

## ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

### St. George Town Office

### MEETING MINUTES

April 26, 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, Scott Vaitones, Susy Ellis, David Percival, Michael Felton, Cassie Kilbride, Ken Oelberger, Loreen Meyer, John Falla, Donnie and Marilyn Wilson, and Maria Baum.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

#### REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda. The following adjustments were made:

- MSU Budget Discussion was moved to Regular Session.
- Third Quarter Budget Review was added to agenda and taken up under Regular Session.
- An Executive Session of the Select Board was added to the agenda.

- Minutes: The minutes of April 6, 2021, were corrected as follows:

Page 3, paragraph 3, line 5, change could to **would**

Page 3, paragraph 4, line 3, change to read: ... 27 square **of** shingles.

Page 4, under Drift Inn Road, line 4, change to read: ... he hoped they **had** money to...

Page 6, under Spirit of America, paragraph 2, lines 3 and 5. Delete the word **to** after dedicated.

Page 6, Discussion Regarding Town Report, paragraph 2, line 3, change eluded to **alluded**

Page 6, Discussion Regarding Town Report, paragraph 2, line 4, change to read: ... into buildings, **this year** had been...

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, to approve the April 6, 2021, minutes, as corrected. The roll call vote was 4 in favor and 1 abstention (Sawyer).

- Municipal School Unit (MSU) FY'2021-22 Budget Discussion: Superintendent Michael Felton and Business Manager Cassie Kilbride gave a brief overview of the school budget. Felton said that when the School Board prepares and works through the budget, three key factors influence their decision making: to improve the student's education, experience, and outcomes; to increase the fiscal sustainability and resilience of the district; and, to contribute to the overall vitality of the town of St. George.

Felton said the school lost \$150,000 in state revenue under the Economically Disadvantaged Student Adjustment which impacted the school's budget. Because the number of children who qualify for free or reduced meals dropped below the state average, the school lost the entire amount. Felton, "You do not get a piece of it; you either get all or nothing." But, he said, the school would be getting more state subsidy this year for Special Education.

Felton: "The School Board and the District are requesting the town raise about \$5.6 million. That is a 2.99% increase from last year and that represents an increase of about \$161,000. An interesting fact is if we had not lost that \$150,000 in subsidy for the Economically

Disadvantaged Student Adjustment, the total assessment increase would have been 0.23 percent. Basically, it would have been a flat budget."

Felton reviewed the expenditures and noted they were relatively flat. He explained that between FY'19 and FY'20, there was a huge jump in the assessment when the Special Education program started but since has flattened out; expenditures were down this year. "I think what that points to is that the investment we made to create our own programs is paying off and helping to stabilize the Special Education budget. We are able to keep children in our district and that has helped the overall budget picture. I think that is important to keep in mind."

Felton said he highlights the cost of Special Education because it is such a cost driver now for all school budgets. He noted that children qualifying for Special Ed in the U.S. are about 14 percent. In Maine, 19 percent of children qualify, and this district is 16 percent. Under the Emotional Disturbance (severe social and emotional behaviors) category, the country is at 6 percent. For Maine, it is 8%, and for St. George MSU, it is 7% of the special ed students. Felton, "I point this out because students with those needs often need some of the most intensive supports including one-on-one ed techs."

Felton said that this year, the school had added the Arc program. This program combines life skills and day treatment along with other services. He said the program had grown under the leadership of Assistant Special Education Director Jessica Berry, and that Berry was hired to be the school's full-time Special Ed Director this fall.

In terms of cost for out of district placements, Felton stated, "If you have a student in K-8 that needs an out of district placement for Special Ed, the cost is going to be about \$55,000 to \$120,000 per student, per year, depending on what type of program (and services) they need." He noted that when the cost of transportation is added in, it can be more than \$120,000 depending on the need of the student.

