Town of West Bath
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 6, 2023

Town of West Bath Select Board:	Kathleen Lavallee, Chair	**- Present**
	Suzanne Andresen	**- Present**
	Madelyn Hennessey	**- Present**
Town Staff Present:	Kristine Poland, Town Administrator Karly Perry, Town Clerk Julia House, Treasurer Steve Renaud, Road Commissioner	
Public:	David Hennessey	

A meeting of the Select Board was held at the West Bath Town Hall on **Thursday, July 6, 2023, at 5:30 pm.**

I. CALL TO ORDER at **5:30 pm**

II. ATTENDANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM – **Yes**

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE WAS SAID.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes:
   a. June 15, 2023
2. Approval of Warrant(s):
   a. Municipal
   b. School
3. Upcoming Board of Selectmen Meeting(s):
   a. TBD at 5:30 pm at the West Bath Town Hall

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved to approve the warrants as presented, seconded by Municipal Officer Andresen. Select Board unanimously approved.

V. SELECT BOARD COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:
None

VI. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. **Policy on Treasurer's Disbursement Warrants, Proposed Renewal**
   Municipal Officer Lavallee stated that these policies are signed annually. Ms. Poland noted that the wage and benefit warrant has been done annually and that the policy for State Fees serves the same purpose and should also be adopted annually.
   Municipal Officer Andresen moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Lavallee to accept the policy as presented. Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Andresen, to amend to adopt both policies. Select Board unanimously approved.

2. **Payroll Service Update**
   Treasurer Julia House announced that the transition to a payroll service has been delayed by the school awaiting discussion with another school currently using the payroll service. Municipal Officer Andresen asked why there is a delay. Ms. House stated that the school has concerns regarding software and the number of journal entries necessary.

Municipal Officer Hennessey asked if Bangor Savings is ready to begin the transition, to which Town Administrator Kristine Poland noted that Bangor Saving still has some work to do on their end. She then stated that the payroll service would alleviate concerns regarding procedure, to which Ms. House agreed that a payroll service would eliminate many issues moving forward.

David Hennessey asked if the auditor would talk to the school, to which Ms. House agreed that they may. She then noted that the Town audit has been delayed due to a lag in state reporting.

3. Personal Property Tax Collection, Request to Abate

Municipal Officer Lavallee reviewed a legal opinion from the Town Attorney regarding personal property collection.

Municipal Officer Andresen asked that proper procedure be followed moving forward, to which Ms. Poland agreed, noting that the current procedure has been in place prior to the employment of any current Town employees.

Municipal Officer Andresen asked for examples of personal property for an auto repair shop. Ms. House noted that the personal property included tools and equipment.

Discussion followed regarding which accounts to abate. Ms. House stated her preference to prepare formal abatement paperwork for the Board to approve at a future meeting. She then noted that the cost of filing a lien may sometimes exceed the tax amount.

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved to authorize the Tax Collector to prepare abatements and notify outstanding 2022 accounts of potential liens. Discussion continued on procedure and which taxes to abate.

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Lavallee, to authorize the Tax Collector to prepare abatements and notify outstanding accounts for 2022 of the lien procedure. Select Board unanimously approved.

4. Policy on Town Committee Procedures, Proposed Amendment

Municipal Officer Lavallee reviewed the redlined policy which has been reviewed by the Town Attorney, noting that language regarding the Select Board liaison has been removed as recommended by the Town Attorney.

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Andresen, to approve the Town Committee Procedures as presented. Select Board unanimously approved.

5. Select Board Rules of Procedure, Proposed Amendment

Municipal Officer Lavallee reviewed the procedures, which include clarification on communication with legal counsel.

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Lavallee, to approve the Select Board Rules of Procedure as presented. Select Board unanimously approved.

6. Job Description Revisions, Review and Proposed Adoption

Municipal Officer Lavallee reviewed proposed job descriptions for Treasure and Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters, and Public Access Officer. She noted that duties performed by the Assessing Agent in the past are now included in the job descriptions for these positions and the Town Administrator position. Amendments to the Town Administrator job description are proposed as well.

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Lavallee to approve the job descriptions as presented. Ms. House stated her concerns with handling personal property due to lack of time and experience. Ms. Poland stated that by her taking on the role of Deputy Treasurer would free up time for Ms. House to address personal property. Ms. House restated that she is uncomfortable handling personal property. Ms. Poland explained that the Assessing Agents will be assessing personal property and that the Tax Collector will be responsible for tracking, which is essentially already being done by this position. Discussion followed on the process for tracking personal property. Municipal Officer Andresen suggested that the process be reviewed in October, to which Ms. Poland stated that personal property is assessed in April. Discussion followed on procedure with Ms. Poland stating the necessity that as the Administrator she be allowed to initiate procedures for the Town Office. Mr. Hennessey recommended allowing administration to move forward. Ms. Poland added that changes can always be made should the office find that procedures are not working. **Select Board unanimously approved.**

7. Purchasing Policy, Discussion

Municipal Officer Lavallee presented the Purchasing Policy for discussion. Municipal Officer Hennessey noted that she was new to the Select Board when the policy was adopted and observed the increased cost of living since its induction. She encouraged the Board to increase limits.

