

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office

MEETING MINUTES

August 22, 2022 - 7p.m.

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Richard Bates (Chair); Select Persons: Randy Elwell, Steve Cartwright, and Wayne Sawyer; Town Manager Richard Erb, Finance Director Irene Ames, and Elizabeth Hupper.

Present by zoom: Van Thompson and Loreen Meyer were present.

REGULAR SESSION

Public Comments

No comments were made.

Adjustments to the agenda

Native American Sign - New business

School Board election - New business

Optional remote meetings during COVID – Old business

Martinsville Grange – New Business

Minutes Review

A motion was made by Elwell to approve the August 8, 2022 minutes as corrected, seconded by Sawyer. After a 4-0 roll call vote, the motion carried (Cartwright was not present at time of vote.)

Communications

There were no communications.

Warrant

Chair Bates

Irene, could you tell us about the warrant for these last two weeks?

Irene Ames

Nothing out of the ordinary. There is the monthly bill for St. George Elementary and the dispatch bill to Knox County.

Chair Bates

All right. Otherwise, do we have any questions? Why don't we go ahead and sign it?

Town Manager Report

Erb

Town Manager Report: I had an email this morning that we've been approved for the grant for further study and design of the Drift Inn Road drainage. We had applied for emergency management funds for projects in the amount of \$21,000; it requires a 25% contribution, which would be \$5,250. If we do not have enough in the current budget for that, I'll come back to you for additional funding. I suspect at some point there will be a special town meeting because we have other things to deal with. This would include an assessment of the drainage problems there and basically get us to the point where we could go out to bid for an actual project, which I hope we get funding for, but this will get us well on the way. Tim encouraged me to pursue it when I first got here. It took a little while to get the approval. Gartley and Dorsky. were a big help in putting the application together and are certainly well positioned to do the work for us. So, I'm expecting that's where we would go with this.

Chair Bates

They are the natural choice.

Erb

I think they are. This evening I received an email which was forwarded by Tim Polky from Knox County EMA. They are conducting a 402 course which is Incident Command Systems overview for senior leadership and policy makers for all Select Board members on Wednesday, September 28 at 5pm. They don't need to know now, but they do want an RSVP. So, I'll send something around by email.

Wayne Sawyer

The last time I attended, it was very interesting.

Erb

That is pretty much what I have to say as far as my report goes.

Chair Bates

Thank you Rick. Any questions for Rick?

Committee Reports**Chair Bates**

The Planning Board did not have their regular meeting, so I have no report.

Randy Elwell

The Harbor Committee is meeting on Thursday.

Wayne Sawyer

I spoke to Tara about trying to get me back on the list for the Shellfish Committee.

Select Board Policy Manuals:**Chair Bates**

On to the Select Board Policy Manual review, page 42 to the end. We don't have to spend a lot of time, but we do need to make sure that we are all comfortable with what's there. Regarding the first four policies, the issue of the names of the Select Board members needs to be updated. Those are on page 42, 44, 46 and 48.

Wayne Sawyer

I wonder if somehow, we couldn't make a note of that ahead of time because it always catches us by surprise.

Chair Bates

I admit I did recognize in the first meeting that we had after the elections, that we had to renew these policies, so actually we checked the date, and we did vote to renew them. So, the effective dates are correct. What I failed to change was the names. We are obliged at the first meeting after the elections to review this and whoever is running this board a year from now needs to remember that not only do you have to renew the policies, but you need to renew the names.

Cartwright

Isn't there some way we could word it so that we simply refer to the sitting or current Select Board members because then you wouldn't have to change things?

Chair Bates

If you look at state law, it is necessary to specify member names. It often has more to do with cutting checks for vendors and other authorizations. There are checks like Grendels for example, the transfer station. He wants to get paid every week. There are a few others like that.

Irene Ames

For smaller owner operator type organizations, it's a cash flow issue.

Chair Bates

We voted to do this and before that, we didn't have any policies. This is referenced in the delegation of authority.

Erb

On page 49, I think we just missed one, did we not vote on that?

Chair Bates

We missed it; we did it later but missed the printing deadline. I'm happy to pass any remaining issues on to whoever is chairing the board next year. I did have a question regarding the general fund policy. This is where we specify that we need to have a balance maintained at a minimum of two months of general fund expenses. There is no maximum. And as we've been discussing recently, we actually are now well above two months. Do we need to specify a limit on that?

