

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS
St. George Town Office
MEETING MINUTES
November 27, 2023

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Steve Cartwright, Rick Erb, Wendy Carr, Randy Elwell, Irene Ames, Jane Conrad, Chair Van Thomson, Bill Lane, David Percival, (other members of Budget and Harbor Committees?). Ryan Cline, Nick Latham, Dan Morris, Bill Mroz, Ben Norton and Gerry Cushman.

Via Zoom: Present were Sandra Roak, Loreen Meyer and Carol Arness.

Quorum

A quorum was present.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Adjustments to the Agenda

The following agenda items were moved to the beginning of the agenda:

Meet with the Town's representative to the Knox County Budget Committee

Meet with Gartley & Dorsky Engineers Regarding Their Evaluation of Drift Inn Road

Hear Recommendations from the Harbor Committee for the Port Clyde Public Landing

Meet with the Town's representative to the Knox County Budget Committee

Thompson

Nick, I think the Committee is looking for just a little review about how the budget process proceeds.

The only thing I got from the budget was from Wendy on the 31st in the afternoon, with the idea that the public meeting was on the second, which doesn't allow a lot of time to get a real handle on what's going on. I think that the feeling of general chatter here in the in the Select Board is we feel as if we're kind of divorced from the process and want to be a little bit more involved. Perhaps with you just reviewing with us what we think are some of our priorities. I think you saw the two letters that we wrote regarding GIS and MCOG.

Nick Latham

I wasn't copied on them, but I saw them from the county last week.

Thompson

Yes, last week. We didn't realize that and come up in terms of possible cuts and funding. I found out through the Commission.

Nick Latham

When you say cuts in funding what do you mean?

Thompson

I understood that there was a proposal to cut some of the funding for GIS in what was brought up. I wasn't party to it. I just heard that this was the case. And the same thing was a consideration of a cut in in MCOG. The Midcoast Council of Governments is really playing a key role in where we are going for our fundraising, looking at anything we have to do with resiliency and dealing with sea level rise and those types of things. And also, our comprehensive plan, which is a big thing for us right now. There are a number of these things that sort of come together.

Nick Latham

I can address that. As far as I know, and I've attended every meeting we've had, there were four of them. I don't recall any mention of cutting the MCOG budget at all.

Thompson

I'm glad to hear that because that's not what I've heard.

Nick Latham

It's the first time I can remember that we really had very little discussion about it, and it was approved without any concern or conversations. I can remember the first few years where we spent quite a bit of time, a disproportionate amount of time, but apparently that entity has gone through a number of changes and my personal opinion is the person presenting the last two years has done a really good job of presenting what they do. I think it's at the point where the county for the last two years is now funding all of it as opposed to letting the individual municipalities pay directly.

Erb

I don't believe we ever paid direct dues, but I understood some towns did.

Nick Latham

There was Camden, Rockport, Rockland, Thomaston and maybe Union, paying directly and so there was the question of what the county was going to do and what their share was going to be in the overall

scheme of things; it's a fraction of the overall budget. I don't recall any discussion about opposition to what their request was. As far as the emergency management, at the at the very first meeting of the budget, there was a question that there was a position being asked for that had previously been funded by grants and then those grants are no longer available. The person who had been running that position for the last ten or twelve years had retired and there was the request by Candice Richards, who's the department manager over there, to fund that position. And that in the initial budget was not put forward by the County Administrator, Andrew Hart. There was a small increase and one of the Board Members, Budget Committee Member, proposed cutting \$10,000, not specific to GIS or anything, it was just a cut of \$10,000. And that's just a straw vote. And that's just an indication but that's what you heard. I know I abstained from that vote because I didn't feel it was the appropriate time to address that for me. And let me back up just a second. I just want to address that specific issue and I will put that to rest. As of last week, there still is an issue about funding the position that had been funded before by grants. There was never any specific mention of cutting back on the GIS position. It was just cut \$10,000, an arbitrary number thrown in there. As far as getting all of this information in a timely manner. I would say I agree with you. I have my own issues about that. We received our copy. The Budget Committee Members received it on a Monday. I'm not quite sure what the day was, Monday before the first meeting.

Thompson

The public meeting was on the second.

Nick Latham

Yes. I wasn't available to pick it up on Monday, so I got it Tuesday morning, so I had two days basically, to look at it. I know that there was a delay in the county in getting the department heads; there was some delay that pushed it back a week but nevertheless that's how we started. So, we were behind the eight ball.

Thompson

I suppose then in looking forward to the future, realizing that this is going on in this timeframe now, it would probably be handy if once a year or every other year we met with you just to review some of our priorities so you understand where we're coming from as the Select Board and where we are with our Comprehensive Plan, because it all comes together.

Nick Latham

How would you like to do that? I have had contact with Rick. This year, we did have some advanced warning about some things that were coming down the road. It was in the papers, and everyone knew that there were issues with the staffing of the communications department as well as the sheriff's and the jail, and there still are some staffing issues there. I'm totally available to that.

Thompson

Okay. Many of us just didn't know you. It is part of that process. We'd like to make sure we interact in the future.

Nick Latham

I am pleased to share my view with you.

Thompson

In a brief nutshell, we don't really fully understand the role of the Budget Committee relative to the Commission in putting things together.

Nick Latham

How it works, and Knox County apparently is one of two counties that that operate where the Budget Committee Members are elected, we get this budget book, we go through it, we show up, Andrew Hunt organizes, and we review four or five departments on any given day. It starts at the end of October and goes on to the end of November. The Budget Committee reviews each department, comes in, presents their budget and at the conclusion of each department's presentation, there's a straw vote; it's not binding or anything. It's just to get an indication of what are the issues. Where does that department stand in terms of its funding or budget request. That does identify certain issues and that's the opportunity for the individual Budget Committee Members to go through line by line. And it's literally that's how we do it.