Felton said that most of the school's budget goes into Article 1 instruction. That includes regular education, mainstream teachers, salary, and benefits for all the teachers, curriculum books, art, and everything in between such as field trips. He noted that the percentage going to Article 1 is higher than most other districts. "In a lot of ways that is a good thing because one critique of small schools is that you are not sending enough money to the children; it is going towards other costs. That has not been the case in our district. The other large portion of the cost is Special Education."

Felton said they will add on a modular classroom next year to help alleviate the needed space at the school. The addition will have two classrooms and two bathrooms, and they will use Federal funds to pay for the cost. They will be investing \$70,000 to finish repairing two sections of the roof and will pay for that expense with their capital reserve funds.

Felton stated the budget continues to increase their ability to meet students' needs here at St. George and control their Special Education costs. They will hire a full-time Special Education Director and a full-time Occupational Therapist. They had been contracting out occupational therapy, but so many services were needed, the cost of contracting out was approaching what it would cost to hire a full time, in-house person.

Felton explained they will use about \$340,000 in federal funds to cover items such as the modular classroom, help in covering some teacher costs, and the curriculum. They may also use some of that money for laptops if the State does not continue the laptop program. They will use some of it to help pay the final lease payment on the bus. They will use \$137,000 in reserves in areas such as repairing the roof. They will use \$300,000 in their fund balance to help keep the assessment down.

Chair Bates asked if the Occupational Therapist would be a new hire. Felton said yes. They currently have a contracted person working at the school two days a week and because of needs and children's IEP's, that was going to increase to three days a week. He said the difference between contracting out for three days a week or hiring a full-time therapist was cost beneficial. He said their goal for FY'23 is to have Pre-K as they have been planning that for years. Felton said they put it off because of the pandemic and that O.T. was a critical component of Pre-K.

Ellis asked about their fund balance. Felton stated it was a little challenging because they had not yet received the auditor's report, but they based the numbers on last year and what they anticipated this year and felt \$300,000 was a safe number. Felton said they hoped the school would qualify again for the Economically Disadvantaged Student Adjustment from the state as that would offset some of the fund balance, but in the long term, they would like to use less from that fund.

Chair Bates asked if Felton could see any stabilization of numbers for Special Education.

Felton: "What we have seen is that every year our numbers go up, especially with the number of children who have more intensive needs. We were two to three years behind other school districts in seeing that increase of children with very high needs coming into the younger grades. For the past few years, we have had several students move into the district that have pretty intensive needs. This could change at any minute but right now, this is the first year we will not have any out-of-district placements in K-8."

Chair Bates asked Felton if he thought the state would step in and give more assistance given the state average and were all the representatives being told to increase the funding?

Felton said the state had increased assistance over the past few years and was funding at 50 percent of allowable Special Ed costs, but they did not cover everything. "And I am sure every legislature hears this from their towns and districts. This is probably the biggest challenge facing public education. How do you meet the needs of the children and do so in a way that is fiscally responsible to your community?"

- Third Quarter Budget Review: Budget Committee Chair Susy Ellis led the review and discussion of the Third Quarter Budget. The Budget Committee had several questions. Revenue.

Why were the payments from the State of Maine low for Route 131? Was it timing? Ellis said she was told the town needed to bill the State of Maine which would be done shortly, and that would resolve the issue.

The town's interest income was lower than what was budgeted but was not as bad as it appeared. Ellis was told there needs to be a journal entry for interest and Tara Elwell would fix that.

Expense:

Town Office. Office expense and professional services were a little high on the percent expended. Ellis said it was desirable to have the items expended at 75 percent. Contributing to the increase were: a personnel item, Planning Board appeals, office expenses, Covid-related items, the Zoom accounts, PPE, and air purifiers. Ellis noted an office expense and office supply line had been created, so some of those items may need to be reassigned.

Planning Department. Planning Board stipends may go over as well as the CEO's salary. Polky explained that the Planning Board had been more active than in the past, and he hoped that next year's budget would take care of that.

