRC staff and officers have been meeting with financial institutions and state agencies. There is also discussion about having some municipalities invest for a discounted tip fee.

Melissa provided an email that confirmed that the additional revenue that the RSU received due to the increased state funding has been placed in the Bradley surplus. That balance is currently \$134,913.07.

Med-A-Vision is the company that manages the employee health reimbursement account. They charge a \$600.00 yearly fee in which we budget for. This amount is automatically withdrawn from the separate checking account that was established. As this amount will not run through warrant process it is necessary for the Town Council to approve in a separate motion. Councilor Wade made a motion to approve the withdrawal, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0. Councilor Ketch asked how this account increases. Melissa stated that the budget amount is flat lined at \$3850 which includes the management fee. If claims are limited the account will continue to grow and perhaps increase the benefit amounts.

Nomination papers for one town council seat, Clemons, will be available on March 31, 2022 and due back on May 10, 2022.

Melissa will be looking for Town Report dedications within the next few weeks. If the Town Council would like to do another Spirit of America tribute that will also be needed.

New Business: Councilor Wade made a motion to accept the quitclaim deed regarding 772 Main Street, tax map 26 lot 1 to release any and all Town of Bradley interest in the property due to unpaid taxes for tax year 2019 municipal lien recorded in Book 15612 Page 119 of the Penobscot County Registry Deeds against Betty Smith, seconded by Councilor Ketch, vote 4/0.

Councilor Ketch asked how the roads were holding up; Manager Doane stated she believed they were fairing well with no complaints. Councilor Wade noted that Route 178 is cracking very badly.

Councilor Ketch asked if the office remodel was complete. Manager Doane stated that there is one piece that needs to be added to her desk but the office was 99% complete.

Councilor Clemons discussed the poor condition of the Bradley Shore Road which was caused by a trash truck on the Clifton side of the road. The road has been posted.

Municipal Warrants: Councilor Ketch made a motion to accept the municipal warrants as presented, seconded by Councilor Wade, Councilor Ketch noted a purchase for carpet. Manager Doane explained that those were rugs for under the desks to prevent damage to floor due to chair movement. Vote 4/0.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was set for March 29, 2022, vote 4/0.

Adjourn: Councilor Ketch made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Clemons, vote 4/0.