

## ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

### St. George Town Office

### MEETING MINUTES

March 22, 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, Chris Williamson, Lynna Pallas Henderson, Merle Rockwell, Greg Soutiea, Loreen Meyer, John Falla, David Barrett, Mark Bartholomew, and Betsy Welch.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

#### REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda: The following adjustments were made.

- JML Budget Request was moved from Old Business and taken up under Regular Session.
- Town Manager Search with David Barrett of the MMA was moved from Old Business and taken up under Regular Session.
- Marshall Point Grant - Letter from Merle Rockwell was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Session.
- Craignair Inn Request for Extension of License was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Session.
- Letter from Superintendent Michael Felton Regarding the MSU Budget was added to New Business.

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

Page 2, paragraph 3, line 4, change to read: ...Hodgkins was **not** representing them...

Page 3, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, line 1, change to read: ...had been **tax acquired** by the town.

Page 3, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, line 2, change to read: ...Containing 0.7 acres, **tax map 219, lot 75, this** property...

Page 6, correct name from Gringras to **G**ingras

A motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, to approve the March 8, 2021, minutes, as corrected. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Jackson Memorial Library (JML) Budget Request: Chair Bates stated he received a letter from Lynna Henderson regarding Jackson Memorial Library's method for how they calculate their request for town funding and emailed the letter to the Select Board. Henderson and Chris Williamson represented JML for tonight's discussion.

Henderson noted she and Charlie Merrill met with the Select Board and Budget Committee (February 22nd) and a lot of good questions were asked about JML's budget, the financing, and how the library calculates their request (of a donation) from the town. Henderson's understanding was JML had asked for a blanket amount of money from the town (\$50,000) the last few years and that was basically how it was done in the past. Henderson said after discussing this with Merrill, they decided to ask the Board, "Would the town be more comfortable if the library based their request on how much they needed after they drew down on

their available endowment funds?" Henderson noted that every year the endowment funds would be different, but she asked if that was a more reasonable way to calculate what the library asked for. Henderson, "To take their endowment funds (a percentage of it) and then from that ask for money that is needed instead of working the other way around?"

Chair Bates asked the Board if this was something to explore or to keep with the existing plan?

Elwell: I don't dispute the programs and how good the library is for the town. I just think \$50,000 is a lot of money, and I feel it is going to keep going up, and up, and up. I feel the library could do more to raise money to try to offset some of the expenses, so the town does not have to keep paying this kind of money.

Willey: If they can use that formula and reduce the amount of money the town gives, that would be great and lock it in, so it doesn't go over the \$50,000.

Hall: I think there is something to be said about predictability. If we stay with the \$50,000 level and the monies from the endowment fund are not enough and there is a shortfall then that puts more pressure on raising money outside. I am in the leave it alone category but I don't feel strongly about that.

Sawyer: I am sort of with Jerry on that. Being involved with other nonprofits that have endowments that have to struggle and figure out how to access that money and which way is best to use it, etc., can get very confusing; but it is also easier to fall back on a predictable source. I know this has not been a very good year to have any kind of fundraiser going on at the library for various reasons and not just for Covid, but let's try to pick up the pace in another year in terms of fundraising and involvement in the community. We are very fortunate to have the library that is doing its best, and especially during Covid, being very creative in ways to do that. I applaud them.

Chair Bates: My concern is that at the moment, the Select Board has no say in the way you do your investments, and I am concerned that if we were to get into a relationship where we start looking at your investment income and the success of that, we would be wanting to get involved, I suspect, in how you are doing your investments. I think that is not something that we want to be involved in, so I think I am in with the majority tonight. I think it is interesting to know about some of the ways you are looking at this, but my inclination is to leave things alone and not complicate it with the town's involvement.

Hall: I had some follow-up questions with Charlie Merrill. He and I have been back and forth, and I haven't circled back with him to try to get the understanding that I wanted to get related to the nature of the statement, but I still intend to do that. But I do want to draw the line where you just drew it, Richard. I don't want to be stepping over that line and making suggestions on how they do things, I just want to understand the way they are reporting it.

Chris Williamson said he sits on JML's finance committee and volunteered to attend as Merrill was away. "The Library Board knows the Select Board has every right to ask them questions as they are coming to the town for support. It is legitimate to ask if there are other ways we could

be doing things for the town; could we be using its resources differently? I don't think the Select Board wants to get into the library's endowment foundation. By no means, am I suggesting that you do not have a legitimate reason to ask them (JML) questions."