Thompson

Similar to our Budget Committee.

Nick Latham

At the end of the last meeting, which we had last Thursday, all the departments came back if we had questions and some of them did have additional questions. At the last meeting, we voted on a budget, again by department. We're about, I think, \$40,000 apart from the revised submitted budget of over \$12 million. Fundamentally, the biggest issue is that that one staffing position at the EMA, that's I think the Research and Operations Manager, or something like that. What will happen now is they will meet in another week and a half, a week from Thursday I think, to vote on the final budget. The way it works is there will be a motion made to approve a budget of \$12,000,536. The budget committee will vote on that. If that number is not approved, that's the only number, we're voting on a bottom-line number. If that number is not approved by a majority of the Budget Committee, I think six out of nine, then it's not approved but the Commissioners vote to approve that.

Thompson

They agree with the Budget Committee.

Nick Latham

Not with the Budget Committee, agreeing with the submitted budget. Then it goes back to the Budget Committee and if the Budget Committee overrules that with six members to overrule it or two thirds, then it's overturned, and the lower number is accepted.

Conrad

If the Budget Committee passes it initially, it doesn't go to the county?

Nick Latham

It goes to the Commission. They have to sign off on it too. The Commissioners meet every week throughout the year. They're very familiar with all of the departments. The Budget Committee members meet once a year for about five weeks. We can, on our own, arrange to meet with department heads. I've done that in the past. I will be meeting this Friday with Candace Richards to go over her budget proposal because I did not vote in favor of it last week. I wanted the opportunity to discuss that with her. It is not a question of the GIS portion of her budget. It is just simply for that one position, in light of all of the other increases. I wasn't convinced of the need for that which is not to say that I'm against it. I just need to talk to her.

Nick Latham

We are looking at a budget that is, after some modifications that have come in, a 17% increase on top of a 17% increase last year. So, we're looking at a cumulative 35 or 36% increase.

Thompson

Over the two-year period.

Nick Latham

It's the first time in my seven years on the Budget Committee that the county is exceeding the allowable tax assessment limit. Every year before this, we hadn't budgeted the full amount, to the tune of somewhere between \$300,000 and \$500,000 a year. This is the first time we're over it by \$30,000 or something. Separately, with the jail budgets, we are over that allowable tax assessment. I'm not quite sure how that works, except they're held as a separate entity by the state and the state has a lot of control over what they can spend or what the state will contribute to the county jail. We're dealing this year with a COLA increase in salaries of 8.6%, I'm sure that's not news to anyone, versus a 5% last year, on top of the CPI 2.8%. We have to realize that staffing is the biggest piece of this budget. For the sheriff's office, it's 88%, for the jail it is 68%, for communications it is 80% and total county wide it's over 70%. The Budget Committee has nothing to do with that. We have no say because that's negotiated between the county and the individual unions. Some of those negotiations apparently are still going on. So again, we have no control over that. The Budget Committee is really just playing on the margins and those three departments: the jail, the Sheriff's patrol division and communications, which is kind of a separate line item, it's not included because it's charged out to each of the municipalities, but of the total including the

communications, those three departments account for over 70% of the budget. So, you have three departments accounting for 70% of the budget, and salary and wages or personnel costs accounting for 70%. We don't have a lot of say there. I can say that the sheriff's department is now, I think at 80% as is the jail, but they've been competing with other local entities.

Erb

Are you talking about the staffing percentage?

Nick Latham

Yes, for staffing. The communications are budgeted for fourteen staff, and they now have five. They have some in the pipeline, but there is significant training for three months and then another three months or so. We're having to pay \$200,000 for an outside consultant while having also to budget fully for those fourteen positions.

Thompson

I appreciate it. It's the nature of what is there and this is just the type of thing that we very much appreciate hearing about one way or another. We understand. Are there any other questions from the committee?

Conrad

When do you expect the county commissioners to be voting on a budget?

Nick Latham

I believe it's the first Thursday in December and we will meet then and that will be the public meeting to approve the budget.

Thompson

The idea is to submit it to the state by the end of December.

Nick Latham

Yes, they have to submit it and they needed two weeks also to publish it. It's a public meeting; anyone is welcome to attend. There may be one or two people who attended the very first meeting. We've had excellent participation from all the departments. I think that all of the departments are very conscientious about their budgets. That's been my impression since I started doing this seven years ago.

Thompson

In review of all the requests for computers and so forth, the numbers that they are throwing out are from four years ago, and the prices have come down tremendously since then.

Nick Latham

There was a request for quite a few computers this year. Some of them have been funded under ARPA. I will say that there was another Budget Committee Member who also noticed that, was very concerned and has asked to see if there's another way that they can purchase them at a more advantageous price.

Thompson

We have been through that in terms of some of the things that we have just done with our communications. You can get one hell of a computer for about \$450. You need to add a monitor to it but it has all kinds of capabilities with Windows and so forth.

Nick Latham

I know that the sheriff's department needs some special computers. It's going to be a big hit on all the municipalities.

Speaker?

Is this something that you project is going to continue to be a big hit or is there a way that you can make it easier?

Nick Latham

I know a number of the Budget Committee Members were saying they need to hold the line. We had a conversation, just walking out on the last year, and then everything blew up this summer. We knew that we were seriously understaffed, and there was a serious pay issue. I'd like to say that next year we will go back and look at increases in the range of somewhere between 2% and 4%, the way it usually was before. We can kind of chip away at little pieces here and there. I would like to think so. With the ARPA funds, we've been able to acquire a lot of items that had been requested that had been put off. We've been able to do some capital things, such as the HVAC system for the for the jail that's been needed. I will say the jail is kind of a wild card because it's an old building. I've been there a couple of times. I wouldn't be surprised at some point if they came and said we need to build a new jail. That may be five years down the road. It's an old jail. We're spending a lot of money repairing things. I think we can get back to staff hopefully. The union agreements are for one year at a time.

