

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office

MEETING MINUTES

March 8, 2021 – 7 p.m.

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Members present were: Richard Bates, Chair; Randy Elwell, Jerry Hall, Wayne Sawyer, and Tammy Willey. Also present: Tim Polky, Tara Elwell, Ken Oelberger, Jeff Schroeder, Loreen Meyer, Susan Ellis, Scott Vaitones, and John Falla.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda: The following adjustments were made.

- Letter from Scott Hodgkins regarding Fort Point was moved from Old Business and taken up under Regular Session.
- Final Budget Review was moved from Old Business and taken up under Regular Session.
- Quitclaim Deed was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Session.

- Minutes: The minutes of February 22, 2021, were corrected as follows:

Page 2, 1st paragraph, line 4, change to read: ...advertisement that was **written in** 2016...

Page 2, paragraph 6, line 1, change to read: ...the resume period, **his office would** screen...

Page 3, paragraph 1, line 3, change firehouse to the word **tower**

Page 3, paragraph 5 changes:

Line 3, ... so we do not have to do any **lighting**.

Lines 4 & 5: Delete the next sentence in its entirety.

Page 4, under Budget Review:

Paragraph 2, line 1, change to read: ... answer to the question **as** to why...

Paragraph 2, line 6, delete the last sentence in its entirety.

Paragraph 4, line 1, change to read: Chair Bates **asked again**, ...

Page 5, paragraph 9, line 3, change to: ... **fundraising** could...

Page 7, second full paragraph, line 5, change to read: ...the town was \$27,000 **over budget** on this line.

Page 9, under New Business, paragraph 3, lines 1 & 2, delete words **in** and **, I** then change to read: ... and the sample letters Kelley sent list the reasons...

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, to approve the February 22, 2021, minutes, as corrected. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Letter from Scott Hodgkins Regarding Fort Point: Chair Bates explained Hodgkins' letter had been discussed at the Fort Point Trail Committee meeting and by the Conservation Committee. Bates said he spoke with Oelberger earlier in the day and thought Ken was going to recommend the letter be forwarded to Mark DeRoche, Northern Regional Park, Northern Region Office, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands since the letter dealt with state issues.

Oelberger summarized how the letter came about. The Fort Point Trail committee met with the abutters and during one of their meetings, the committee explained to the abutters that some of their issues were not under the purview of the town or the Conservation Commission and those issues would have to be addressed to the Bureau of Parks and Lands. The Fort Point Trail committee suggested they put their concerns in writing to be forwarded to the state and that is what Scott Hodgkins did.

Oelberger: As I mentioned to Richard today, I thought if people agree that we should forward that on, I would give Mark DeRoche a heads-up call that the letter was coming, how it came about, and then take it from there.

Selectperson Hall thought that was a fair summary of events and his view was the opinions Hodgkins expressed were not necessarily the view of the Select Board. Hall did not know about the CC's views, but he was happy for Hodgkins to send the letter in and express his perspectives; but he (Hall) would like to be sure Hodgkins was not representing them as anything but his perspective.

Oelberger said the CC had not gone through the letter and checked out each of Hodgkin's concerns, specifically. The CC did note the berm was mentioned and it had some deterioration, but they did not look at some of the other issues Hodgkins discussed. Oelberger said, "And he (Hodgkins) didn't bring those issues up during the abutters' meeting."

Selectperson Hall explained that even large state and national parks must deal with the issue of becoming popular to a point where the amount of use they get harms the park. Hall thought that was in essence what Hodgkins was saying and what was happening at Fort Point. Selectperson Hall, "We have no ability to police that. I would be surprised if the state did. But some of the points are worth noting, and it is up to the state to decide whether anything should or could be done about them."

Oelberger asked Selectperson Hall if he would review his email to DeRoche to make sure they are all on the "same page" and are consistent and not reflecting the towns or the Conservation Commission's position. Selectperson Hall said he would.

Chair Bates asked for comments. Polky was okay with sending the letter, "As long as they (the state) know the letter is not the opinion of the town." Chair Bates thanked Oelberger in advance for writing the email and Hall reviewing it. Selectperson Hall thanked Scott Hodgkins for writing the letter and drawing attention to the issues.

- Quitclaim Deed – Wildcat: Chair Bates asked Schroeder if he was present for the Wildcat Quitclaim deed. Schroeder said he was interested in the Wildcat claim as he had a small oyster farm on the St. George river and was interested to hear more about the development of the property as an oyster farm.

Chair Bates summarized the issue. The Wildcat property had been purchased by a company that would be operating an oyster farm business at that site. While trying to get title insurance for the property, the company's attorney discovered issues they felt had not been properly addressed in

1996. In 1996, at that stage, the grout pile/rock pile had been tax acquired by the town. Documented in Book 1985, page 224: Containing 0.7 acres, tax map 219, lot 75, this property was formerly known as Map 27, Lot 75 and on January 25, 1996, the town sold it to the Deneb Corporation of Rockland. The new company's attorney asked the Select Board to sign a Confirmatory Municipal Quitclaim Deed. Chair Bates thought the town must have done this back in 1996 but to regularize it, the attorney requested the Select Board go ahead and issue a Confirmatory Quitclaim Deed.

