

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office

MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2023

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Present were Richard Bates (Chair), Steve Cartwright, Van Thompson, Wayne Sawyer, Randy Elwell, Richard Erb, Irene Ames, Wendy Carr, Scott Vaitones, David Percival, Susy Ellis, Terry Brackett, Jim Balano, Amy Myers, Regan Myers, Michael Myers, and Michelle Young.

Via Zoom: Present were Loreen Meyer, and Elizabeth May.

REGULAR SESSION

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Adjustments to the Agenda

Proposal for Band of Buoys Fundraiser was moved to the first item on the agenda, Third Quarter Financial Review was moved to the second item and Land Use Permit Fees was moved to the third item.

Proposal for Band of Buoys Fundraiser

Regan Myers

If you've had a chance to look at what was sent, then you have a general idea of the fundraiser that Michelle Young, Amy Myers and I are organizing. It's in support of St. George lobstermen, the proceeds of which would go to the Maine Lobstermen's association, which as you know, supports our Maine fisheries and advocates on behalf of our lobsterman. Amy, Michelle and I are wives of St. George

lobstermen. Part one of the fundraiser is St. George lobstermen donating their buoys to us to be donated to residents of St. George who donate money. In addition to the donors getting a buoy, we will also have an extra buoy that we would like to display as a public show of support to our lobsterman. We have an area in mind that we think would be perfect for it on Main Street in Tenants Harbor across from the Historical Society. I believe it used to be a dentist's office. If it's something you'd consider and you have another location, we'd be open to that. We ran out of buoys, so this [presentation of model] is not a true depiction. In reality, it would be covered. We have done this to scale. Amy worked very hard on this. It would display all buoys and in addition, it would list the lobstermen's names inside according to the village that they're from. It would also identify which ones are generational. I think that it would be enjoyed by all of the residents and is sorely needed by our hard-working lobstermen and lobster women. That's it unless you have questions.

Bates

Thank you for coming. This drawing shows it is 14 feet high. It looks like it's a walk-in unit with the names on the inside. It is quite different from the one in Boothbay. They have a tree, so this is the next step up.

Regan Myers

It is. We started with the idea of the tree. Amy, Michelle and I are all very creative and artistic in our own way and while we were building the idea of the tree, what really came to mind is we wanted it to be almost an art display and something that would be usable by those who visited it. If it was just a tree, it might look like something that was geared towards the holidays and we really wanted something that was able to be visited year-round.

Bates

How long do you think this will be there?

Regan Myers

Our idea was that in three to four years, or whatever agreed time the town had, we would have another auction. We would auction off the entire structure to be placed on a private property and would use those funds from the auction to donate to the MLA Defense Fund, as well as to the town of St. George.

Bates

Is this for the Legal Defense Fund of the Maine Lobstermen's Association?

Regan Myers

We are in the process of aligning with the St. George Business Alliance, in hopes that they will assist us in the fundraising as a whole. In addition to working on receiving donations, they would help us with donating to the MLA.

Cartwright

How would you solicit the donations? How would that process work?

Regan Myers

It would probably be a three-pronged approach. We would advertise at local businesses; we would utilize social media and go door to door.

Cartwright

Could people visit this without making a donation?

Regan Myers

Yes. They would be able to visit without having donated, but we would have information available in hopes that after seeing it and being a part of it and feeling what the meaning behind it is, they would donate directly to the MLA. If we were to create a donation box, I think that could create problems, but through the website, they could continue to educate themselves.

Bates

It says six feet. Is that inside or outside?

Amy Myers

It is a six-foot-by-six-foot footprint, and it's 14 feet tall.

Elwell

How many buoys will be on it?