Meet with Gartley & Dorsky Engineers Regarding the Evaluation of Drift Inn Road

Erb

For those of you who don't know, Bill Lane of Gartley & Dorsky has done quite a bit of work for the town over the years. We were really happy to have him involved in this project here. We were funded by MEMA, the Maine Emergency Management Agency, for more or less a formal assessment and planning tool for the Drift Inn Road, trying to deal with the issues which we saw today, as a matter of fact. We have heavy winds and high seas. That is probably the most likely place for us to have problems and so

there was quite a bit of debris on the road. Today, Stevie went down with a plow and plowed it off and then we cleaned up the rest of it after that as well. The other thing we run into is the old stone culvert there. It gets plugged but it wasn't as bad today as it has been partly because of some sort of short-term steps that we've taken. Some of the previous members of the board were very encouraging about moving ahead with a plan for that particular area. Possibly, that that might be the next step towards grant funds to actually do the construction. So that's what we asked Bill to do. I have a couple of questions for him, but I'll let him explain what he's seen down there and the kind of project that we might be looking at.

Bill Lane

Thanks Rick. Good evening. I'm Bill Lane from Gartley & Dorsky Engineering and Surveying. So, the focus that we've had is to resolve this ongoing maintenance issue that Rick has been describing and that Steve described. It takes resources from the town to keep the road operational and the culvert functioning. The existing stone culvert is aged and doesn't have adequate size by current sizing standards. It probably would continue to function but is beleaguered by this possibility of it being fouled by seaborne rock, trees, branches, and stuff that gets into the culvert and blocks it makes it less functional. So, our proposal would be to deal with that along with the road grade adjacent to the beach. This is a VE19 zone according to the current flood zone map. We cannot bring this road up nine feet so that is what we're proposing to do with the road at its low point at elevation VE10. Comparing that to VE19, you see we've got kind of a disconnect. And the VE part of it is storm energy that causes that risk factor to create that 100-year flood zone in this area. We are proposing to take it above still water flood elevation which is something slightly north of elevation 11 to the lowest point in the road as it's regraded, as shown on these plans at elevation 12. So, it's approximately (Inaudible) still water flood elevation There's still going to be storm energy that will probably over wash the road at times.

Thompson

Generally, that's in the neighborhood of a storm surge of three feet and then you've got wave action.

Bill Lane

Correct. And to deal with that energy component, we are also armoring or proposing to armor the entirety of the seaward edge with riprap. By comparison to the existing culvert, which is depicted in blue, which is kind of square to the road and pointing straight into the back of the cove, we are suggesting after discussions with Rick, a skewed alignment of approximately 15 degrees so it does not cross the road square and also does not aim its outlet directly into the back of the cove. It is slightly oblique and so hopefully that would in combination with some rocks placed in the intertidal area prevent that continued condition of seaborne rock blocking this passage. The proposed culvert is a 12-foot concrete box culvert which is substantially larger than the approximately four by five existing stone culvert. This would be a culvert with independent precast footings or cast in place footings for that matter that we design and develop and then the span of the culvert itself to convey the brook would be 12 feet. That's largely driven by accommodating the current permitting requirements of the US Army

Corps of Engineers and building in some resiliency for future higher storm intensities over and above what the expected baseload is.

Thompson

Would you put it in, so it has an angle to it?

Bill Lane

The angle compared to the road is skewed.

Thompson

That's lateral. I'm talking about the vertical.

Bill Lane

The pitch of the road is an open bottom bias culvert and so that's the channel elevation that would be establishing where the stream flow is. We're looking to essentially let the stream be as naturalized as possible as the crossing passes over.

Cartwright

At the culvert what would be the grade of the road compared to what it is now, how many feet above the existing.

Bill Lane

Two feet higher.

Cartwright

And that would extend back away and then it would become less and decrease?

Bill Lane

Yes. We're trying to keep the road self-draining throughout. We're putting some low points in as we transit through this section, but we're really not tying back to an existing elevation 14 here and we're filling slightly over an existing 4.75 with elevation 13 proposed here. So, we're creating a reasonable amount of new grading to make this road roll a slight amount to drain adequately with crowding as well and not getting any higher than that one foot above the water, largely owing to scale of project and scope of project as well as making the reasonable tie ins for the adjacent properties.

Thompson

Steve, that's shown in the cross section on the red line and the existing road level is there in green.

Cartwright

I see it.

Carr

Does it involve taking anyone's property or are you changing the outline of the road?

Bill Lane

At this point, we're using the existing right of way, utilizing the entirety of it; you can see the grading goes right to the right (Inaudible).

Carr

But what about on the inland side?

Bill Lane

Similarly. About the only place where we're really doing something consequential, grade wise, is where we're going to bring a little bit of fill into that driveway, so they won't have as much of a gully as they presently do.

Carr

Have the property owners participated in any of this? Are they on the Resiliency Committee or have they come to any meetings?

Bill Lane

Not that I'm aware of.

Erb

Those steps are yet to come. I thought we would first do a presentation to the Select Board.

Cartwright

That driveway isn't actually used. You can tell.

Thompson

The other part of that is you're removing a culvert that's there, and you shifted it to take care of the natural drainage and that vertical line that we're seeing is a second culvert that you're putting in. That's drainage from that area, so they've changing the overall orientation to make that self-draining in that area. Instead of the culvert running towards the creek, it runs out towards the ocean.

Bill Lane

From this point forward, that's correct. That's largely a function of raising the road so much we've had to provide the one cross culvert in these environments.