Williamson explained the study Merrill did of similar towns and the amount of funding the libraries receive in town support. Chair Bates thought the Board was cognizant that many other towns the size of St. George had much smaller libraries without the same scope of services. Williamson stated, "Bottom line is that there are lots of towns that are putting in more than \$50,000 and the number does not seem to be out of line."

Bates said St. George was fortunate to have the library it does, and the library was fortunate to have its endowment. He thanked Henderson and Williamson for their input on this issue.

Select Board consensus was to not change the way the funds are requested from Jackson Memorial Library.

- Marshall Point Lighthouse Grant Request: Merle Rockwell and Mark Bartholomew represented the Marshall Point Lighthouse Committee. Rockwell explained the request. "It is critical we get a generator to protect the historic property of the Marshall Point Lighthouse, the barn, and the summer kitchen. Several weeks ago, there was a storm. A tree fell and took the power lines down. The entire artifact collection was in danger of freezing because every part of the building was at approximately 30 degrees.

"As a destination and an important valuable resource to St. George, we have as a committee of Marshall Point Lighthouse, an obligation as stewards to protect the historical property as well as the artifacts in it. I have applied on behalf of the Marshall Point Lighthouse Committee and the property to the Maine Community Foundation for \$10,000 which would be the cost of purchasing (a generator) and most of the installation." Rockwell said the committee got quotes last August for approximately \$9,000 but it would likely cost more due to inflation.

Rockwell said all the necessary work for the grant application had been done. "All we need is for the Town of St. George to approve the application request. The town owns the property, so you have a say in all of this and that is why we are here. The Historical Society is our fiscal agent, but the town owns the property."

A motion was made by Selectperson Willey, seconded by Elwell that the town agrees to accept any grant money from the Maine Community Foundation for the purchase and installation of a generator at Marshall Point Lighthouse. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

Chair Bates stated Maine Community Foundation would need documentation in the Select Board minutes that the Board voted on this issue. Chair Bates said he would also write Rockwell and the Lighthouse Committee verifying the motion and the results of the vote.

- Town Manager Search: On March 11, the Select Board held a Zoom meeting asking for feedback from the public on the qualities and requirements for the new town manager. Chair

Bates stated at tonight's meeting with David Barrett of the MMA, the Select Board would discuss the qualities and requirements they felt were necessary for a town manager and what they would like placed in the advertisement.

Barrett recommended they start their conversation by looking at the Board's priorities. What particular skills and expertise would the Select Board be looking for in a Town Manager? Over the next 3 to 5 years, what was this person going to be charged to implement as they serve as Town Manager?

Chair Bates summarized some of the discussion on qualities and requirements the public had at the March 11 meeting.

- A Town Manager who can fit in with the town ways. We are not looking for a radical change. Have continuity.
- The town has a large summer population. How could the summer residents be more involved in the town?
- Climate change issues and understanding the significance of it.
- Managing the diversity in the town. Recognizing as a town we have a wide age range and a wide socio-economic spread. The mix of people from away, retirees, people in the fishing business, etc.
- Exact roles for the town manager. What are the duties the town manager should have to do? The terminology comes up about "hats." Whether the new town manager needs to have the transfer station hat, the local health officer hat, or the EMA Director hat.
- A town manager who has good administrative skills; who can manage the staff; who can manage the volunteers; and who can work with the townsfolk.

Chair Bates said he received three emails after the Thursday meeting and forwarded those to the Select Board.

1. Peta vanVuuren repeated her comments about having a good manager.
2. Debbie Wheelock wanted to understand whether the town manager would have to live in town. She was concerned that home prices were high. She asked if it was essential the town manager live in town. (The town charter states the town manager does not have to live in town.)
3. Scott Vaitones thought the new town manager should have a strong financial background. (This may depend on the abilities of the new Finance Director.)

Selectperson Willey: This town is a fishing village and I think the person should have an understanding of how that works and be able to communicate and work with the fishermen. Possibly a candidate that if not living in the area would be from Maine and understand the features of small-town and community living. And to understand the town has a K-8 school here, and that the town pays tuition for 9-12 high school students to attend other school districts.

Barrett felt that as far as the finance side, regardless of the abilities of the Finance Director and the school in town, the town manager still needed to know what was going on and be able to look at those things from a bigger picture. Barrett, "The town manager needs to have this 20,000-foot view and say this doesn't look right, and to ask what this is, and be able to work with the Board on that."

Selectperson Hall: There were a couple of people who advocated for a heavy emphasis on being a health officer. I think the town needs a generalist because of the various departments in the town, the amount of money spent in some of those departments, and the complexity of them, e.g., solid waste, roads and property, the fire department.

