

## **ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS**

**St. George Town Office**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**February 5, 2024**

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Select Board members present were Steve Cartwright, Rick Erb, Wendy Carr, Randy Elwell, Irene Ames, Jane Conrad, and Chair Van Thompson. Also present were Michael B. Jordan, Anne Cox, Dan Morris, Susan Ellis, Ken Oelberger, Ryan Cline, Greg Soutiea, John Maltais, Dave Percival, Chris Williams, Scott Vaitones, Peta VanVuuren, Leticia VanVuuren, Bill Mroz and Ben Vail.

Via Zoom: Present were Jonathan Coggeshall, Carol Arness and Rob Kelley, 2023macbookair, (Betsy Johnson) "Betsy's ipad", tohler, and Sandra Roak "user".

#### **Quorum**

A quorum was present.

#### **Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **Adjustments to the Agenda**

The Budget Committee Review of the Proposed 2025 Municipal Budget was moved to the beginning of the agenda.

Committee Reports were removed from the agenda.

## **The Budget Committee Review of the Proposed 2025 Municipal Budget**

### **Thompson**

We were given a budget proposed by Rick at the last meeting. I asked you to review it. We're going to start going through the process of review starting with General Assistance and Social Community Services, etc. for the agenda today. If we could start with General Assistance.

### **Erb**

For those not familiar, General Assistance is the Maine legal term for local welfare. The town is required to appropriate for that and have a General Systems Administrator. Irene does those hours. I've done it in the past in other towns. In St. George, a couple of things are a little bit unique. We spend little or nothing in this account generally for a few different reasons. One is, over the years, the state's eligibility requirements have heightened. Fewer people qualify and in St. George, we have other sources of assistance, whether it is the Community Development Corporation, churches, Grange, or other nonprofit entities that assist with that. We are required to appropriate funds. We do appropriate \$2500 for that reason.

### **Thompson**

Moving on to Social and Community Services.

### **Erb**

Most of what you see there are nonprofit organizations that request funding from the town. Most of them are funded each year. There are some that have been funded in the past who did not make a request this year, The County Cap being one. You can see if you look back, they were a little spotty. Some years they asked for funding and some years they did not. I was surprised we did not hear from Maine Public Broadcasting this year. They normally asked for a couple of hundred dollars. I didn't hear from them this year. There was another one or two that did not ask for funding.

### **Cartwright**

You had a couple of late arrivals.

### **Erb**

I did. They're in there now. I do have more information. In some cases, it was pretty lengthy. When someone sends you their audit report, it is hard to know how much you really want. There are dozens and dozens of pages, but I leave it to the Select Board and the Budget Committee. If you want more information, they can probably get that for you.

### **Conrad**

Can I ask a question about cemeteries? Why are they here? I know one of the cemeteries is now town owned and then we have others.

**Elwell**

The Wiley's Corner Cemetery has its own association but there are some mowing expenses for the veteran's graves.

**Susan Ellis**

I think that's correct.

**Susan Ellis**

This is still a volunteer run cemetery, not town owned. They are willing to administer it, but their trust accounts and their income doesn't cover all of the expenses, particularly for veterans. Veterans is a separate line though, right?

**Erb**

Right. Jerry Hall provides the information for that.

**Susan Ellis**

This is in Wiley's Corner?

**Elwell**

Yes. They come every year.

**Susan Ellis**

Is it so the town does not have to take it over?

**Erb**

Right. Veteran's Graves is a different thing. State law, I believe, requires us to appropriate a certain amount of money for maintenance of the graves there.

**Thompson**

Let's move on to the Planning Department.

**Erb**

Most of the increase that you see there is a Comprehensive Plan which is something that we have not had to fund for the last several years. How many years has it been since we updated it?

**Conrad**

It was May of 2018 when we passed the last Comprehensive Plan.

**Erb**

This is an update of that. Other than that, you will see here the personnel costs. The town's personnel policy calls for cost of living adjustments based on the consumer price index. You can see from some of these, that the increase was 3.2%. We did have an increase in benefits cost, much of it having to do with health insurance, which was up 4.5% this year. Other than that, there's not a lot of changes on that in particular.

**Susan Ellis**

I had two questions if I could. One is on Trainings and Workshops. Can we cut that to \$1000 since we've been using less than that?

**Erb**

That is a possibility.

**Susan Ellis**

Also, is there a budget for the Conservation Commission, and how they are going to spend the money in their regular account? I have \$22,000 written down.

**Erb**

I can get the breakdown of the Conservation Commission.

**Oelberger**

Basically, the money in the account now is money that still goes to Fort Point.

**Susan Ellis**

What's the balance due there?

**Oelberger**

Probably about \$10,000 for Fort Point. There's money in there for the acquisition of a new property in town. We put money in last year's budget to pay for any of the types of things we'd have to do to acquire a new property.

**Susan Ellis**

Would that get added to the Land Acquisition Fund or would it stay in the Conservation Commission?

**Oelberger**

You asked me first about what we have in our current budget, not what is in the request for next year. For the request for next year, the biggest lump would be what we want to go into the land conservation and acquisition fund.

**Susan Ellis**

\$11,000?

**Oelberger**

There was additional money for trails, for the Maine Conservation Commissions, for part of the Zoom license, for the signs on Route 131 to the state every year.

**Susan Ellis**

That's what's in the balance that we are carrying forward.