Regan Myers

We have about 75 lobstermen for Zone D and I'm still trying to calculate Zone C, which my husband said is the most prevalent for St. George, so I would assume 150 at a minimum. We believe that we have buy in from half of those lobsterman and just by their involvement, other lobstermen will come. We have support in Port Clyde, Tenants Harbor, Martinsville, and Wheelers Bay. This is a good cause. It's to their benefit to do it. There is another thing that the Town would likely have to approve. Rather than driving around to pick up the buoys, we thought it might be more time effective to have a buoy drive where we would utilize a parking lot to have all of the lobstermen come within a certain amount of time to drop off their buoys, which again would create a lot of social media and excitement and enthusiasm.

Van Thompson

Have you thought about how you're going to anchor this, at 6 x 6 x 14 feet?

Regan Myers

Yes. This is interesting. We are looking to partner with a local construction company.

Amy Myers

It would definitely have to be anchored.

Bates

Would it require power, and will it be illuminated at night?

Regan Myers

If we decided to illuminate it for the holidays, we talked about solar lighting, and we would look to maintain it ourselves. Since we're local, we would not ask the town to do that. We would do regular upkeep to make sure that it was kept in good shape.

Erb

Do you do have a budget figure for suggested contributions?

Regan Myers

We're asking for a minimum donation of \$25 per buoy. We're obviously hoping to get more. We're not only able to share the buoy with the donor, but also educate them on what's really going on. Whenever I'm delivering lobsters, I'm asked by local residents how my husband is doing, what is going on, and how can they help give support. We believe that this is a very real model that any coastal community can do to raise funds for the MLA. We're thinking that we probably could raise a minimum of \$2,500. This is not only a way to support your community fishermen but also raise a good deal of money.

Bates

What does the Board think about this?

Elwell

A while ago we had a conversation on how we could support the lobster industry and our local fishermen. I think it's a great idea. Somehow, we have to support our local fishermen.

Erb

A suggestion I had, and I understand if there's resistance to it, is incorporating this into the 10 Cold Storage property. That would take a while because we're going to be under construction for a year.

Elwell

Central Tenants Harbor would be best versus on one end or the other.

Amy Myers

It's centralized and St. George's Days, that weekend, would be good to shoot for.

Regan Myers

We thought it was a great time to unveil it so to speak.

Cartwright

I don't know if you'd have it ready by St. George Day, but if there's a parade you could put it on a float.

Regan Myers

That is not a bad idea. Actually, we have a truck trailer. We did like the location because there are picnic tables there now and it really is a peaceful area to sit.

Amy Myers

People can access it in a wheelchair and there is parking. Our hope is to have a picture of the buoy, the boat name, the town that it fishes out of and the captain of the boat's name. If you're somebody that's coming in from the harbor and you see a buoy in the harbor, you could come over and look it up.

Cartwright

Maybe we could try it for a year with the possibility of renewing it.

Regan Myers

If we could keep it there, it would be wonderful. We'd be open to that.

Elwell

If it's popular this summer, why stop it?

Regan Myers

I agree. In a few years, we might want to open it up to volunteers to maintain it.

Elwell

Why do you think you need to give a donation to the town.

Regan Myers

We thought it would be a show of goodwill.

Elwell

I don't think the town needs a donation. I'd rather see you put the money towards the lobstermen than the town getting the donation.

Erb

I think others probably need it more than the town.

Van Thompson

I'm wondering about the upkeep of the buoys.

Bates

The last thing anyone any of us would want would be something that's starting to fall apart. It's not good for the town or for the Lobstermen Association.

Regan Myers

Absolutely. We could submit to the town a quarterly cleanup day where we go and maintain it.

Wayne Sawyer

Every year, the lobstermen could come down and bring a buoy that's painted and swap it out.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Cartwright, for the Select Board to support the Band of Buoys Fundraiser structure, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Bates

Your next step is to discuss it with CEO Terry Brackett. The Planning Board will have to know about this structure.

Third Quarter Financial Review

Bates

We have the Budget Committee here. Susie, tell us about issues with the third quarter financial review.

