

TOWN OF ACTON SELECT BOARD MEETING

November 15, 2023

6:00pm

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Winchell, Jr. called the meeting to order.

2. WARRANTS/BILLS

Signed

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Walsh made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Norwood made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 8 meeting; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR WEEKLY UPDATE

Roux extended a public thank you to the Fire Department and the previous Toys for Tots program that the Fire Department ran. They have decided to dissolve the program and what was in a designated Toys for Tots account, \$3,226, has been closed and donated to Neighbors Helping Neighbors to continue to help serve the needs of the community.

Last week the town spoke about offering Dental and Vision benefits – the Treasurer reached out to Maine Municipal to confirm the program and costs. There is no cost to the town. The employees pay 100 percent of the cost. Open enrollment starts today.

McGurty made a motion to implement a dental and vision plan with Maine Municipal, effective January 1, 2024; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

The timeline for the School Town Meeting has been announced and the tentative date is March 19, 2024. Roux advised the town needs to have a conversation if we will join the school and include Town Articles in the School Town Meeting or if the Town will have its own Town Meeting and what the timeline will look like. McGurty questioned the history of the School Meeting dates. Roux provided the following dates for the School Board Referendum:

- May 2, 2023
- April 26, 2022
- April 27, 2021

McGurty continued, questioning the move up to March. Roux indicated Dan was at the recent School Board meeting and may be able to advise.

Norwood indicated the School Board looked at the process and looked at the dates to see when they could complete the budget process the soonest. It was also noted that after the April school break it is more difficult to draw residents.

McGurty would like to see both budgets at the same time and believes it would be advantageous as a resident to see everything together and vote in one meeting.

Norwood stated there was concern combining meetings due to the length of the potential meeting.

Winchell, Jr. continued that we may lose too many residents throughout the meeting, if it is too long.

Roux advised that discussions would continue regarding the timeline for the Town Meeting and the order of events (Zoning, Committee Votes, and Warrants and Articles).

There will be no Select Board Meeting next week as we prepare for our Neighbors Helping Neighbors Thanksgiving Baskets and Dinner.

6. DEPARTMENT HEAD / COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

William Langley, Road Commissioner

All the shouldering has been completed – Peck Road, Buzzel Road and West Shore Drive. There was an issue with the machine and the company will be offering a credit for one day.

The end of Peck Road is washing out: it has been shouldered up to the end and will be ditched tomorrow. Rip wrap will be placed as well. Prior to West Shore Drive on the left, the swamp on the left was blocked up. Trapper Bob was able to get the beavers out and Langley cleared the culvert on Goose Pond Road.

Langley prepared the pad for the Rec shed: he dug the loam off, placed stone and went with a 16x24 lot. Singleton sent a picture of the shed in place.

Winchell, Jr. indicated a slight communication issue with the shed placement. Due to the quick delivery of the shed, placement had to be moved as there was no time to prepare the site for what the committee had voted on. The shed will be moved to the other corner of the field after the parking lot is completed.

7. LIAISON UPDATES

McGurty: Warrant & Finance / Town Finances, APAT, Cemetery

McGurty and Roux met with Michael Corey from APAT regarding the APAT budget and technology opportunities.

McGurty, the Treasurer, and Langley met regarding the A/P scheduling and timeline for invoices to be submitted for processing.

Walsh: Roads & Road Committee, Fire Department, Transfer Station

Walsh met with the Fire Chief last week. They spoke about the budget and trucks as well as manpower for the department. UPF built the tank for the new tank truck. There have been issues with the tank truck: when turning it dumps 50+ gallons of water on the ground which is a hazard. The truck was taken to the dealer for work to be completed. Last week, a technician from UPF and Rosenbauer, as well as a local representative: they relocated the vent at the top of the tank. This was completed right at the station. This fell under the warranty.

Norwood: School Department, Conservation / Forest

Norwood attended the School Board meeting last week: discussion was around the School Budget and timeline, student math and reading scores and the basketball team.

Winchell: Code Enforcement / Planning Board, Recreation Committee, Mary Grant

The Rec shed was delivered to the Rec Field.

8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Traffic Detail - Sheriff's Department

McGurty advised there is a lot of talk on social media and in previous Select Board Meetings regarding the speed of vehicles on town roads. Residents have expressed concerns for safety. The Town would like additional patrolling specifically focusing on traffic enforcement. Roux reached out to the Sheriff and the Sheriff provided a layout of the cost of the additional detail – approximately \$85-\$110 per hour, and the Sheriff provided thoughts on having a full-time deputy for Acton alone (which has been discussed previously). McGurty suggested implementing additional details with the Sheriffs Department, 4-hour shifts, 3-4 times per month.