Wayne Sawyer

Having a minimum was the intent. I don't think the intention was to have a maximum.

Van Thompson

I would leave it open.

Irene Ames

We need to decide how much to leave in there. We have the upcoming school payment of \$500,000 and we have the bill to the county for \$1,000,000 so it would be wise to have extra funds.

Cartwright

Nothing would prevent us from taking action if we thought it was really excessive.

Chair Bates

Okay, so we'll leave that going forward. The next item I have is on page 70. We didn't really have anything before that. Page 70 is the street light policy.

Erb

I have contacted CMP on the removal of two street lights, as approved by the Select Board.

Chair Bates

We have considerations for when a streetlight is considered for admission, and we have fewer requirements for when a streetlight is being considered for removal. I'd like to suggest that we add to the considerations for removal, something like the appropriateness of the original placement.

Erb

Are you really saying we should consider removal if it does not meet any of the criteria?

Wayne Sawyer

Maybe if placement of the streetlight is considered to be inappropriate, or unnecessary.

Van Thompson

Or subject to the discretion of the Select Board.

Randy Elwell

Or based on a written request to the board.

Erb

Aren't we saying that we may remove it, if it no longer meets the criteria for establishing the streetlight.

Wayne Sawyer

Something like that.

Irene Ames

So do we need to do better.

Erb

At the discretion of the board, if a streetlight no longer meets the above criteria.

Chair Bates

Rick, send me the revised wording and I'll send out the changes in a week. When we meet in three weeks time, we can then vote to accept those changes.

Native American Sign - New business

Chair Bates

Okay. Next thing on the agenda, Native American signs. Steve, you are going to give an update.

Cartwright

I saw a design online that was on a Maine tribal site webpage. It was a turtle with fiddleheads around it. It was kind of attractive. And the guy who designed it is named Harry Neptune. I contacted him and we've been corresponding about it. I told him that I'm on the Select Board and would need approval, but he is very interested in designing a sign for us. He can do vinyl or metal, which sounded interesting. I didn't get pricing but if you all are interested, I can ask him to submit a design and pricing.

Chair Bates

So, remind me Steve, are we looking to have this sign in a specific spot in St. George, perhaps near the town sign?

Cartwright

I'm open to suggestions. I was thinking near the Tenants Harbor sign or when you first come into St. George at the town line.

Erb

Is there a name for St George that the Native Americans used?

Cartwright

I can try to find out. I have some contacts. One of the early maps of the Historical Society has an Indian carry, or a portage from Seavey Cove over to the river side.

Chair Bates

Like how Thomaston marks many of its historical buildings, the portage could be marked?

Cartwright

I was thinking at this stage, the point is just to acknowledge that we are on Indian land. I think this raises awareness and promotes education of Native American history. History didn't start when we first got here.

Randy Elwell

We could put it on the library lawn and discuss this with the Historical Society. The maps are in there.

Cartwright

I think that is a real possibility but at this point, I'll get an estimate and a design that I can bring to the next meeting.

School Board Election – New Business**Chair Bates**

New business action item. We need to set the date for the School Board election and Rick has gone through the state election laws. We need to follow the timetable set by the law. Papers will be available on Tuesday, August 23. That's tomorrow, and they need to be back to the Town Office by four o'clock on Friday, September the 30th. If we vote to agree on this timetable, the ballot will be available for anyone that wants an absentee ballot and mails it out on time. It will be available for the November 8th election.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, to approve paperwork to be issued on August 23, 2022, with a return due date of September 30, 2022, in preparation for a November 8th St. George School Board election. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

2021 Town Audit Report**Chair Bates**

Audit Report. Does everyone have a copy? Tara sent out the PDFs so we can get the town report published.

Erb

The printer does have it now. We haven't heard back from them yet but they're not waiting for anything from us.