Municipal Officer Lavallee asked the Board if they felt that the policy itself is acceptable aside from the costs, to which the Board agreed that it is.

Ms. Poland stated that her opinion that the Town Office limitations are appropriate and suggested that the Board focus on the limits for Public Works (Section 11).

Road Commissioner Steve Renaud spoke to the difficulty in finding contractors for smaller projects.

Mr. Hennessey recommended allowing the Road Commissioner to approve projects up to $10,000 and that projects above $30,000 require written estimates. He then stressed the urgency in completing road work. Municipal Officer Hennessey agreed and stated that the detail in the Town Meeting warrant has essentially approved the work to be done and recommended allowing the Road Commissioner the flexibility to move forward.

Municipal Officer Andresen recalled a request for road work standards, to which Mr. Renaud confirmed that the Town engineer is in the process of creating standards.

Municipal Officer Lavallee reviewed Mr. Hennessey's recommendations, to which the Board agreed that language should be included for sealed bids. Municipal Officers Lavallee and Hennessey agreed that projects up to $50,000 be allowed with written estimates. Municipal Officer Andresen stated her belief that the increase was too much compared to the previous policy.

Ms. Poland asked that the Board address change order limits, recommended that engineering project change orders be approved if the engineer determines that the change is necessary, and that non-engineered projects over $5000 require Select Board approval, to which the Select Board agreed.

Municipal Officer Lavallee asked how the Town could better track road expenditures, to which Mr. Renaud agreed would be helpful.

Municipal Officer Andresen asked if any progress has been made with road software. Mr. Renaud stated that he is waiting to hear back but has an additional contact who may be interested in assisting the Town.

Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Lavallee, to allow the Town Administrator and Road Commissioner to approve projects up to $10,000, that projects $10,000-$50,000 require three estimates, and that jobs over $50,000 require sealed bids. Change orders for engineered projects are to be approved by the Town Administrator and Road Commissioner. Change orders for non-engineered projects up to $5000 are to be approved by the Town Administrator and Road Commissioner, projects over $5000 are to be approved by the Select Board. Discussion followed on requiring equipment standards for projects. **Select Board approved 2 in favor and 1 opposed.** Municipal Officer Andresen asked that the record show she is strongly opposed.

8. Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail, Proposed Funding Application

Municipal Officer Lavallee reviewed a request for $5000 in matching funds for the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail, noting that Bath and Brunswick each have $20,000 in escrow to cover their portion of the match. The remaining $5000 may be covered by the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust (KELT).

Ms. Poland expressed her support for the project.

Mr. Hennessey expressed concerns regarding trail maintenance.

Municipal Officer Lavallee spoke to community support for the project.
Municipal Officer Hennessey moved, seconded by Municipal Officer Lavallee, to authorize $5000 in funding for the Androscoggin to Kennebec Trail. Select Board unanimously approved.

9. Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Poland stated that the Town Attorney has added a new attorney to the firm. The new attorney brought with them Maine Gravel Services as a client, which will require a waiver from Maine Gravel Services in order to move forward. If a waiver cannot be obtained, the Town will need to seek alternate counsel on matters involving Maine Gravel Services.

Ms. Poland updated the Board on the Town-wide revaluation. Letters have been sent to property owners and appointments will be scheduled next week (July 10-14) for appointments the following week (July 17-21). Discussions will center around assessed values and not the mill rate.

Ms. Poland announced that the hot water tank at Town Hall failed and caused flooding. Insurance was notified and the carpet in the back room was removed. No documents were damaged. A new tank has been installed. Municipal Officer Andresen recommended an alarm system be installed on the tank. Discussion followed on the procedure for this type of event.

Municipal Officer Andresen addressed a letter from Senator Susan Collins. Ms. Poland stated that the letter which references the new fire station to be built in Bath. Ms. Poland sent a letter of support for Bath Fire Department on behalf of the West Bath as a mutual aid town. Municipal Officer Andresen asked that the Town follow up on the progress of the Sagadahoc County communications tower.

10. Future Agenda Items

Municipal Officer Lavallee asked that the Board discuss hiring a Town Planner. Discussion followed on the next meeting date, to which the Board agreed to meet on their regular date of July 20th.

Ms. Poland noted that the revised Bid Policy and personal property abatements will also be discussed, as well as request for bids for Town Office windows.

Municipal Officer Andresen requested that the Board discuss Town assets. Ms. Poland reviewed state requirements for selling tax-acquired properties. Municipal Officer Hennessey noted that many Town-owned properties are landlocked, to which Municipal Officer Andresen suggested that properties be researched for easements allowing access. Municipal Officer Lavallee spoke to the scarcity of public land and suggested that the Board carefully consider whether or not to sell property.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Municipal Officer Hennessey, seconded by Municipal Officer Andresen, moved to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. Chapter 13 §405 (6)(A) to discuss a personnel matter. Select Board unanimously. Select Board entered into executive session at 6:54. Select Board ended executive session at 7:37 pm.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Municipal Officer Lavallee moved to adjourn, seconded by Municipal Officer Hennessey. Select Board adjourned by unanimous acclamation at 7:37 pm.

A true attested copy,

_____

Karly A. Perry, Town Clerk