Ellis asked when a revaluation might be done as the last one was 10 years ago. Chair Bates said they do not have enough money in the reserves. He said every year the Board reviews the sales in all the areas of town and reviews the numbers to see if things look reasonably fair. Last year they were not too far out of line. Polky said the sales were fairly close, and it did not show anything that needed to be adjusted at this time. He suggested the town go at least two more years if not four.

Public Safety – Fire Department. Utilities were somewhat high in this department. Polky thought it was due to lower savings on the solar at this time, and the power used to build the training building. Polky thought that once they got to the seventh year and bought the system, they would see some savings. Selectperson Hall said the anticipation was that the town would save two or three cents a kilowatt-hour through the first six years on the amount of power generated by the solar panels. Then the town would save a lot once they were purchased in year seven.

Ellis noted utilities were running quite well under budget in the town office. Polky noted the utility expense had several confusing factors. The town office uses fuel oil as well as solar and all the lights were replaced with LED's, so utility use should be down. Polky said he did not have a good answer but hoped when they hired a new Finance Director, they could again start tracking the solar and electric usage and costs.

Public Works – Roads. The Committee asked if there will be any other resurfacing projects done before the change of the fiscal year. Polky said there is a small project on Snow's Point and if there is money left over, they might try to do Mosquito Head Road. Polky recommended that if the funds are not expended, carry them forward so the projects can be done next year. "Stick with the 10-year plan."

Public Works – Solid Waste. The committee thought this area might be a budget overrun, but Selectperson Hall explained that up to \$50,000 could be transferred from other departments to cover an overrun in Solid Waste. Ellis noted Solid Waste, the tipping, and transport were over but other lines were under.

Polky said they are running into problems with tipping and transportation for a number of reasons. One is sheetrock. It was being recycled but no longer is. It is being shipped to Scarborough and then sent to a landfill. St. George has been paying double for that and decided not to send the sheetrock to Scarborough.

Polky said another reason for some of the overrun is that people are not recycling. Contractors used to recycle the materials from their job sites. But now they are just dumping it into the demo, and that is one of the reasons they doubled the price for dumping; but it does not seem to faze the contractors.

Percival asked what had been planned for property maintenance. It was budgeted for \$10,000 but there was \$9,000 plus leftover. Polky said they were going to redo the controller building and had an agreement with a local contractor to do it, but he had not shown up to do the job. It still needed to be done and Polky said he was looking for someone to do it.

Harbors. There was no expenditure for the Board Secretary. Ellis said she was told the Harbor Committee did not have a paid Board Secretary right now, so a member of the committee was taking their minutes.

Ellis asked what the town policy was on Covid-19 and meeting in person. She stated all members of the Budget Committee were vaccinated and voted to meet in person. Polky stated the current policy. If everybody is vaccinated and provides proof, they can meet in a building without masks as long as they maintain social distancing and do not have more than 50 people in the room.

Polky said the problem is if you cannot prove everyone is vaccinated, then every person still needs to wear a mask. Selectperson Hall asked what happens if the public attends. Will they need to put masks on? Polky said absolutely.

- Communications: None.

- Warrant: The warrant for the week of April 26, 2021, was reviewed. The total expenses were \$557,040.46 and included a \$449,279.56 payment to St. George MSU, a payment of \$3,000 to Gartley & Dorsky for the Fort Point survey, and other regular expenses.

The warrant will be signed electronically.

#### TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Recyclable Items. Polky suggested they no longer recycle sheetrock and shingles. He stated when the program started, the town would get recycling credits and would get the reclaimed material back, but the town no longer got credits for sheetrock. He said the quality of reclaimed material was at times questionable and should be monitored.

Regarding shingles, the price per ton for tipping had increased and so had transportation costs. Selectperson Hall asked if the transfer station would stop taking sheetrock or charge more to dispose of it. Polky suggested the town take it but put it in the demo. "There is no sense to ship it to Scarborough because they are just dumping it into a landfill. If for now it is dumped in the demo, the town would pay \$62 a ton tipping (going to Norridgewock) instead of the \$80 a ton to Riverside in Scarborough."