Susan Ellis

We looked at revenue and expenses for the third quarter. We had very few questions. Irene did a wonderful explanation of how Trio works, showing monies from the State for state reimbursement and state homestead reimbursement. They don't show up on the reports because that would actually create double dipping and that's no good. We get it and she can explain it to you if you want her to. We talked about a little bit of a deficit in solid waste, but it looks like that is going to come along and be okay. We have very few questions about expenses, and we think everything is looking really good. I can get really specific if you want me to or answer any questions.

Van Thompson

They wanted to let us know that they thought we should retain the auditor we have.

Erb

Because it is so difficult to find anyone else.

Susan Ellis

We don't want to lose this auditor; if we have no contract and we have no auditor, that's worse.

Bates

I had a couple of questions. I was looking at the numbers. The revenues for solid waste, recycling numbers, looked like just 6% of the numbers for recycling. Did I get that right?

Susan Ellis

Solid Waste does look like it's showing a significant deficit on revenue. Irene says that there was \$16,000 as of last Friday, added to the solid waste revenues and when she's tracking it for the year going forward, it looks like we may be somewhere in the ballpark. Also, our expenses are running lower than anticipated, so it's not so bad.

Erb

We were hit in two different ways. The prices for the commodities are down all over the state, and because they are down, we've been more likely to hang on longer without bringing them to market. Because the price is so poor, we think things can only get better, but they haven't gotten much better. Besides the fact that we don't get as much when we deliver, we're not delivering as much, hoping things improve.

Bates

We optimistically hoped for \$125,000 but it looks like we've received \$8,800 but you said there has been a bit more come in recently.

Erb

It's not going to be a banner year. We're not going to get close to \$125,000 even though we were close to making it last year. We were on the way to that at the time that we set the budget, but it started to taper off towards the end of the year and has not picked back up.

Bates

Thank you. The other question I have is regarding the recreation tennis courts. I'm wondering if we can take that money out of the Lipson fund.

Ames

Ben uses the Lipson fund but it's not enough. \$2,000 a year on top of the Lipson fund is enough to maintain the tennis courts.

Bates

Okay. Are there other questions for the Budget Committee? It's good that we're well positioned.

Susan Ellis

We are in good shape, and we have wonderful people in our Town Office keeping an eye on things.

Bates

Thank you very much.

Land Use Permit Fees

Bates

This is the outcome of the March 27th review. Terry Brackett, Magan Wallace, Rick Erb, Anne Cox, Jerry Hall and Scott Vaitones have all done this over the last few weeks. Thank you very much.

Terry Brackett

Okay. I assume everyone received a copy of this handout. Are there any particular questions?

Cartwright

Just a thought on the solar fee. I assume that is for a solar installation of some kind. If we want to encourage that, I'm not sure we should charge \$100 for it. Maybe we should make that one free so we can encourage more solar.

Terry Brackett

There's quite a bit of solar going in now and they're paying the fee based on the cost of the project that they're putting in. So, if they're putting in a \$3,000 project, they are paying \$2 per \$1000 now. In some cases, this fee will be less because of the cost of the project.

Bates

This came up a couple of years ago. There was outrage that people were putting solar panels on the roof, and the assessor's agent was coming around, deciding that the house was therefore more valuable and

therefore having to pay more property tax. We did waive that, so even if the assessor stated a house is worth more because of solar panels, it doesn't count into the appraised value. We fixed that problem.

Cartwright

I know it's not a lot if you're spending \$3000 on a project, but it might be an incentive.

Van Thompson

I think the average solar price is not \$3,000.

Terry Brackett

It's closer to \$30,000.