Selectperson Willey asked if the property was still owned by the town or by the corporation. She said she did not understand who the property currently belonged to. Chair Bates said in 1996, the town sold it to the Deneb Corporation and subsequently, (he did not know the intermediate history) to the St. George Sea Farms, LLC.

Polky, "Back in 1996, the town did turn the property over to the owners. We have been taxing the property owners since then. So, the town hasn't had a claim on it since then. It just looks like we did. Maybe we didn't record the signing."

Selectperson Elwell, "So, whoever owns the old Wildcat Lobster, owns the grout pile." Polky and Chair Bates stated yes. Elwell, "If they own it then we might as well it quitclaim it to them." Polky, "It is just a formality".

Selectperson Hall, "There appears to be some legal ambiguity the title insurance lawyer wants to get cleaned up."

Selectperson Willey, "Will it be owned by the new Wildcat people or still be owned by the corporation?" Chair Bates, "The new Wildcat company. It is just a change of ownership." Selectperson Willey, "So, it is going from the corporation to Wildcat?"

Chair Bates said 1996, he did not know its trajectory but maybe it was still owned by the Deneb Corporation in 2020; he did not know. "Right now, it has been bought by the new company, St. George Sea Farms, LLC. I do not know if there was some intermediate ownership between 1996 and 2021 but since 1996 it has not been owned by the town."

Selectperson Willey, "The grout pile is separate of the Atwood's property?" Polky stated yes, "Nothing has really changed with the Wildcat Lobster pound property. There are a couple of lots that make up that property, but nothing is really changing.

Selectperson Hall, "I think it is accurate to say the grout pile is not 100% on the piece that we are talking about issuing a deed on. It extends into the property by the quarry a little." Polky stated yes. There were no other questions.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall to approve the signing of the Confirmatory Municipal Quitclaim Deed for the property formerly known as Map 27, Lot 75. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Final Review of the Proposed FY'2021-2022 Town Budget: The Select Board did a final review of the budget. A Select Board roll call was taken for each of the 12 sections listed below.

Town Office: Total amount requested is \$644,412.37. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Select Board & Assessors: Total amount requested is \$74,494.02. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Willey. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Planning: Total amount requested is \$121,289.01. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Elwell. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Public Safety - Fire Department: Total amount requested is \$412,836.33. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Animal Control: Total amount requested is \$9,414.13. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Willey, seconded by Hall. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Public Works - Roads & Property Management: Total amount requested is \$673,498.25. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Willey. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Public Works-Solid Waste: Total amount requested is \$579,884.49. The Town Manager recommended tipping fees of \$150,000. The Select Board requested tipping fees of \$160,000. A motion to accept the Select Board's recommended amount was made by Selectperson Willey, seconded by Hall. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

General Assistance: Total amount requested is \$2,500. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Social & Community Services: Total amount requested is \$ 233,780.00. The Town Manager recommended \$2,000 for AIO. The Select Board an additional \$1,000 or \$3,000 total. A motion to accept the Select Board's total amount recommended was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Parks & Recreation: Total amount requested is \$104,993.57. This is the same amount the Town Manager recommended. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Harbors: Total amount requested is \$402,734.01. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Unclassified: Total amount requested is \$110,803.00. This is the same amount recommended by the Town Manager. A motion to accept the amount recommended was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

The proposed budget request is \$3,370,639.18. Chair Bates noted this is \$11,000 more than Town Manager Polky originally proposed.

Revenue Budget: Chair Bates said they want to ensure the numbers that go into the warrant reflect everyone's best guess of what the numbers ought to be. Selectperson Hall and Budget Committee Chair led the review. Selectperson Hall explained the Budget Committee reviewed the revenue budget line by line and they had only one suggested change under Recreation Income. The income had been approximately \$4,000 the last couple of years. This year due to COVID, the income dropped drastically to \$800.00, but it may bounce back next year. They estimated the revenue to be \$3,000 which may be a more realistic number for next year.

Chair Ellis agreed with Hall's statements and added that there was expense planned for summer employees for the summer rec program. She said if the revenue did not look like it would hit those numbers, the expense would go down as well.

Chair Bates asked about the Animal Control income of \$526.00. He thought it was rather precise but much smaller than last year and was it based on past performance? Selectperson Hall stated it was, and it was a run rate calculation. "It certainly is open to question and if someone argued it should be \$1,000, no argument from me."

Polky said he looked at the revenues Selectperson Hall sent out last week. He looked at what Tara Elwell and Terri-Lynn Baines put together on Friday, and he agreed with what he saw and heard. He said, "A lot of the revenue figures are best guesses." Chair Bates thought it was valuable to review the revenue and make the best guesses.