Selectperson Hall asked if this would be the same for the shingles. Polky said it might because currently, the town was getting the reclaimed material back so there was a trade-off, but he did

not think it was worth \$80 a ton. When they started the program with Commercial Paving and Recycling (CP&R), every ton that was sent, the town paid a tipping fee, and CP&R would replace that with the same amount of weight in reclaimed material. Polky said the material is not as good as it used to be, and the town is not always getting it back.

Chair Bates said so the alternative was to have it go to Norridgewock. Polky said he had no problem sending the sheetrock to Norridgewock but would like to talk with Commercial Paving & Recycling about the shingles and perhaps come up with something. Polky said he would recommend not taking sheetrock as a recyclable item at this time and that the open-top container for the sheetrock would be located in a different area at the Transfer Station. Polky said there was an open-top container there now that they were leasing from Commercial Recycling. If they did away with the sheetrock, the Transfer Station would not have to lease the container.

Compost. The University of Maine is performing two types of tests on the compost.

Finance Director. The search for a Finance Director continues but Polky hopes they have news by the end of the week.

Contracts. There are a number of contracts that need to be revisited, renewed, or renegotiated. Some of those include roadside mowing, heating contracts, a contract with Maine Coast Petroleum for fuel oil, and Dead River and Fabian for propane. The Secondhand Shop contract ran out, and Aaron Grindle's Solid Waste Transport Contract will run out in September 2021.

Road Paving. Polky said he knew policy stated there should be three bids on a project, but he would like to send an invitation to Hager Enterprises, Inc. and Performance Paving, Inc., as the other companies they've dealt with (Lane Construction and Pike) over the last five to six years had been so far out of the price range. The town was paying around \$70 a ton from Hager Enterprises, Inc. and Performance Paving, and Lane and Pike bids were in the \$90 range. Chair Bates thought when they had previously discussed this, it was that Lane and Pike were not interested at all. To satisfy the policy and get three bids, the town would probably get the same "we are not interested" response. Selectperson Willey asked which company they hired that did not do good road work and there had been a lot of issues with their work. Polky said it was Lane Construction.

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, to authorize the Town Manager to place bids out to Hager Enterprises, Inc. and Performance Paving, Inc. and waive a third bid. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Solid Waste and Recycling Committee: Selectperson Willey reported the SW&RC met on April 20, 2021, at 7:30 a.m. via Zoom.

The Roadside Clean-Up event will be held from May 1-8, 2021, and bags for trash and buckets for returnable bottles will be available at the Transfer Station.

The committee was approached about holding another shredding event and the committee might work with a few other groups in town to help with the cost. More information to come.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on April 13, 2021, at 7 p.m.

- The building permit application to update the educational space at 59 Factory Road (Herring Gut Learning Center) was accepted as complete. The Board determined that it satisfied all the Performance Standards in the Site Plan Review, and having also obtained the DMR and DEP permits, the project was approved.
- The building permit application to install a fire suppression hood at 6 Wallston Road (Ancho Honey) was accepted as complete; satisfying the Performance Standards in the Site Plan Review, the project was approved, with the condition that the State Fire Marshall's approval is obtained.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

- Fort Point Survey: Ken Oelberger summarized the Fort Point survey done by Gartley & Dorsky. A meeting was held with Jim Dorsky. They reviewed the survey with Lori Gary, a member of the ad hoc committee and representative for all the abutter meetings. Gary took the information back to Richard Paulsen, Sr. and Richard Paulsen and they concurred with the results of the survey. There is now an identified and agreed upon property line. Polky is working on documents that can be signed by both parties: The Town of St. George, and the abutters.

Selectperson Hall added the town now had a survey, and that all the parties seemed to agree the lines looked right, made sense, and were parallel. He said it seemed like a clean arrangement and there was agreement by all the parties. "It has had a good outcome."