Terry Brackett

I'll go into the history of this. Magan and I have been talking about our fees for quite some time. She took it upon herself to get the fee schedule from several different towns: Warren, Union, Washington, Damariscotta and other similar sized towns. We looked at the cost and also at what other towns charge for and we found that we were way behind the ball on other items that are charged for, and we still are. We didn't try to solve that problem, but we tried to make things more equitable and fairer for everyone, such as the first two items on the sheet. For building permit cost, by going to a square foot price, it takes out the guesswork of what the cost is going to be. Sometimes people are very accurate with that and other times they are way under. If I'm doing a project for myself, and you're doing a project and hiring a contractor, you're paying on the labor costs, but I might not put the labor cost in, so by the square foot price, it's the same thing. I did look at a permit that just came in. They paid according to the cost of the project. I figured it out by the square foot price. It was a difficult one to do because an architect designed it and he didn't know how to draw a straight line. I came up with about \$700 less by the square footage. I think in the long run, it evens out. The other thing is that sometimes we get projects that come in and they really have to have that permit and they have no idea what the project is going to cost and can only give an estimate. Occasionally, I've had contractors come back to advise that they owe more money for the permit, but most of the time, you never see them again. Any other questions?

Elwell

Do you and the others feel comfortable with this?

Terry Brackett

I think everyone was pretty comfortable with it at the last meeting.

Bates

What we want to stress is making things more equitable. If the Select Board decides to go ahead with this, we need to have a public hearing on the 15th or the next time we meet in order to get the notice in the paper.

Erb

I think we would be joining other towns that use this methodology. It's much more common now.

Terry Brackett

I'm not saying that we have to be just like every other town, but I think most other towns use a square foot price. We have a lot of fixed costs in there because after you get by the first three items, almost everything else is at a fixed price.

Bates

It seems to me, Terry, the whole thing is very timely, because in some of the ordinances, like the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, we have fees that are built into the ordinance, which is really difficult because if you want to change them, then you have to go to the public and get a vote on the whole ordinance. Assuming that the Land Use Ordinance is passed on May 8th, that new land ordinance very distinctly has rules in the ordinance, and the fee structure is amenable to this and is on a separate page. This is a very timely occasion to be looking at all of this and assuming the ordinance passes, and assuming that the public hearing is uneventful, then I think it will be a big step forward to have this separate arrangement.

Terry Brackett

These fees haven't been adjusted since 2012.

Bates

Building them into the ordinance was a very strange idea.

Cartwright

You say we're still somewhat of a bargain compared to some of our surrounding towns.

Terry Brackett

The square foot price of 45 cents is probably close to the high end, but not the highest. That should last us for a number of years. We're definitely not the highest one around.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Thompson, to accept CEO Terry Brackett's findings and recommendations regarding land use permit fees, and schedule a public hearing, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Minutes

A motion was made by Cartwright, seconded by Thompson, to approve the April 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes, as corrected, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Communications**Wayne Sawyer**

I received a couple of phone calls from folks involved in aquaculture. Having attended the aquaculture meeting in Thomaston, they seem to be more worried than I think they need to be.

Warrant

Ames

There is nothing out of the ordinary other than the annual Fire Department training trip out of state and the school paid its invoices.

Bates

Okay, I will sign it and get it going. Thank you.

Town Manager Report

Erb

Today was the day I had set a deadline for the real estate agents to submit proposals and we have heard from five of them, all with local connections. Karen Rikalla of St. George Realty, Diane Hall of True Hall, Katy Miller of The Bean Group, Penney Read of Midcoast Realty Group, and Fletcher McNaboe of City and Harbor Real Estate Group. They all submitted. I've looked through them very briefly but have not dug into them at all. I wondered if one or more of the Select Board members would work with me to review them, and then we can take them up at a future meeting? Is anybody interested?

Bates

Steve, I'm looking at you.

Van

I will help also.

Erb

There was a lot of interest in this, if only because it is so hard to find listings right now. I had some contact with Bob Gingras, the assessor's agent that we use, and he knows that we are looking at revaluation. He threw out a number. It was, as you would guess, a pretty high number. We would still have a way to go on our reserve funds to pay for it. The other thing he said was, if he were doing it, he would probably start it in 2025 and finish in 2026, so that's way out there. I also spoke with the assessor who works for Camden, Kerry Leichtman. I think he also has picked up Rockport as well. He thought that there are others that we might want to consider and thought that two years in his mind was longer than needed for the number of parcels we have. He was surprised it would be considered a two-year project. I really think I ought to dig into it a little deeper and if that is what the Board would like, I will report back to you.