Selectperson Willey asked about the General Assistance reimbursements as there had been quite a change. It showed zero. Chair Bates thought it reflected how difficult it was to give out General Assistance. Polky stated it was difficult to meet the state requirements. Selectperson Willey noted there was a lot of other help out there, too. Vaitones had no comments on the revenue and was good with where the revenues were at. There was no further discussion.

A motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, to accept the sum of estimated revenues for the warrant as reviewed by the Select Board and Budget Committee. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Chair Ellis stated the Budget Committee felt Selectperson Hall, Tara Elwell, Terri-Lynn Baines, and Tim Polky did an amazing job working on the budget, and they agreed with the Select Board's recommendations on both Revenue and Expense.

Scott Vaitones asked the Select Board if they would keep the Budget Committee engaged as they headed towards trying to get the mil rate ironed out. Chair Bates thought as a Select Board, they needed to commit to keeping the budget committee informed as the various parts of this whole process come together. He committed that the Select Board would make a strong effort to keep the Budget Committee informed.

- Communications: None.

- Warrant: The warrant for the week of March 8, 2021, was reviewed. The total expenses were \$142,490.73 with no items considered to be out of the ordinary.

Chair Bates asked about the voided check for Rt. 131, winter roads. Tara Elwell stated Kalloch was issued two checks by accident and she had to go through a process in the accounting system to correct the error. She said, "The amount shown on this week's Department Summary is not supposed to be there, but it will also be on the next warrant." She explained that Kalloch was not paid twice, but only paid once.

The warrant and other documents will be signed electronically.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Tim Polky. Polky said he was doing better and should be back to work in a week or so. He was working from home remotely and was on the phone but not in the office. Chair Bates said he was glad Polky was making good progress. Because the Town Manager had been out of the office, Tara Elwell gave a report.

Audit. Fred Brewer was at the office on Friday and Monday to work on the town audit. She said there was only one item that needed to be sent to him and hoped he would have the audit completed in a few weeks. Then at some point, he would be back and give his report to the Select Board.

Posted Roads. A lot of people had been calling about posted roads.

Review of Building Permits. Bob Gingras, Assessing Agent, and his son planned to be at the town office for three days to review the building permits for the last year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Board of Appeals: Selectperson Willey reported the Board of Appeals met on March 4, 2021, at 7 p.m. The Janet Wirth (Old Woods Farm) appeal was withdrawn since there was no jurisdiction for the appeal. Willey thought this would still be an ongoing issue, but nothing at the town level.

Chair Bates added Wirth realized the particular issue did not concern her. CEO Brackett had denied the building permit to the new owner. Late in the afternoon, Wirth and her attorney decided to withdraw the appeal. By the time attorneys agreed on the withdrawal, the meeting had to take place, but the appeal was quickly resolved to be a non-issue.

- Conservation Commission: Selectperson Willey reported the CC met on March 4, at 4 p.m. Becky Delaney from Jackson Memorial Library joined the group to discuss the path they want to repair. When Delaney gets ready to do that, the CC will try to help her repair the path.

With all the wind, there are a lot of blowdowns on the footpaths which will need to be cleaned up. Some are rather large and those will have to be taken care of professionally.

They discussed the Fort Point Trail boundary survey and Scott Hodgkins' letter.

The CC has an educational program scheduled for April 22; more information to follow.

They discussed Sea Level Rise (SLR) and the CC is working with the SLR committee on that issue.

The CC discussed solar energy. They are still talking with the school about future solar energy and how the school could do that most affordably with the best results.

The CC discussed electric cars and asked the question, "Someday in the future did St. George want to have a charging station for electric cars?" It was noted that Robert Skoglund has a charging station at his house if anyone needs a charge.

The Georges River Land Trust is finishing the updates with the resource maps and the new maps will be coming soon. Chair Bates noted there was a \$525 check to the GRLT last week and asked if that was for the maps. Selectperson Willey stated it was.

Oelberger added that the resource maps are now on the town website and they will be picking up the paper copies this week. He said the Knox County EMA printed the maps for them, and they got those for free. The CC has another meeting with Michael Felton on Friday, March 12 to talk about potential solar for the school. It is not panels for the school but signing up for a community solar subscription. The initial indication is that it could save them \$4,000 a year initially. The school is getting a second proposal from another company as well.

- Budget Committee: Selectperson Hall stated the Budget Committee had gone through the expenses and revenues and was in good accord with the opinions of the Select Board.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on February 23, 2021, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

- The application to install two dormers at 33 Cottage Road on the land side was voted complete; satisfying the ordinances, the application was approved.

The application to expand the deck and add a second-floor balcony at 5 Third Street (Craignair Inn) was considered; the applicant was asked to return to the next meeting on March 9 with answers to various issues.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Liquor License – Randolph Deutsch, dba East Wind Inn located at 21 Mechanic Street.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall to approve the application for a liquor license for the East Wind Inn. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Chair Bates reminded the Select Board of the public meeting scheduled for 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 11, 2021. This is to get public input on qualities and requirements for a new town manager. Tara Elwell noted that to date, 25 or more people from the public have asked for the zoom information.

At 8:06 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson
Select Board Recording Secretary