Polky stated he needed direction from the Select Board which would permit him to find someone to draft the deed and have Gartley & Dorsky set pins on the southern line.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall to have Town Manager Polky draft a quitclaim deed and then have the town attorney draw up the deeds to this property. This vote also includes having Gartley and Dorsky set pins on the southern line of the property. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

Oelberger noted that once the pins were set, they would meet with the abutters and Lori Gary to discuss what markings would be used for delineating the property boundary line and discuss signage. Selectperson Hall said having Lori Gary included on the ad hoc committee had been good and she had been very constructive.

Selectperson Hall said there was discussion about whether the ad hoc committee needed to continue or be disbanded. Oelberger thought the only item left was the discussions with the state on the parking area, but he said, it was clear by the survey that the existing parking area did not infringe on the Paulsens' property. Selectperson Hall said someone from DOT offered to make some proposals and sketch some ideas on how they might expand the parking area. Hall thought that was the one remaining MDOT related issue, and as far as disbanding, he did not feel strongly either way.

Polky thought the CC could deal with most of the remaining issues and he felt they no longer needed the ad hoc committee. Oelberger said Tom Gorrill had experience with working with DOT and Selectperson Hall thought it was important to keep Lori engaged with the CC on this

issue. Hall explained that Polky was working on getting pins set with Gartley & Dorsky and getting the deeds and agreement drawn up, so he did not think the ad hoc committee members needed further involvement unless there was a complication. Polky felt if the CC kept Lori Gary updated on the issue and gave her a chance to respond, she would be okay with that.

Chair Bates summarized as follows, "The Fort Point ad hoc committee will come to a close and Lori Gary will be involved in any discussions that may come up in the next few weeks about the deeds and the pins, and she will be involved as the CC looks at the signage and plantings."

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Willey to disband the Fort Point ad hoc committee and transfer the remaining responsibilities to the Conservation Commission. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

- J. K. Kalloch Winter Roads Contract: Polky said he negotiated a contract with Kalloch and combined the two contracts into one. He took the 30.1 miles of town roads and added the Rt. 131 portion of road making it a total of 41.5 miles at a six percent (6%) increase. The contract amount is \$115,501.60. Polky said this mileage included the portion of the contract the State of Maine was paying the town.

Selectperson Willey asked if this was a three-year contract and did it have to go out to bid. Polky said that at the last meeting, the Select Board agreed to have him negotiate with Kalloch. He said the Board has that option and it is the Select Board's prerogative. Polky said there is nothing that states the Select Board has to put it out to bid.

Chair Bates noted that J.K. Kalloch had done a reliable and good quality job for the last few years, and it seemed like this was a case where it was okay to go with a single supplier.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall to approve a three-year winter's road contract with J. K. Kalloch for 41.5 miles of road at \$115,501.60 per year. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

J.K. Kalloch Summer Roads Contract: Polky also talked with Kalloch about summer maintenance for the roads. Kalloch was willing to sign a three-year contract at the same rates except for one issue. He wanted to change his labor rate from \$35 an hour to \$38 an hour but would keep his same rates for all his equipment. Chair Bates asked Polky if he felt it appropriate not to go out to bid because of Kalloch's quality of work the last few years.

Polky said it was up to the Board to make the decision. He thought Kalloch offered a good price but if the Board felt more comfortable putting it out to bid, they could do that. He felt the difference between the winter and summer road contracts was that they made a deal with Kalloch last year when he said he would "hold the line" on his prices. Selectperson Elwell thought a \$3 increase in the labor rate was reasonable and thought other companies' bids would be much higher. Elwell explained when they employed a company that had a lower bid, a lot of the work did not get done. Polky agreed that was a concern.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer to approve a three-year summer road contract with J. K. Kalloch at a new labor rate of \$38 an hour and to keep the same



rate for all his equipment as was stated in his previous contract. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Screen for Compost: The compost at the Transfer Station needs to be screened. They tried to make a deal with Justin Long to rent his screen, but it did not work out. Polky said he found a trommel screen that would attach to a Bobcat. He said the screen turns and creates a better compost product. The cost for the screen and delivery is approximately \$7,500.