Community Resilience Partnership Status**Chair Bates**

The next agenda item is the Community Resilience Partnership status. Meg Rasmussen met with us a couple of meetings ago to explain what this enables the town to do. There is a two part process. One part is that we must apply to become part of the state Resilience Partnership Program, which means having a few more meetings of this subgroup that we have formed. That will satisfy that requirement. Then having done that, we need to make an application for a community grant, for as much as \$50,000. A couple of ideas have been discussed. We could use that money to improve the insulation in the windows and other infrastructure in the town office. But another opportunity has arisen, which I think is actually pretty exciting. We were wondering how to go about fixing our vulnerable roads and I contacted a couple of engineering companies recommended by the DOT just to see if we could get some quotes. A company called Sebago Technics came back to us and said that our timing is perfect. They are looking to do a big study with a pilot town, testing all kinds of very sophisticated surveying techniques, using radar, LIDAR which is light based radar, and various other techniques to produce models. For example, when we want to discuss what's going to happen with the Martinsville Bridge as sea level rises, people could put on VR glasses to simulate water rising and the effects on the bridge or correspondingly Harrington Cove Road. Another way is using a projection screen. The tools that Sebago Technics and their partners want to develop and pilot, would enable towns like ours and its community members, to make decisions based on these VR simulations. For example, Harrington Cove Road is a vulnerable area when the tide is high and with the modeling techniques that they have, they will be able to demonstrate what it would look like, if for example, we build a seawall or raise the road. It's a visual thing. The intent of this pilot program from Sebago Technics is to demonstrate to the pilot town all the options. They estimate the value of the services they would provide to the town would be about \$130,000. Our contribution, if we get the grant, would be up to \$50,000 depending on what the state awards us. We may not like all the numbers, but they are what they are. I suggest that we wait until the Budget Committee meets with us for the first quarter financial review on the 31st of October and then we can also talk about the audit at the same time. This pilot program would hopefully benefit many other towns along the coast also for zero investment. We don't need to provide matching funds for any of this and we will get all of this insight into ways that we can fix our problems. The challenge is that we have to apply for both the Community Resilience Partnership Program and the state grant by September 20th. We had a committee meeting last week and we have another one this week. I think we can do it.

Cartwright

Remind me how this is of no cost to us.

Chair Bates

The state provides grants for these things that do not require matching funds.

Erb

Is the grant for \$50,000?

Chair Bates

It could be up to \$50,000. The state will review our application and determine how much we receive. We haven't received a firm quote from Sebago, but they've implied that what they really would like is just an endorsement so the terms of the project may be flexible based on the grant we receive. I think from our point of view, we are going to get tremendous insight into possible solutions for fixing these sorts of problems.

Van Thompson

And the fact that they're trying to make it a demonstration project, I think really is going to add to the scope of what they do, because it's going to be such a good example. In looking over what you presented to the group Richard, I think it's a real opportunity and I appreciate you reaching out and contacting them.

Chair Bates

It was a stroke of luck that we contacted this company. There was a list of about 30 companies, and I could have called more but the timing was perfect for this one. It turns out that they were looking for a for a partner, and we simply fit the bill from their point of view.

Van Thompson

Well, I think we fit well in terms of our size. It's not a huge project. It's very reasonable, and therefore it's one that they can jump into with both feet, and I think it's a real win win situation.

Chair Bates

I hope so. So, I hope in the coming weeks there will be some news about the application. Meg is working with us, and her role is with the Midcoast Council of Government. For her, it's a pilot program because she's just started with them, and I think she is giving it her all.

Tobacco Free Policy

Chair Bates

I am passing out copies of a new Tobacco Free Policy. Actually, one is a policy, and one is a resolution.

Erb

I was contacted by a consultant in Augusta who is working with Pen Bay Hospital on their tobacco free efforts, looking for towns to adopt policies or resolutions about being tobacco free. They will help us write it, will give us free signs and will give us \$500 for program assistance. State law already prevents smoking inside public buildings. This is more of a statement. It could go a little further, but it doesn't have to. It's up to us what areas it covers. It could become part of our policies. If it's not a policy, and it's a resolution instead, that is fine with Becky and the people who are running the program. I think it's a good statement for us to be making. I've spoken with Ben; it does not conflict with anything that they have at the Parks and Recreation

facilities. All the fields are already tobacco free. I could probably provide more information next meeting, and we can decide whether to move forward.

Chair Bates

The resolution which they requested appears in the paper and is more a matter of further reinforcing tobacco free attitudes.

Erb

I think they are looking to keep these issues in the public eye, and it becomes somewhat newsworthy when a town adopts resolutions. A policy is a little more restrictive.

Cartwright

I was just thinking that resolutions are not enforceable.

Erb

We wouldn't allow someone to smoke inside a building but if somebody was having a smoke in the parking lot, I think I wouldn't really be looking at it as an enforcement issue. I'd look at it as an education opportunity and that would be my approach. So, if we do go the route of a more formal policy that prohibits it, I think people would have to realize that probably would be our approach. We would try to encourage people; it's an addiction.