McGurty made a motion to authorize an additional 12 hours a month (four-hour blocks) for the month of December 2023 for additional traffic details; seconded by Norwood.

Winchell, Jr. questioned the speed radar signs. Roux reviewed last week's discussion regarding the \$500 fee for the company to come out and inspect the sign to see if it can be repaired. The town responded regarding a potential credit that can be applied to the new purchase if the current sign can't be repaired. We are awaiting a response.

Public Comment – n/a

All in favor. Motion carried.

Winchell, Jr. made a motion to approve \$1,000 to cover an inspection and repairs towards the old speed radar sign; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Sebago Technics

The Road Assessment is still out.

The Rec project will be addressed when Sebago Tech comes back out complete the last road; Winchell, Jr. will meet with them.

The Transfer Station is pending a review of the three designs. A discussion last week occurred regarding a public hearing for the Transfer Station design. Walsh to meet Robin regarding the schematic. Roux suggested adding the Transfer Station to the Gym Facility Assessment Public Hearing on November 29.

Robin Ham, Transfer Station Superintendent, suggested reaching out to DEP to get CAP location plans to assist with the placement of roads and design schematics. Winchell, Jr. indicated that the plans do not represent what was initially discussed and suggested that they be addressed with Sebago Tech prior to a public hearing.

Charlie Hydek questioned if the plans will be posted online for review prior to the meeting. Roux advised once the meeting date is set, the plans will be posted online. McGurty continued that once the plans reflect what the town is looking for, a meeting can be set, and the plans can be made public for viewing. Roux confirmed. Walsh will coordinate as the Liaison.

Hydek advised that in the Spring, he provided DEP maps to the town and a PDF map of the layout of where the landfill is and where it is capped. There are no exact survey markers. As a taxpayer, Hydek

requested a copy of the PDF map for his records. Winchell, Jr. questioned, as an engineer, if Hydek would look at the current schematic designs and provide his input. McGurty provided his schematics to Hydek to review.

Winchell, Jr. indicated he will be following up with Sebego regarding the Rec Field. He would like a wetland delineation and a survey (due to the Route 109 project).

C. Mooring Ordinance

McGurty advised we have started discussions regarding a Mooring Ordinance in Acton. Very few towns in Maine have mooring ordinances, but many are looking into having them. As a property owner on the lake, McGurty thinks this would be a good thing for the town to do, due to the number of lakefront homes we have in the town. At this stage we should have this reviewed by legal counsel in terms of what the range of possibilities might be for the town to consider in an ordinance.

McGurty recommends moving this to legal counsel and asking them to outline the range of possibilities for the town to consider and to draft a mooring ordinance for the town. Select Board Members agree.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mark Roy – Budgeting Process

Mark Roy, Roy Accounting

McGurty indicated we have started talking about our budget process and calendar. There is an opportunity now, with the services provided by Roy Accounting, to consider how Roy might approach assisting developing a budget for the town, taking a fresh look at the calendar, potentially integrating the town and school budgets. Also, assist in helping the Select Board Members, Warrant and Finance Committee Members and department heads address issues and concerns that have been addressed over the years, regarding budgeting and putting a new process in place that will satisfy everyone's needs; as well as putting together a transparent and accurate budget for the town.

Roy advised, in general, the process that has worked best is knowing when the town meeting will be and then working backwards to set a time frame: when does the Budget Committee and the Select Board Members need to receive the budget to consider and vote on it; when do the department heads, the Town Administrator, and the Select Board need to present their initial budget.

If the Town Meeting is March 19, 2024, that is a relatively tight schedule. Department heads would need to start putting together their budgets right after Thanksgiving. Roy would provide a workbook to enter numbers. Roy would review and make sure everything complete and makes sense. If there are any questions, Roy will work with the Town Administrator for clarification. McGurty questioned if Roy would be looking at historical trends. Roy advised he would not. McGurty continued, indicating that for the last two years there has been a surplus. Is there a way to capture where the surplus is coming from. Roy advised that once a consistent process is set and a couple years have passed, it will be easier to assess where the surplus is coming from.

Roy has updated the FY'23 Budget as a draft for FY'24: the data needs to be translated from the old system into the into the new accounts for departments. Annual Audited Financial Statements should be viewed by residents and be tied to votes and Warrant Articles. This year's current budget has been reformatted to more consistent categories and object codes.

Additional discussion occurred regarding setting up specific reserve accounts for larger ticket items (i.e., new fire trucks, large road repairs, etc.) and Warrant Articles addressing uses of reserve account funds.

Hydek suggested, when developing these reserve accounts, using lifecycle costs (either maintenance or replacement cost).