Cartwright

This is maybe a difficult question, but how long do you think this would last given projections for sea level rise? How much time are we buying by doing this major project?

Bill Lane

It depends on which of the guidance numbers you might want to try to employ. As I understand it, the 2050 number from NOAA is the most optimistic. I was slightly prepped for the question so I can quote from NOAA Corps of Engineers from the 25th, "you can get half a foot rise to 2.25 feet rise by 2100. I don't think that this road is probably passable at the worst of the projections, but still, for whatever reason, the corps of engineers know a low rate rise projection would still have less than a foot rise. I'm not sure that I've got a reason to be defending one estimate from the government or the other. And just to fill that in, it'd be seven feet more of water in the worst of those modeling iterations.

Elwell

You plan to put riprap on the beach side. I've seen storms that washed pretty big rocks up on the road. How are you going to keep the riffraff from doing the same thing.

Bill Lane

As Rick might have related, some of the rocks that are in that intertidal area there are now moving, so we're going to go to school on that. I think the least dimension on any of these rocks is three feet. And certainly, our key stones are generally in the least dimension a four feet scale when we tow in a riprap stabilization scenario.

Erb

That's heavily used for recreation. I think, if we can try to find the right time of year to do it, that that would be appreciated.

Bill Lane

There's two disconnects, the stabilizations are probably better undertaken in cold weather so we might want to see this project phased. The Army Corps of Engineers has a very discreet window without getting additional permissions from them. The programmatic general permit that runs from 2020 to 2025 has a time window of January 15th to September 30th for instream work and for culvert work. In Lincolnville, we actually had a culvert of this size go in from approximately September 10th to September 30th, and they pulled it off. In terms of logistics, we have to get public information out there ahead of time, close the road and ensure that users of the beach and users up the road are cognizant of the closure.

Thompson

Can I ask a fundamental question? Do we have a ballpark that we could talk about financially here?

Erb

I don't think we do. I asked the same question today.

Bill Lane

It's early, so it's combining some time considerations as to when the town might actually be doing it. In today's dollars, you are probably looking at creeping up on half a million dollars, but I wouldn't want to be telling you that without any kind of analysis.

Thompson

That gives me a feel.

Erb

Of course, the hope is that we will receive grant funding.

Cartwright

Where was the Lincolnville one?

Bill Lane

Townhouse Rd.

Conrad

Is this option two something you've not talked about?

Bill Lane

Not significantly, no. Considering that these are going to act as impediments to a seaborne rack coming in, a different stone orientation. It's the stones that are in the intertidal area and how they're oriented.

Cartwright

Rick mentioned that it's a very popular beach for townspeople and people from away as well. Would there be a way to get down to the beach from the road because that's how people go now. There's a little path or two through the rocks.

Bill Lane

They would have to basically be coming off the ledge, closer to the parking area because the stabilizations are going to be approximately two to one across slope and it's not at the scale of rock that we're anticipating. It's not a very workable iteration to try and put in a pedestrian accommodation because you'd be on the hook for an ADA accessible route. I think the way that historically folks walk off the ledge is probably going to be the approach to get to the beach.

Thompson

What is the road width?

Bill Lane

Twenty feet right of way and shoulders.

Cartwright

You wouldn't be changing the road under this design.

Bill Lane

Correct. We're making it more decidedly 20 feet.

Cartwright

Would the unofficial parking still be there?

Bill Lane

We're showing it to remain right now on the south side of the road. We're trying hurriedly to tie down on the north side of the road.

Thompson

Okay, nothing further. Thank you.

Gerry Cushman

I'm 54 years old and I live in Port Clyde and trust me, what Randy is saying about scraping Drift Inn Rd. It has been happening for as long as I can remember. I'm just sorry, it just has. Port Clyde flooding out is not something new. (Inaudible), the best option we found about erosion control is stacking granite. Why wouldn't you just get rid of the riprap? You know that riprap has holes and seeds in it and things like that. And at that price at thought half a million dollars, you got to come in within budget stacking granite and you would have your break wall to protect the road.

Bill Lane

I'd love to be able to do it if I could get a permit. But it's not permissible.

Conrad

What's the timeline in which we would need to make a decision to proceed. There are various steps here.

Thompson

On Tuesday there is a group that's putting together funding for resiliency and is just the type of thing we're trying to look into. We are beginning the process of looking. I'll give you that contact if you'd like to be involved in that. It is a Zoom meeting.

Erb

What I'd like to do is follow through with MEMA which funded this study and talk to them about what potential funding is coming up for construction.

Conrad

And with respect to the window with the Army Corps of Engineers, is there a time by which we would need to make some decisions?

Bill Lane

It really works back from when you genuinely expect to be able to bid and fund the project. The Army Corps of Engineers takes a long time to extract from an island. The Maine DEP is also involved with the work adjacent to the resource as new work in their hands under the Natural Resources Protection Act with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Navy.

Gerry Cushman

I just don't understand. It sounds like you're thinking that this idea would be a good idea, but it can't be permitted. I'm wondering if we're looking for sustainability and resiliency, wouldn't it make sense to be adopting the best ideas Maybe it's not the best idea. You can explain that or explain why you can't permit stacked granite.

Bill Lane

I will not defend why you can't permit stacked granite. We've not been able to for anything other than a water dependent use that genuinely is in need of it, doesn't have any place else to go, is zoned for it, and possibly even needs to stand on one leg and beg in and of itself. It's not a project that opens the door for considering other treatments, but these are all angular blasted material that we bring in with a least dimension typically of four feet which does not seem to be any kind of a problem. We're ten years into that paradigm now. With the realm of options, we probably could also look at concrete and precast armoring structures. We just don't have those available to us with the regulations.

Gerry Cushman

Could you use steel?