Selectperson Hall thought it seemed unlikely they would hire someone who had the amount of in-depth knowledge that Polky had in all those areas. The issue of having somebody who was a good manager, who could delegate, who had some knowledge in those areas would be important, but he would advocate against necessarily having a specialist in one area and being completely deficit in all the other areas.

Barrett thought a small-town manager's job was the ultimate generalist job as it was a never-ending stream of different job categories.

Selectperson Willey: The town might not be so much involved in this, but the fire department and the ambulance association are attached to the office. It is not a separate building. It is all one unit, and the person might be involved if something was going on. A lot of towns have a separate town office, a separate fire department, and EMT (unit), but St. George is one big giant pot.

Selectperson Sawyer: I have had the privilege of working with two of the best town managers this town could have hoped to have had. We are not going to replace them. We are going to get a different town manager, but we certainly aren't going to be able to replace them. I think we may have to lower our expectations somewhat. With Tim, we had the benefit of lore and law. We have stories, present, and past. Whoever we get now is not going to have those skills. They can be a generalist, but they are not going to have the skills that Tim and/or John had. The Board needs to remind themselves, maybe constantly, that we are not going to replace him. We can do our best to find a generalist but, we need to understand what a generalist is compared to Tim and John.

Chair Bates asked if Barrett had seen any generalists in the applicant pool for the town of Corinth. Bates, "Is the Select Board searching for the impossible? How improbable is the search going to be?"

Barrett: They were not at all generalists. There were a couple of engineers, a couple of strictly finance people, and 30 people who were not qualified at all. If you are hiring somebody who had experience before, they are going to be a generalist by nature. They are not going to have the history, the past lore, or knowledge of the town, but those people are trained to learn that. Every different town they go to, they have to do that all over again.

Barrett: It is really about finding somebody who has the management skills, finance skills, supervisory skills, communication, and interpersonal relationships so they don't have to learn those but can spend their time looking at the particulars of St. George, the community's expectations, the Board priorities, and trying to figure out what it is the community is looking for in terms of its future.

Selectperson Willey thought it would be nice if the person were economically conservative.

Barrett and the Select Board discussed what the composition and contents of the advertisement should be. Barrett stated the advertisement would be written in a general manner and similar to the draft from five years ago. The ad should not be so specific that potential candidates self-select out of the search.

Selectperson Hall: The other thing people have mentioned is personality. The ability to have a good way with people is critically important. We are looking for someone who is going to come in here and work with the great team the town already has. (Selectperson Sawyer agreed.)

Chair Bates asked Tara Elwell if she could post another notice online (regarding the Town Manager search) that says "Following up on the public meeting of March 11, if you have comments you would like to make on this topic, please send them in."

Barrett suggested they put in the ad the number of employees the town manager would be supervising to give candidates a sense of the scope of supervisory responsibility.

Selectperson Elwell: I would think before any candidate applied, they would investigate the town/research the town such as the tax base, etc. They should be familiar with what they are applying for.

Selectperson Hall asked if they wanted to mention a diverse population. Barrett said they could weave that into a question during the interview. "How do you strive to ensure that the town government is responsive to a variety of citizenry who come from very different places and backgrounds?"

Barrett said when they get down to a handful of candidates, it would be appropriate to send them some materials to help them familiarize themselves with the town. "It would be useful to have a packet of information developed for the final candidates. I will look around the town's website to see what I can find and that will give me a better idea of what we need."

The Select Board and Barrett discussed the time frame for getting the advertisement done and out. Barrett thought they could get the ad done, reviewed, out by Thursday, and have run it through April 20-21st. They discussed the cost of advertising and since it is done largely electronically and online it can reach more people. Barrett suggested they advertise in:

- The International City Managers Association newsletter which is the professional trade journal; an approximate cost of \$450.00.
- The MMA website is free.
- MMA has a deal with the Vermont Municipal Association to place each other's ads for free.
- Massachusetts and New Hampshire Municipal Associations; cost about \$100.
- Indeed.com.
- "Live and Work in Maine" is not a municipal website but is out there for people who want to live and work in Maine and it attracts some alternative candidates who want to locate to Maine.

- The Courier-Gazette, about \$200 online and in paper and includes Camden Herald and Village Soup.
- Pen Bay Pilot, about \$100.

Barrett noted that the Bangor Daily News and Portland Press Herald ads cost about \$1,000 each, so people were not placing ads with them. He suggested the ad be put on the town website and posted on the bulletin board at the town office.

Barrett and the Select Board discussed holding a special meeting prior to the Board's regular April 26 meeting to discuss applications and recommended holding special meetings in Executive Session as they would be reviewing confidential information/candidates resumes.