Chair Bates

I know that there are members of the emergency services who work in town and some chew tobacco and some smoke. But this does not address what happens in the firehouse.

Randy Elwell

The fire department properties are already smoke free. Technically, you're not supposed to even smoke in the parking lot. But at ballgames, etc. it's going to happen but it's not worth causing an altercation. We can make it known that there is a no smoking policy and discourage the behavior.

Chair Bates

So, are you looking for action today?

Erb

No. I'd like to put together a formal resolution policy.

Chair Bates

So, we'll aim for both for the resolution as well as the policy that we can incorporate into our manual.

Optional Remote Meetings During Covid – Old Business

Another item we added to the agenda was to recognize the issue of meeting during increased levels of COVID. We may have remote meetings; tonight, Van is zooming in. It seems to me that if any of us have any concerns about attending a meeting, then the law allows us to meet

remotely and stay at home. The board may meet entirely remotely or as a hybrid. We just need to give notice to the public. How does the board feel about it?

Wayne Sawyer

I still prefer a live meeting. But if it gets to the point where it really isn't safe for any of us, we may just have to go back to remote meetings all together.

Randy Elwell

Either way is fine for me.

Van Thompson

Same for me.

Wayne Sawyer

We have the windows open now but what are we going to do in February?

Van Thompson

You have to be careful because you don't know what you might run into.

Randy Elwell

I think we just have to keep an eye on the local numbers and make a decision.

Chair Bates

If any of us have any concerns, then speak up and let's stay in touch.

Martinsville Grange – New Business

Chair Bates

Okay, shall we move on? Randy added the agenda item for Martinsville Grange parking. Randy, could you explain?

Randy Elwell

I received some calls, and some people approached me regarding a great deal of people parked at an event there. They were parked on the road and there isn't much shoulder on the road. If we ever had to get a fire truck or an ambulance through there, we never would be able to.

Chair Bates

This was at the Grange? I think the keeper of that building is Larry Bailey. I can contact Larry and advise that when there is an event there, people need to understand the rules; you may not park on the highway.

Van Thompson

Are we talking about last Saturday night? There was a string quartet at the grange. They are popular.

Randy Elwell

Yes, I would say so.

Erb

Van, are you thinking it might be a one off thing.

Van Thompson

There was a similar event early in June.

Cartwright

They love coming here. I went to one of their concerts and they are coming back in the Fall when there will be a lot less people around; there is just very limited parking there. The grange predates cars.

Randy Elwell

The only thing we can do is make it known that people may not park there.

Chair Bates

They have to understand if they are renting the space out; one of the conditions has to be that you don't obstruct the state highway and it may mean that when they rent it out, they must explain that there is limited parking and provide direction regarding parking areas.

Cartwright

They could use traffic cones so that they could only park on one side of the road.

Randy Elwell

I don't think it would because that hill is blind. I said I would bring it up. There is not much we can do unless someone calls the sheriff's department.

Chair Bates

I'll reach out to Mary Bailey.

Randy Elwell

Please just advise those concerns about the hazards. The same thing happens at Drift Inn Beach.

Chair Bates

Yes, it's a state highway and we really have to make sure that the hazards are avoided.

Cartwright

One idea for the public parking at Drift Inn Beach is to use a shuttle.

Erb

When Greg started spending time out there directing traffic, it got better right away.

Conservation Commission Alternate Member Approval

Chair Bates

Next item on the agenda is the approval of the alternate members of the Conservation Commission.

Irene Ames

Ryan Shane, Dale Pierson, and the conservation associates Richard Pelletier and Ingrid Mroz.

A motion was made by Cartwright, seconded by Elwell, to approve the four new Conservation Committee Associates. By a 5-0 roll call vote, the motion carried.

Executive Session

Present: Richard Bates, Wayne Sawyer, Randall Elwell, Steve Cartwright, Van Thompson, Rick Erb, and Irene Ames.

Motion: To go into executive session pursuant to Title 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(C) – Acquisition of real property .

- Prop: Elwell
- Sec: Cartwright
- Vote: 5-0
- Time: 7:58 pm

Returned to Regular Session at 8:25 pm

Motion: To adjourn

- Prop: Elwell
- Sec: Sawyer
- Vote: 5-0
- Time: 8:26 pm

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Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Taylor

Recording Secretary

Town of St. George, Maine