Elwell

Rockland is getting ready to reevaluate.

Erb

It's a statewide issue.

Cartwright

Did he give you a figure?

Erb

He did. I'm reluctant to put it out there. Looking ahead to 2026, at the rate we are going, we won't have enough.

Bates

Bob Gingras mentioned that the Board could always authorize a "paper eval" where basically we calculate that a house worth X, is multiplied by a factor of Y which could be 20% or something like that, and that would automatically bring the average of the price back so that we get the full State allowances. This is going to be an issue coming up where people won't appear to get their full homestead exemption because the values will fall out of the accepted range. As an interim measure, we could do that.

Erb

They usually call them updates. We did one in Kennebunk and we broke it down by the section of town because we had a beach area that was very different than rural West Kennebunk, and they applied the factor based on location. It did buy us some time.

Van Thompson

When we looked at our data, it was the rural areas that went up.

Bates

It still doesn't take into account the scatter which is quite large. I think Rick's idea of checking to see if there are other interested companies out there is a great thing to explore.

Erb

It would be good to have an agenda item to talk about what I find, how many are out there and a ballpark for what they would charge, at the same time we discuss alternatives, such as an update. We have some things to talk about regarding the Harbor Committee, but I may wait for that report.

We have the warrant for the school budget meeting, and that's coming up. I spoke with Mike and their situation is not that much different than the town and the county. We're all up this year. The school had some success in bringing theirs down from where it had been. What you'll see, is an increase in school budget of 9.73%, the town ended up around 11.4%, and the county up 17.3%. Everybody is up and I'm hearing it in other towns too, a substantial increase. I do think from my quick calculation, we're probably going to be talking about a rate increase in the area of 10 -11%. By percentage, the school was the lowest. It's also the largest piece of the tax rate. That helps bring it down to the low end. The county is the smallest in dollar amount but had the highest percentage increase. Obviously, you're going to get more information. We'll be signing later tonight for the school but that's where we stand.

For the Town Meeting, David Kenney is the name of the moderator that we will be proposing. He is the Town Manager in Lincolnville. I think you're going to like him. He has a nice way with people for sure. He asked me a few questions about the Town Meeting and most of them I could answer. I have only been to one. He wondered if there were any particular traditions that we incorporate into it.

Elwell

Not really.

Committee Reports

Harbor Committee

Erb

The Committee met and has signed contracts now with the CPM contractors. The office trailer is on site now and some large deliveries of steel will be coming up within the next month. We had a discussion about the need for a public information meeting and the Committee has chosen to hold that on Thursday evening on May 11th.

Bates

What time will that be?

Erb

7pm. Today, Bill Mroz put together an outline that talks about plan evolution, grant process, the budget, expectations during construction and post construction plans, including his suggestions, which were really helpful. We had some discussion on Thursday night. The issues here are going to be congestion and particularly parking and loss of parking. It's obviously going to be summertime when construction is going on. It's a lengthy enough project that there is no way to schedule this without working there in summer. They shut down in January. They're not going to work in the spring, leave and come back in the fall. It's not realistic that any company is going to be willing to do that. We need to have some discussions with people. It's going to be a challenge, for sure. but we're all committed to this project. It's going to happen.

Elwell

There was talk about reaching out to the business owners to keep them informed because there is a lot of concern about it affecting businesses. Also, the Harbor Committee made a decision to disallow parking on the existing parking lot because right now Allen's Island workers are parking there. The work vehicles can go somewhere else and then there will only be foot traffic to the dinghy boat.

Erb

We're talking about using the fire station for auxiliary parking.

Elwell

They don't use the Drift Inn Rd. parking lot in the summer, so that is available. The days of parking there to go out on the island to work is going to be over. The only spaces we have to provide are the two spaces for the family we received the land from.

Erb

I think there was a feeling that once you take away the parking, because we have to during the construction, it's not going to go back to the way it was.