Selectperson Elwell felt if the town was going to be composting and selling it, the crew should have the equipment. Chair Bates agreed that if they sold compost, they needed the right equipment. Polky said there was approximately \$20,000 in the Solid Waste Equipment Reserve account at this time, and there is another \$15,000 from this year's budget that has not yet been put into that account. So, there will be a total of \$35,000 in the Solid Waste Equipment Reserve account.

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell to authorize an expenditure of \$7,500 from the Solid Waste Equipment Reserve account for a trommel screen attachment for the Bobcat to create a better compost material, that Town Manager Polky will handle the purchase, and Mr. Polky states the \$7,500 includes delivery charges. The roll call vote was 5-0 in favor.

- Update on Town Manager Hiring Process: Chair Bates said he spoke with David Barrett on Friday, April 23, and they had received approximately 27 application responses. Chair Bates said Barrett sent packets to the Select Board on approximately 15 suitable candidates and those should arrive at the town office on Tuesday. Barrett explained the packet would include a rating sheet. He suggested the members could use this rating sheet to draw up a list of the top five or six candidates they would like to speak to.

Barrett's proposed timeline was to meet with the Board via Zoom on Tuesday, May 4 at 6 p.m.; each of the members proposing five or six candidates, and then out of all those, they should end up with five or six they will agree to interview by Zoom.

They meet again via Zoom on Wednesday, May 19, and Thursday, May 20 for two nights of Zoom interviews, assigning each candidate about an hour.

Then on Thursday, May 20th conclude with a discussion of the two or three candidates that will be invited to St. George for an interview.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

- Open-Top Container for the Transfer Station: Polky said material and "stuff" are piling up on the open-top container because they do not have another container to put it in. He said by the time the truck gets back with the container, it is full again. Polky felt they need at least one more container for the sheetrock.

Polky explained that the last time they looked for open-top containers, they got a better deal by buying two and he wanted to know if that was something the Select Board wanted him to investigate. The last ones were bought in Pennsylvania and they saved around \$1,500 on each by buying two.

Polky said the price for a 40-yard open top container was about \$5,000 to \$7,000 apiece. Selectperson Hall asked if the town needed more than one. Polky said one would get them by. Selectperson Elwell noted if the town dropped the contract with Riverside in Scarborough, they would take their container. Polky said the town was renting the container from them, so they would take it back. Selectperson Elwell, "So this request will replace that one?" Polky said yes.

Selectperson Willey asked if they were to buy two, was there space at the Transfer Station? Polky said the containers were there but usually Aaron had one in transit or at his place. As far as space, it would not be a problem.

Polky said the existing open-top containers were "used hard" and Larry's Welding had been patching them and putting wheels on the containers. Selectperson Elwell thought if they could save money by getting a better price on two containers and rotating a new one with an old one, it would be better than constantly having to repair them.

Selectperson Hall asked, "Do you need two? I am not saying only buy one. I am saying with the rotation and everything else is just getting one to replace the rented one enough? It isn't clear to me."

Polky: "It probably is not; and to answer your question, we need two, yes. We can get by with one, but we need two."

Selectperson Willey asked Polky what the price would be with the discount if they bought two containers.

Polky said he did not know and would have to find out. "If you say yes, I will get some prices and come back to the Board and talk with you." Selectperson Willey thought that was a good idea. The consensus of the Select Board was for Town Manager Polky to get prices on open-top containers and bring that information back for discussion.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Present for the executive session were Richard Bates, Wayne Sawyer, Jerry Hall, Tammy Willey, and Randy Elwell.

At 8:35 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Willey, seconded by Elwell, it was voted 5-0 to go into executive session pursuant to Title 1 MRSA Sec. 405(6)(F) to discuss confidential records. The Select Board came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m.

#### REGULAR SESSION:

At 8:47, on a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson  
Select Board Recording Secretary