- Request for Extension of License on Premise – Caignair Inn by the Sea, Inc. / 5 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
The property owner, Greg Soutiea, was present via Zoom. Chair Bates noted that last month the Planning Board approved the Caignair Inn's application for a larger exterior deck. The owners wanted more outdoor seating capacity for the restaurant. The Division of Liquor Licensing & Enforcement requires approval by the municipal officers for this request.

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Willey, to approve the Request for Extension of License on Premise for the Caignair Inn by the Sea. A roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Communications: None.

- Warrant: The warrant for the week of March 22, 2021, was reviewed. The total expenses were \$571,924.39 and included a school payment of \$449,279.56, a payment of \$1,988.64 to Wells Fargo Real Estate Tax Service, and a payment of \$1,532.64 to Carla Skinder, a payment to Ford Enterprises of \$64,500, and other regular expenses.

Tara Elwell explained the Wells Fargo refund. The Coralogix file was not working properly, and money was sent for a tax account that had already been paid. In that case, the town requires them to send the town a request in writing to get that money back. Carla Skinder forgot her mortgage was escrowed and she had already paid with a credit card so requested her money back. Elwell explained she could issue her a refund but would not get the user fee back from the state. Skinder was okay with that.

Tara Elwell explained the Ford Enterprises' payment of \$64,500 was money paid to the company that did the work on the septic system for the Village Ice Cream and Bakery Shop. Terry Brackett applied for a grant for that septic system, and Jesse Thompson paid half of the \$64,500.

The warrant and other documents will be signed electronically.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - Tim Polky reported the following:

Town Office Roof. The roof shingles on the fire station side of the town office blew off and were patched on Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Interior Rooms at the Town Office. They have rearranged some offices within the town building. Polky's old office is now being used by EMS Director, Amy Drinkwater. The town needed a locked room to house a refrigerator for the storage of future vaccines.

Vaccines in April 2021. The town has been chosen as a site to administer covid-19 vaccinations. Hopefully, vaccines will be received in-house by the first week of April. EMS plans to administer approximately 100 a week, if possible; 50 on Friday and 50 on Saturday. Polky explained it would depend on the state's priority list. The person gets their priority from the state and the state will send the person to the closest place which may be St. George.

Townline Signs Replaced. The sign on Rt. 131 between South Thomaston and St. George was replaced, and the sign on Rt. 73 in South Thomaston was also replaced.

Roads are Posted. The roads have been posted.

Finance Director Interviews. The interviews started today, March 22, 2021.

New Fire Truck. The delivery of the fire department's new truck will be around 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Polky said the truck should be ready to be put in service just as soon as it arrives.

Selectperson Willey asked about the Covid 19 vaccine. Would people be coming from out of town, or would the vaccine be just for St. George residents? Polky was not sure but thought whoever was making up the priority list for the state would be assigning people to wherever they could go to get it. He said it was supposed to be set up for residents, but it did not mean that people from out of town could not come. Amy Drinkwater was not sure which vaccine the town would be receiving.

Chair Bates asked about the town roof being patched. Would that hold until the town had the funds in the new financial year to do the whole roof? Polky stated the roof should be okay until then.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Solid Waste and Recycling Committee (SW&RC): Selectperson Willey reported the SW&RC committee met on March 17, 2021, at 7:30 a.m. The committee is planning a spring clean-up event/jubilee this year. St. George residents will be asked to pick up roadside trash in their neighborhood and the event will run from May 1 to May 8, 2021. Crews from the Bolduc Correctional Facility will not be helping with roadside clean-up this year.

The committee will be trying again to promote recycling. Their focus will be on one type of plastic or paper at a time. May will be milk jug/bottle recycling month and the committee will be encouraging residents to recycle their milk jugs, a #2 plastic. The SW&RC will then add on other recycling items.

Members of the committee have had complaints about the Transfer Station being closed on Thursdays, and they asked if it will ever re-open on Thursdays.



Polky said the closure of the Transfer Station on Thursdays was a COVID-19 pre-caution so the employees had time to handle the solid waste and Chair Bates asked if that was still an issue. Polky said not so much but it had been working out better to have the Transfer Station closed on Thursdays.

Polky: Before Thursday closures in order to get employee coverage and have each employee only work 40 hours a week, each employee was taking a half-day off; alternating their days. Now that the Transfer Station is closed on Thursdays and everyone takes their half-day off on that day, that keeps them at the 40-hour week. Selectperson Willey asked if that meant they would be continuing to stay closed on Thursdays. Polky stated yes, for now.