The School Town Meeting is held during the week. The Town Meeting is held on a Saturday. Discussion of timeline for the Town Meeting occurred. Roux will discuss with the School Board and Roy to set a date and complete a timeline for processing the budget.

Public Comment:

Joyce Bakshi – Questioned if we need to specify between maintenance and capital expenditure in the budget.

Susan Meehan – Questioned an across the board raise for employees this year: Suggesting merit raises verse across the board raise to all employees. Discussion occurred regarding competitive wage review and compensation.

Phil Caruso addressed questions with regards to the investment policy. At the Warrant and Finance Committee meeting, there was a discussion regarding the investment policy. What investments does the Town currently have? The Town has \$3 million invested in treasury bills (\$1 million with a one-month maturity, \$1 million with a two-month maturity, and \$1 million with a three-month maturity, that continually roll over), held in a brokerage account at TD Bank. There is \$1.5 million in a variable rate treasury fund, that adjusts per the current market rate. There is also money at Partners Bank at a 4.5 percent return. (name) questioned if account statements are available on the Town website. McGurty advised they are not available on the website: they can be. McGurty suggested further discussion at the next meeting.

Lee Robator - As a new member of the Warrant and Finance Committee, tonight was very enlightening. As you are building the budget, setting up a smaller contingency fund at the department level provides flexibility to allow the Town to tighten the budgets and allow the department heads to manage and operate their departments with oversight by the Board and the Town. Then set a larger contingency fund based on the overall budget that gives the Board the capability to handle unexpected expenditures without going to the town for a vote. When looking at the budgets, it would be nice to see a brief narrative of what was behind each line item.

B. Lawn Care Bids

Two bids were received.

Seacoast Property Maintenance:

Town Hall/Safety Building \$120/cut

Rec field \$120/cut

Nature preserve/Lincoln School \$60/cut

Fire tower \$50/cut

Bush hogging at Transfer Station – \$250/cut

All prices include fertilizer.

24 cuts total for the season. \$15,960

Spruce Property Care:

Town Hall/Safety Building
Nature Preserve \$65/cut
Lincoln School \$65/cut

Yearly cost without fertilizer: \$42,750

Yearly cost with fertilizer: \$75,000

C. Abatements

118-029 – Higgins Revocable Trust: Land adjustment from 60-foot frontage to 50-foot frontage, giving a \$262.81 abatement.

147-022 – Hudson: Land area adjusted from 243-ft frontage to 200-ft frontage, giving a \$138.68 abatement.

149-001 - Payeur Family Living Trust: Land value adjusted to reflect the value of combined lot with the abutting lot, giving an abatement of \$332.18.

150-002 – John Perkins: Land adjustment based on the depth of the property in an abatement of \$815.12.

217-007 – Linda Cronin: Land adjustment to reflect the limitations of the parcel, in an abatement of \$982.92.

125-025 – Brian Ferland: Denial of an application for abatement: It has been assessed correctly and no abatement is necessary.

Winchell made a motion to approve the abatements as read; seconded by Walsh. All in favor. Motion carried.

Walsh made a motion to approve the denial of abatement as read; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

D. Liaison Restructure

Roux advised discussions of restructuring is based on the amount of work needed for some upcoming projects and budget constraints.

Winchell, Jr. – Recreation Committee / Roads & Road Committee

McGurty - Municipal Management / APAT / Cemetery Committee

Norwood – School Committee / Conservation & Forest Committee / Mary Grant Committee

Walsh - Fire Department / Transfer Station

E. Resignation

Roux read a resignation letter from the Conservation and Forrest Committee Member Andy Brazier.

Walsh made a motion to accept the resignation of Andy Brazier with regret; seconded by Norwood. All in favor. Motion carried.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

McGurty questioned if there has been any follow up on French Street with regards to the residents' concerns. Walsh reached out to the company and discussed the concerns. The company was not happy about the inability to use the road. Roux will follow up with the resident to confirm the concerns have been addressed.

11. PENDING

- A. Speed Trailer
- B. Facility Assessment / Old Gym Public Hearing 11/29/23 6:00pm

Walsh made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by McGurty. All in favor. Motion carried.

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Website

13. MEMBERS PRESENT: Select Board Chair, David Winchell, Jr., Select Board Members, Tom McGurty, Ed Walsh, and Daniel Norwood, and Town Administrator, Jennifer Roux

14. ATTENDANCE: William Langley, Robin Ham, Charlie Hydek, Mark Roy, Kelly Burgess, Joyce Bakshi, Susan Meehan, Phil Caruso, Dennis Long, Lee Robator, Joe Ruma