Bill Lane

I'm pretty sure we would not be able to get past the DEP. They have more of an aesthetic consideration.

Hear recommendations from the Harbor Committee for the Port Clyde Public Landing

Erb

We had a good turnout from the committee tonight. The committee has submitted recommendations and just took several meetings to develop them. They are, I think, rather straightforward and not overly down in the weeds. The idea is that we need to be planning now but we also recognize that until the project is done, and we begin using it, we probably don't know everything about how the property will be used. We need to be able to adapt. Now is the time to begin that process, when the project is new, to try to make these initial changes to how the harbor operates and how the wharf operates. Dan, do you or others want to go through this with the members? How do you want to do it?

Dan Morris

I just want to emphasize that this is something new for the Town of St. George. Our town landing is up until this point for recreational use only. While building a facility that's protecting the working waterfront and if we have working waterfront come to the facility, people who use it for profit. I want to emphasize this is just a start to get the facility off the ground. None of us pretend to know what the future is going to bring, so we tread very lightly in our proposal. One of the things that we would like to accomplish is that the facility is self-sustaining in the future, cost wise. We don't expect a lot of maintenance at the beginning but when there is maintenance, it is going to be very expensive. With commercial uses of the facility, whereas they are generating personal profit for the people using a public facility, we felt very strongly that there shouldn't be a town permit there. The cost of those permits when we held those discussions were all over the board and it is very difficult to develop a consensus amongst the committee about how high these fees should be. There's really no way to judge what the amounts really could be. We started conservatively with the amounts that the committee felt were conservative. It will take experience by the town to determine whether or not the fees are appropriate or should be changed one way or the other.

Conrad

Did you look at what other towns do, such as Searsport?

Dan Morris

Brian, the Harbormaster, and Dave Schmanska before him, did a very good job of providing the community with what other towns do. That's all over the chart.

Elwell

None are the same.

Dan Morris

Every town has a different idea of what an appropriate fee for use. They are all over the board. We tried to look at Stonington quite closely because they're a town an awful lot like St. George but even doing

that there were things about their fee structure that we really couldn't figure out or didn't really agree with.

Erb

Dan, did you have the feeling that some of the pricing in Stonington would probably not fly here?

Dan Morris

Yes.

Conrad

Was it high?

Erb

Yes.

Speaker?

They support that facility on selling fuel, that particular one; that is where the bulk of the money is made to support that facility. That's up in the air whether we ever want to get into that. I mean, we don't know if that is going to be an option. Saco supports its staff only with parking fees.

Conrad

There's not enough parking that we can sell.

Thompson

There is parking in some of these.

Conrad

I know but we don't have enough spots that we can support anything like that.

Dan Morris

The recommendation acknowledges that this won't solve the parking problem in Port Clyde, but it will hopefully improve it. We didn't set out to create a huge parking lot down there at all. We set out to build a working waterfront facility with a recreational component to it that we could adjust back and forth as needed, depending on how much activity we see in each one of those sectors and we're proposing these recommendations that Brian, the Harbormaster, have a wide discretion on how the facility is used, what part of it should be commercial working waterfront and the other part of it recreation and that could change during the busy season if he sees the need. What we've tried to do with his recommendations is build out a lot of town discretion at the beginning to adjust things as they may see it needs to be done. No one on the Harbor Committee is here to tell you that we're experts on parking, especially in Port Clyde so the Select Board may want to get some advice from the Planning Board or other committees in

town about the parking issue. That is the most highly visible issue in the town. We've spent a disproportionate amount of time as a Harbor Committee talking about parking which we know very little about. We've tried in these recommendations to take a commonsense approach as it pertains to parking. The key to the whole thing is we're going to have to put in a couple of seasons there to see how it all goes. We think that these recommendations will get us through those first two or three seasons and tell the town what needs to change during that process. We fully expect that changes will have to be made after two or three years of experience but it's hard to say at this point.

Conrad

What would need to happen to have fuel sold down there.

Dan Morris

Right now, we have not built into the project infrastructure underground delivery of fuel. In other words, fuel tanks and that sort of thing. Any fuel that we're looking at in the beginning of this project will be delivered by truck directly to a boat. That's pretty common with a larger drive-up fleet in Port Clyde. This facility could accommodate that but until you find out what the commercial uses are, you don't really know.

Conrad

So, we don't know whether the demand exists.

Dan Morris

We don't.

Nick Latham

A lot of the benchmarks for staff were people who weighed fish and charged by the pound and that type of stuff, and this is designed really as a self-use. People who come in and use the facility without any amenities or access to any help.

Elwell

A lot of towns with public landings charge by the pound but we didn't feel that we should be doing that.

Dan Morris

A lot of the activity down there may be seasonal, but we recommend an annual permit for ease of administration. The annual permit fees, and some of these we consider to be quite low, but because the activity they cover is more or less going to be seasonal, we didn't feel a high fee would be appropriate. In other words, somebody is buying an annual fee at a very low cost because they're only utilizing the permit five or six months out of the year.