Elwell

If work crews park there, it is defeating the purpose of having space for someone that wants to launch their boat and go for a boat ride. They could park somewhere else, and their boss could be responsible.

Erb

We talked about the large tractor trailer trucks that do come in and as I understand, it's common for them to pull onto the boat ramp and then back up from there and that should still work.

Elwell

CPM will work with the delivery trucks and help them get around and the Town Office would be the number to call if you have a problem, versus going to the foreman down there all the time.

Erb

Every bit of contact we've had with CPM has been very positive so far, and the Committee felt that way. We can work with these guys.

Bates

At seven o'clock here, Bill Mroz is going to make a presentation and the rest of the committee will be there to answer questions.

Erb

Bill probably will. He was putting together an outline and some of it was handed to Dan, some of it to me. We will have CPM here and we'll also have Noel Mussen here.

Bates

I remember that Bill did the initial presentations, nine years ago.

Cartwright

Rick, is there some way to get the word out, especially to Port Clyde people?

Erb

We will. I'm open to suggestions on that. I wrote a notice for the newsletter and can probably put it on the website tomorrow.

Conservation Committee

Cartwright

I sent out a draft. I think it'd be really cool to have a big tree contest in St. George and find out what the oldest or the biggest trees are.

Bates Planning Board 7:00pm April 11 Meeting

1. The application to replace an existing shed with an enlarged one at 38 Wahebe Road was accepted as complete; satisfying section 12C-4 of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, the application was approved, with the condition that within 90 days of approval, the applicant file the 2016 and 2023 additions with the County Registry of Deeds, in accordance with section 12C-1-d of the same ordinance.

2. The application to install a 5'x154' granite cribbing supported pier, a seasonal 3'x50' ramp and 16'x26' wood float at 165 Howards Head Road was accepted as complete. With the Army Corps and DEP permits in hand and satisfying the standards of Section 15C and 16D in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, the application was approved.

Shellfish Committee

Wayne Sawyer

They had a special meeting some time ago. I went, and so did a lot of other people who are locally involved with aquaculture. The two people leading the meeting were people who were in favor of an aquaculture moratorium and said that Waldoboro had already enacted one. I don't think we need a moratorium. I think we handle the business of aquaculture quite nicely. We have people who raise oysters, and several lobstermen who grow kelp instead of lobsters. We've managed to approve all that but there were some people on the Shellfish Committee who wanted this moratorium and then you sent out something that said, "To heck with moratoriums."

Bates

I think it originated from the State which said, in fact, that it's not in the jurisdiction of GRISMO or any of these other small communities.

Cartwright

It wouldn't be up to us anyway, is what you are saying.

Elwell

The leases are under DMR control, so the Town has no say one way or the other.

Wayne Sawyer

I'm not going to be on the Select Board anymore. We need someone who can bring their opinion to the Board. They're not going to change. I think they're going to want a moratorium and that's the reason for the phone calls.

Cartwright

What was your sense of why they really want the moratorium?

Wayne Sawyer

The two people that were there to lead the workshop were from somewhere important, maybe even the State. Maybe I should have taken notes, but I didn't. They caught the attention of the Committee except for me, for some reason and I am going off the Board. They also caught the attention of some people who are now involved in aquaculture. The kelp people advised they only have experimental licenses, and the oyster people the same. They're not as big or as productive as they want them to be. I think some of the Select Persons on the Committee are interested in a moratorium. As I see it, St. George is going to come out and say they will have to do it without us.

Bates

If there were to be a moratorium with GRISMO, every one of the five towns would need to vote on this. It can't be done unilaterally by the committee itself. This would take a long time. Some towns may decide to go that route, but there's no reason for St. George and the people in this area to do so if they think it's a bad idea.

Wayne Sawyer

GRISMO believes their business is protecting clams.