Chair Bates asked how the spring clean-up would work this year. Selectperson Willey said the committee hoped the trash bags and other items could be left outside the town office and people could stop by and pick those up. She said they did not mention what happened when the bags were full and who would pick up those bags and take them to the transfer station. Willey said she would check back with Wendy Carr for details and make sure the trash would be picked up during that week and not left on the roadside. Chair Bates wondered if the volunteers would take their clean-up bags to the transfer station rather than leaving them on the side of the road.

- Harbor Committee: Selectperson Elwell was absent for their last meeting, so Town Manager Polky reported on the Harbor Committee.

Moorings. There was concern about how the Wildcat Lobster moorings had been handled. The issue was discussed, and it was decided the Harbormaster was handling the issue correctly. Polky, "What happened was the former owners of Wildcat Lobster sold three of the moorings to the local fishermen and the new owners of the property would like to have the moorings back." Polky said these were private sales and did not think the town had any jurisdiction over the issue.

10 Cold Storage Road and the Department of Economic Development Grant. Noel Musson was having problems getting into the grant website and found out the grant they applied for had been closed out, so they now have to start a new grant application. Musson is having problems accessing the site, and Alan Brigham has not been calling the town back.

Polky said the committee has done a great job and gotten several letters of recommendation and letters of support to include with the application. Polky said one issue that came up was the sellers of the property wanting to keep in the deed the right to retain parking space for two vehicles. The lawyer who is on the Finance Committee would like to have that taken out of the deed. Brigham said the town designated those parking places to be in a non-benefitted area that is outside the area that is benefitted from the grant. Polky said there is an area on the top of the hill that the two parking spaces could be located. However, it was suggested by the Harbor Committee that if the clause could be removed from the deed, that would be great.

Chair Bates stated that Cecile Tucker, one of the previous owners, was reluctant to take the parking spaces out of the deed because that was how the town came to that price. Chair Bates,

"That is not going to be improved by the grant. Part of the way we got to the price with the family was because of that parking area, and I feel the town is obliged to do that."

Chair Bates commented if they plan to meet the construction deadline in the fall, the town needs to get the grant application in soon. Selectperson Hall asked about the fall construction deadline. Chair Bates said that is assuming all things line up, the town gets the grant, gets through the bidding process, and would be able to start it in the fall. Polky said the original plan was to start in October and run it through the winter. Selectperson Hall asked if that was still realistic. Polky said, maybe not; the start date might have to be January, and it will have to go into the 2022 summer season.

Chair Bates, "The sooner Musson can get this grant resubmitted, the better. We have delayed this and there have been various personnel issues, but we have this loan out there and it is just sitting in the bank and we need to start spending it."

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on March 9, 2021, at 7 p.m.

- The application to install a new pier foundation at 17 Cottage Lane was voted complete; satisfying the FEMA floodplain guidelines, the application was approved.
- The application to expand the deck and add a second-floor balcony at 5 Third Street (Craignair Inn) was picked up again and the application was approved.

- Shellfish Committee: Selectperson Sawyer said the committee met and discussed the possibility of opening the upper bay (from approximately Hospital Point toward the railroad bridge in Thomaston) to regular clamming. He said right now, the area is only open to depuration clamming. The committee has not made a final decision because they need to do more testing and sampling. Chair Bates, "Don't the clammers want to get in that area?" Sawyer said because it is only depuration clamming currently, there are probably a lot of good clams. Bates thought there must be some pressure to get this sorted out. Sawyer said yes there would be from the clamming committee, but the State is being slow to respond.

OLD BUSINESS: The items were taken up under Regular Session.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Interstate Septic Disposal Agreement: The Select Board reviewed the Interstate Septic Disposal Agreement. Polky stated the agreement presented to the Select Board is for the same amount as last year's contract. He noted for the record, the Select Board approves the agreement, and the Town Manager signs the contract.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, to accept the Interstate Septic System agreement for the year. Roll call vote was taken. The vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Town Meeting: The Select Board discussed the town meeting. Chair Bates said the town meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2021. He said Polky spoke with the Ambulance Association and they are prepared to erect the tent for that meeting. He proposed they meet at 6 p.m. and

Select Board agreed. Tara Elwell will check to see if Michael Mayo plans to attend the St. George Town meeting, and she will contact Dan Miller about the sound system.

- Michael Felton and Cassie Kilbride: Chair Bates scheduled Felton and Kilbride to present the MSU budget at the Select Board's April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Board agreed that was a good idea. Chair Bates said by the April 5 meeting, the School Board hopefully would have approved their budget.

At 8:45 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson  
Select Board Recording Secretary