This was Gerry Cushman

I'm going to give you kind of an idea how docks work, and this is from Cutler to Kittery. Most co-ops have a rule of thumb of running on \$.25 a pound. That's what we run the co-op on. Some go up towards \$.50 cents a pound. The more poundage you land at a facility, the more money you can bring that down and get closer to \$.25 cents. If a lobsterman lands 100,000 pounds at the Port Clyde co-op, and we have quite a few, he pays \$25,000 a year. I hear Ryan saying he's got a cooler and a place to park. Is this dock going to provide a place for him to hoist his lobsters out and put them on a truck. Is this place going to provide a place for him to (Inaudible) because you have now changed the game. If I can catch 100,000 pounds and only pay \$1,500 a year, accessibility is easy. All you have got to do every morning just drive to my freezer or you can just drive to the Port Clyde Co-op and go into the big cooler, grab the bait, go out fishing, come in with the crates and tie off to the float or your mooring, come in meet the truck and you get truck price. Truck price is the ultimate price from where the lobster goes and leaves these docks. The Port Clyde Co-op has to deduct \$1 off truck price. Truck price is \$6 right now and we give the fishermen \$5. If we do a good job running the co-op, we pay them dividends out of that dollar. For the last few years, we've been paying 75 cents because we've done a good job. We've got rid of our flood insurance because we paid the facility off. We had a mortgage and because of Katrina they changed the law, and our flood insurance was going to be \$45,000 a year even though we had grant money and rebuilt that so it could be flooded. We still had to pay for flood insurance. I just kind of want to give you guys a general idea. There is a formula out there. It's statewide and it's 25 to 50 cents to run a dock. The average catch in the state of Maine of a lobsterman is 45,000 pounds.

Conrad

What about capacity? Are there people going to do bring lobsters into Port Clyde that aren't going to the co-op and use it the way has been described?

Gerry Cushman

Oh, I think you'll get fishermen from Tenants Harbor. The truck price is \$7. I've been trying to digest this but it's going create a hiccup in the docks in Port Clyde. There's no doubt about it.

Ryan Cline

Where are you going to park?

Speaker?

You have a parking spot.

Ryan Cline

For who?

Speaker?

Is there a limit on how many fishermen can go out there?

Ryan Cline

With a parking spot? I'm just throwing a ballpark number, let's say ten spots.

Conrad

Have you guys talked about all this at the Harbor Committee?

Dan Morris

We have.

Elwell

Why is taking so long?

Dan Morris

The numbers that Gerry was quoted had been heard by the Committee before. I am a member of the co-op and know these same numbers. When this facility was first being discussed, and there was going to be a delay at that time between construction and what we were proposing at the time, some fishermen came to one of our meetings and asked if they could use that dock. There was a handful from Port Clyde. We proposed at that time a fee that would have amounted to I believe around \$6000 a year to use the dock plus they would have to carry some liability insurance and construction may interfere with their activities down the road. It was kind of a temporary thing, that we would try for a year. To a man, the people that paid for those meetings thought \$6,000 was outrageous and that was all based on an average catch. This dock provides no help whatsoever. Any fisherman using it is completely on their own. At the co-op or at the other dealership, you have people that will wait on you to help you weigh up lobster, help you get bait and fuel and get the product into a truck. It's very clean and very easy at the co-op or any other lobster dealer along the coast of Maine for lobster fishermen to just come to that dock, unload their lobster, get their fuel, put bait on for the next day and put them on a mooring. When you're on your own in a facility like this with no help, you're doing all the work and it's not for everyone. I've known a lot of fishermen in my time that have tried to do this on their own and almost invariably wore themselves out trying and came to the conclusion that it wasn't worth the extra money they could make. So, these numbers that we came up with, as I said, are very conservative. We discussed \$1,000 a month for weighing lobsters at this facility and that's not unreasonable. It really isn't unreasonable. So, like I said, we were all over the board on what were appropriate fees and we settled on what we thought were fairly low fees to start with, to see what would happen. I'm a co-op member and have a vested interest in the coop being successful and I don't want this dock to unfairly compete with the co-op or Linda Bean. The question that nobody knows the answer to at this point, is whether it would take too many boats away from those facilities. Like I said, these are recommendations. The Select Board certainly has the authority to change them. Any increases in these fees, you can rest assured, have been discussed over and over again by the committee over the years.

Conrad

And when do we think it's going to be operational?

Dan Morris

Correct me if I'm wrong Rick but I think the latest was late spring, or early summer 2024.

Erb

Right. I feel like it's pushed into July at this point,

Dan Morris

This recommendation suggests that (Inaudible) we just wait until the beginning of 2025.

Erb

It may be that we will want to take these recommendations after the Select Board has reviewed them and decided what your thoughts are, and put it into the ordinance, which potentially could be at the May Town Meeting

Conrad

I don't think we should have specific numbers in the ordinance.

Erb

We talked about that. Whatever we did would be something that the Select Board would have the authority to adjust.

Dan Morris

We recognize that some of these, if implemented into town regulations, have to probably go to a public hearing. At the public hearing, I would hope that any comments regarding the appropriateness of fees would be heard at that time. Like I said, this is a starting point. We knew when we proposed this that there would be many steps in this process before the facility was operational and the public would also have an opportunity for comment.

Cushman

I'm open-minded to this whole idea but I want you guys on this table to know the facts. A couple facts he presented were not facts. The co-op in the last fifteen years has only stayed open for seven months. Then we give the fisherman five to six months to use the facility on their own. They would be using this facility similar to the town facility. Most boats have two guys that help. There is more than a third, probably even closer to the half the fisherman at Port Clyde Coop would rather just run the co-op like that. Everyone just fend for themselves. They get more money on the truck. That's just the way it is. The higher producer lobsterman pays for the majority of the workers, majority of the maintenance and majority of the repairs. That's just the formula that works through a co-op. I just want to give you the

facts. The co-op does close in the wintertime. The recommendation from the coop members is going to be this year to close for five months and the guys will fish off the Port Clyde Co-op doing what Danny says they hate to do, but I talked to a lot of them, and they love it because they get that truck price for five or six months. That is a fact.

Conrad

On this recommendation list where it says heavy commercial users, do you know how many there are now that would fall into this category, like Island Transport?

Dan Morris

Island Transport and Reliance are basically the only ones. We listed what they have historically paid to use the facility down and what we recommended, which was a substantial increase.

Thompson

I'm going to suggest that the committee then take this and look it over and then see if we have specific questions as we move forward, before we act any further.