Elwell

One of their arguments is that the oysters suck in the clam seeds and filters that but on the other side, if you read about it, the clams do the same thing to the oysters. One of GRISMO's issues is wild oysters in the Damariscotta River. They want them to use sterile seeds so they cannot reproduce but that costs money.

Van Thompson

Was there an explanation as to why the moratorium was for six months?

Bates

Randy arranged to have Afton Hupper from the Maine Aquaculture Association come and talk to us next Monday, so we'll be educated on many questions.

Elwell

The DMR is so understaffed that some companies with experimental leases have applied for a regular lease, but they can't get one. I support aquaculture because the lobster business is getting harder and if there's a way to make money, then why not?

Sign Warrants for School District Budget Meeting & Budget Validation Referendum

Bates

Just to remind you, we're required to countersign this. It was drawn up by the school.

Bates

Mike was very pleased that several things went in favor of the school. When Mike came to talk to us a couple of weeks ago, there were unknowns like health insurance and those turned out not to be as large an increase as they were expecting.

Erb

It looks like they pulled another \$100,000 out of the fund balance.

Consider Application for Dockside Seafood Liquor Licence

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, after holding a Public Hearing, to approve the application for the Dockside Seafood Liquor License, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Elwell

I thought these were under the control of the State.

Erb

The State tells me that the towns have quite a bit of authority.

Elwell

I believe there is an appeal process.

Erb

There is.

Renovating Downstairs Meeting Room

Bates

The last thing on the agenda is renovation of the downstairs meeting room and I think we will expand the discussion to improve the general facilities as well. My thought about putting this issue on the agenda is since the pandemic started in March 2020, we've either had hybrid meetings up here, or we've met remotely, and we've stopped meeting downstairs like we used to. Meetings here have their advantages, but because other people have meetings here and things get rearranged, we hope to renovate the space downstairs and make it usable. For a hybrid meeting, we need computer equipment and maybe we share the owl but at least we need to have the capabilities of having hybrid meetings downstairs. We could buy nice tables so everyone can see each other, and put on a new coat of paint. Rick tells me there is money to work with.

Erb

We have money to work with. Property maintenance for this building is probably around \$14,000.

Elwell

Why don't you come back to us with an estimate. I think it is a good idea.

Erb

Richard, were you thinking about a permanent zoom setup, just for downstairs, that wouldn't be moved?

Bates

It would just be for the downstairs.

Erb

It would avoid some of the problems that we've had with the owl.

Elwell

If we're going to do it, I would like to see us improve the technology, something like the school put in, the Promethian boards, basically flat touch screens that are more advanced. What we have is outdated.

Bates

Van pointed out that with the governor coming, we really ought to have a good place and a good way of presenting.

Van Thompson

I'm thinking that given the way this is set up, we could hang something in that same position on the ceiling. We could rent a decent projector.

Elwell

Check with the school. They have one.

Van Thompson

A high-powered projector that works in the gym?

Elwell

Yes. He takes it in the gym when they have their community meetings. It would save money. I'm sure they'll let you borrow it.

Bates

We can separate the two issues of audiovisual equipment up here from what is needed downstairs.

Van Thompson

We should update the technology and might as well do both at the same time.

Loreen Meyer

You have all been cutting in and out all night and at times, it sounds like you're all underwater, and at other times, it's really sharp and harsh. Something is not right.

Bates

Loreen, I'm sorry you've had trouble listening. The volume on the microphone here is set at its maximum so I think the problem is, we're not speaking loud enough.

Loreen Meyer

It's an electronic thing because there's been feedback. There's been some sort of cross talk coming through, picking something else up. It's not just a matter of heads being turned away. Something is not right with the audio.

Elwell

If we're going to renovate the downstairs, I'd assume we have good technology put in because other committees will be using it.

Bates

I'd like to suggest that we could put this on Van's shoulders.

Bates

Van can get together with Rick and figure out what makes sense to make a good meeting space.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, to adjourn the Select Board meeting, and by a unanimous roll call vote, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:20p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Taylor
Recording Secretary
Town of St. George, Maine