Cushman

I'm open minded. I wish we could have a meeting regarding Linda's dock and just give you feedback. I support this dock and want it for commercial use, but also want to be fair and equitable to all the other docks.

Thompson

Thank you, Gerry. Thanks to the Harbor Committee. It is a lot of work you guys have done. You've discussed it up and down. I only attended a few meetings.

Speaker?

One point is that if you look at the light commercial use, think of people like Tamra Cody, who have that small group. I just think that this seems a little bit of a disparity that for service commercial users, you would be charging them an annual fee of \$500 and then someone who's a light commercial for two to three months, the same \$500. I would just look at their pocketbooks in comparison and what those two differences are, and maybe for someone like a Tamra it's \$200 or so. She has a business that's literally in operation for maybe three months.

Erb

We've struggled quite a bit with those that are really just temporary users.

Speaker?

You may need to have a further meeting about pricing, even with heavy commercial. You've got Island Transporters, but what about folks like Mecklin that are taking on big on big projects,

Elwell

That's why the Island Transport went up so much. They're the ones hauling Mecklin to the island. One of the things that the Committee was worried about was Mecklin running the equipment over the new pavement to get on the Island Transporter.

Elwell

I suggest when everybody gets a chance to discuss this, we bring Dan back to be a part of that Board discussion. For months they've been back and forth. It's a mixed group, but everybody agreed to get something started. I think they should be part of that conversation with the Board.

Thompson

We will take that under consideration.

Conflicts of interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

Minutes

A motion was made by Conrad, seconded by Elwell, to approve the November 13, 2023 Select Board Meeting Minutes as amended, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Communications

There were no communications.

Warrant**Thompson**

The school is listed again and there is a separate warrant for the Cold Storage Road project.

Conrad

I thought that in the minutes, we should probably add a sentence that we signed the warrants.

Cartwright

There is a big payment on the CPM. Is that all within budget?

Erb

Yes. I think I've done summaries with you guys on that before.

The warrants were signed.

Town Manager Report

Erb

I have just got a couple of items here. As I mentioned, the storm did create some minor issues.

Thompson

Did anyone take any pictures?

Erb

Yes. Stevie did. I believe it was the reason that the power was out at Kinney Woods Road. There were a lot of branches down and some lines taken down. Other than that, we came through it pretty well last night, but those two areas did have some problems. The other thing I was going to mention is as Steve knows, we do have a meeting that we've just sort of called ourselves for people to come in and talk about pedestrian safety issues and speeding. We're going to meet upstairs here on December 7th at 4pm.

Thompson

Is that a public meeting?

Erb

Yes. A rather informal one but yes. I've notified people who I know are interested and we put something on the website and there'll be an ad in the paper as well for that. I have the minutes from the meeting where we met people from Clark Island Road. I really don't know how to contact any of them.

Cartwright

I met one of them and she said she already knew about the meeting. I guess the word has spread.

Erb

That's what I was hopeful for because I looked back through, and I never received any emails from any of them, so I didn't know how to reach them. I won't worry about it, then. Steve said he would be there.

Thompson

On the seventh?

Erb

Yes.

Committee Reports

Planning Board - Carr

Carr

The Planning Board met on November 14th. First, they had a public meeting on Atwood's Quarry for the McClain pier from CTL Land Management. There were a few people who showed up for that, but it was pretty quiet. The application was considered, and it was approved subject to DEP approval. The next thing we talked about was the subdivision application, which is in that same vicinity. There's a few more things that they need to supply us with like whether they're going to have sprinklers and what they're going to do in terms of a subdivision plan and site plan. The preliminary plan is complete, but they may be having a public hearing fairly soon on that project.

Conrad

Are those seasonal cabins?

Carr

Yes.

Conrad

Because the word subdivision was used, some people might assume that they were year-round.

Carr

No. They are seasonal. Outward Bound school came in because they basically wanted to turn their yurt platforms into cabins. They went all the way through the application and the applicant met all the standards, so their application was granted. Someone came in about the old kayak shop in Port Clyde and that's Marine Commercial so it really should be a water dependent use, but they found that the use had not changed and approved an antique shop to go in there to rent that building. It has no running water, and no heat. They have a Porta Potti behind it. Then the main thing that you probably are interested in is the CDC came in about workforce housing, and they actually had some site plans. They have determined that it's going to take eighteen acres to come up with enough acreage, because there are so many wetlands there. It's going to be one parcel. Right now, the thinking is that somebody will have a ground lease for 100 years or something like that. And out of those eighteen acres, they're going to have seven units in six buildings. So, one of the units will be a duplex. It's a subdivision, but it's a single lot. There is no cluster housing. That term had been used, but they're not going to do that. It's all affordable housing. I think the last time they came in they said it was going to be mixed. But now they're thinking it's going to be all affordable because they're going to have to get funding and they're going to have to

attract a builder who will work within those parameters. I think they've made a big step forward. The next meeting is tomorrow night.

Thompson

Were there any discussions about ordinance?

Carr

No, because they were sort of just having a conversation. There was no formal application and there was no formal consideration of ordinance changes to address this.

Board of Appeals – Conrad

Conrad

Nothing to report.

Harbor Committee – Elwell

We just met with them.

Budget Committee – Thompson

Thompson

They were just in attendance this evening.

Resiliency Committee – Thompson

Thompson

They have not met. They will meet on December 6 at 5 pm.

Comprehensive Planning Committee

Conrad

The drop boxes and postcards are out there. Some of you may have seen on the town website that the school has a survey. We're hoping to also have an online option for postcard stuff. One of the committee members is working on that and that's the reason I haven't circulated even more broadly like on the Facebook page or anything because I feel like if there are going to be three ways to do this online, I want them to all be available when I circulate that information. I am excited that we have a Colby student to work with the Comprehensive Plan process for next semester and provide us with some meaningful help. That's pretty exciting.

Cartwright

That's great. You were able to place them. I know there's one at the Town Office upstairs.

Conrad

The five drop boxes are at the Town Hall, the school and the three post offices: Spruce Head, Port Clyde and Tenants Harbor.

Cartwright

Not the library? Did you approach them?

Conrad

No. The group decided and that was the decision that was made.

Elwell

I think you would get more traffic where you put them versus the library.

Cartwright

I think that is adequate. I was just thinking out loud. It is a popular place.

Shellfish Committee – Elwell

Elwell

We met the Thursday before Thanksgiving, and it was normal business going over the budget and stuff but nothing serious.

Solid Waste - Erb

Erb

We are still on winter vacation.

Cemetery Committee – Carr

Carr

Nothing to report.

Affordable Housing - Cartwright

Cartwright

We just had a pretty good update on it.

Resignation of the Animal Control Officer

Thompson

You saw the numbers that were sent around relative to communities our size and what was being paid.

Erb

Bill Demmons has resigned. He had dropped a number of towns a year or so ago but kept us but for health reasons he's going to get out of that business entirely. He does work, but he's going to drop this. I was contacted by Troy Peasley, who I believe is a police officer in Rockland. He is their Animal Control Officer, and he has picked up those towns that were on list, so we were very happy that someone already certified with experience and as a law enforcement officer was interested because I know from past experience this is a hard position to recruit for. It just dropped in my lap; it was sort of a surprise. I have spoken with him I would personally like to move ahead and appoint him as Animal Control Officer. I think I mentioned in the notes what seemed to make sense would be to match what Thomaston is doing. There was a lot of symmetry there. You had the two small towns paying almost the exact same amount and are similar in size.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Cartwright, to hire Troy Peasley and approve a salary competitive to the Animal Control Officer in Thomaston, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Conrad

The only question I have is his availability. I didn't realize that these positions handled all these different towns. How quickly is somebody able to respond when they get a call.

Erb

This will be at least as good as anything we've ever had. Almost every town has part-time Animal Control Officers.

Elwell

Demmond was right on top of it, even though he had other jobs.

Cartwright

It's not something somebody does full-time and makes a living at.

Conrad

If somebody is a police officer and is on duty elsewhere, that might pose a challenge to get to a scene.

Erb

It will. We hardly ever have situations where the ACO is needed right now. Typically, it has been a situation of a dog barking every night for a week and we are asked to go see the owner. We've also had situations where the animal shelter has assisted by picking up animals when needed so we work it out.

Elwell

They are hard to come by so if we can find someone, don't kick the bucket of water over.

Discuss a Town-wide Property Revaluation

Thompson

Has anyone responded?

Erb

We had no responses. I think we're seeing here that when you go out for RFP, whether it is for auditors or appraisers, the chances of finding someone get slimmer every year. We sent out to more than a dozen appraisal firms that the state listed. I was hoping we'd get one or two responses at least but we did not. I reached out to one of the appraisal companies that I have some experience with hoping I would get some feedback on why we didn't get a response and didn't get a response to that either. Bob Gingras is the Assessor's Agent, and he did receive an RFP request. I expected to hear from him. I called him up and I said, Bob, what happened? And he said he just totally forgot. He thought it was due in a couple of weeks. He said he had already talked to me about what he thought it would cost and I'm not going to say it right now, but he said he would submit a quote to me, even after the fact, but that was last week, and I still don't have it.

Cartwright

We are kind of striking out.

Erb

We're not doing well, at this point. Camden had the same situation. I think I might have sent around an email from that Town Manager. I reached out to her last week she got back to me today. I was curious, what did they end up paying? She said they found one person willing to do it. They're paying \$346,000 for it.

Cartwright

Is that a similar sized community to ours?

Erb

No, it's larger. It's probably twice the population and definitely has a fair amount of commercial and some industrial. In all honesty, when I spoke with Bob Gingras before, I think the quote we'll see from him is going to be in excess of \$300,000.

Elwell

I always have the feeling that if you want it done, you're going to pay the money.

Conrad

It has to be done.

Elwell

The contractors know that you can't find anybody.

Erb

We have just under \$170,000 in our reserve account. We've been adding \$20,000 a year. This is roughly three years out.

Conrad

We need to be adding more.

Erb

We are. We are going to have to. \$230,000 is how much we are going to have in three years. The budget is going to be put together in the next month or so. My plan is to add more. I don't think we have much choice. These prices are not going to come down. It was discouraging not to get anything. I will report more when there is more to talk about.

Discuss the Acquisition of Property at Old Woods Road (Executive Session)

A motion was made by Thompson, seconded by Elwell, to enter executive session at 8:33pm for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, as well as to discuss the possible acquisition of property on Old Woods Rd. as allowed under Title 1 Section 405, 6c of the Maine Revised Statutes: "Discussion or consideration of the condition, acquisition, or the use of real or personal property permanently attached to real property or interests therein or disposition of publicly held property or economic development only if premature disclosures of the information would prejudice the competitive bargaining position of the body or agency.", and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Conrad, seconded by Elwell, to end the Executive Session and by a unanimous vote the public meeting was re-opened at 8:48.

A motion was made by Conrad, seconded by Cartwright, for the Select Board to retain the Maine Municipal Association to assist us with the process of hiring a new town manager effective July 1, 2024, and to expend \$2,000 from this year's budget for the initial payment under the recruiting contract we were provided, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

The Select Board authorized Rick Erb to convey to Malcolm Willard that we received his offer for the sale of Lot 11 on Old Woods Road and are considering our response.

Adjournment

The Select Board meeting was adjourned at 8:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Taylor
Recording Secretary
Town of St. George, Maine