**Oelberger**

No. You just asked me about the \$11,000 for next year.

**Susan Ellis**

Okay, so that's all those things. And then the \$22k that is remaining in your account right now?

**Oelberger**

What I just said. \$10,000 for Fort Point.

**Susan Ellis**

Okay. I got that. I see \$33,000 total to carry forward.

**Oelberger**

But we'll be spending some of that before the end of this fiscal year.

**Susan Ellis**

At least \$10k for Fort Point and then other things.

**Conrad**

To answer your other question, Susie, if the town were to acquire some property for the purpose of conservation, it would likely pull some money from the conservation pot, and some from the town's line for acquiring properties. That's what we've considered doing for some property.

**Thompson**

There is some question about where we would put it, if Community Resiliency was looking to have some money in the budget.

**Susan Ellis**

With the solar panel line, I would retitle that and keep loading it. We are going to need the same as (Inaudible) for this.

**Thompson**

Well, that's a good point.

**Susan Ellis**

I think that's in Unclassified.

**Conrad**

It's also possible that some of the \$20,000 we have under Comprehensive Plan money, we may not need to spend that on a consultant that's just for the plan. And it could be somebody who could do additional planning, including for climate change and maybe other planning aspects in the town.

**Thompson**

I will keep that in mind. That's a good recommendation about what we might do relative to the (Inaudible) solar panels once we clear that.

**Susan Ellis**

Will we talk about that in Unclassified?

**Thompson**

Yes. Let's move on to number four Parks and Recreation.

**Erb**

He might be a little delayed. He will be here.

**Thompson**

Okay, so moving on to Harbors.

**Erb**

What you see is basically what Ryan submitted. One thing that we have found is that with 10 Cold Storage Road being active again, we now have utility costs there. We've seen an increase in that. I'm not sure what to budget. Most of it is electricity. I put in \$2,000. I think we have spent over \$700 this year far, halfway through. Ryan, a question was asked earlier tonight, when the Budget Committee was here about costs on floats and landings. Where do we stand on replacement floats?

**Ryan Cline**

You mean the budget line for public landings itself for the reserve?

**Susan Ellis**

Capital is what I was concerned about.

**Greg Soutiea**

The \$2,500 addition to the ramps and floats reserve.

**Susan Ellis**

Is that going to be enough? You're down to \$10,000 in your reserve account.

**Ryan Cline**

We should be good for now. The only thing is they're going to do a bunch of work right now because Port Clyde is under construction.

**Greg Soutiea**

That \$10,000 should cover that?

**Ryan Cline**

Yes.

**Susan Ellis**

He has money in Administration in the regular floats and landings section.

**Thompson**

One other thing has come up relative to the landing project and that has to do with parking. The question was, would we or should we be considering putting aside some money for somebody to do a little bit of policing down there, a part-time job that would be mid-June to September or something of that sort. Any thoughts?

**Erb**

I had a couple of questions that I sort of struggled with. One was what the revenue would be; we're going to talk about that a little later tonight, and with that revenue, what would the expenses be. Would this be something you would consider possibly at a special town meeting at a later date, when we have a better grasp of what those will look like? I find it hard to put a number on it right now.

**Thompson**

I just want it out there, so it is something being considered.

**Carr**

I think we have a problem with enforcement also, the mechanism for the jurisdiction in order to enforce, because we don't have an automatic enforcement provision in our ordinances. We would have to fix that I think in order to give somebody power to enforce it.

**Elwell**

That was the problem we had with parking, the enforcement, you could do it all day long, but they don't enforce it.

**Susan Ellis**

Why isn't there anything in here for the Board Secretary?

**Erb**

We already had one.

**Susan Ellis**

Ryan, for the Channel, is \$6k going to be plenty?

**Ryan Cline**

I bumped it up \$2000 because of maintenance of the channels in and out has gone up. There is a new owner and new prices.

**Elwell**

Ryan, what's the overall cost you're looking at to replace the Harbormaster boat?

**Ryan Cline**

Anywhere from \$160k to \$405k.

**Elwell**

I know the boat we have is insufficient and starting to get to the point where it needs to be replaced.

**Greg Soutiea**

What timeline are you on for that?

**Ryan Cline**

It depends on how much money we're going to put away.

**Erb**

Ryan came to me this year and said we're not making progress on the boat with the amount of money we have budgeted.

**Ryan Cline**

If we keep on putting \$3000, I'll retire, and the next person can be putting money away.



**Elwell**

I think that we should bump that a little more to bring the timeline quicker. We are in need of a new Harbormaster boat.

**Erb**

The request originally, in all honesty, was \$30,000. I put in what I thought we could, but I understand.

**Elwell**

Are you looking at new?

**Ryan Cline**

All options are on the table. There is \$60,000 in reserve. To buy something used, what I'm looking at is probably \$100,000 if I can find one.

**Elwell**

Basically, you need another \$100,000. With call we had the other night, I think we need a better, safer Harbormaster boat and should do it.

**Susan Ellis**

Can we do it over two years, or does it need to be this year?

**Elwell**

I don't think it needs to be this year, but we don't want him to retire when we finally get it.

**Ryan Cline**

That's kind of why I'm shooting for at least \$30K. So that way, in another two to three years I could do something.

**Speaker**

Can I ask a question? It seems to me you were talking about going in and evaluating used a year or so ago. Am I correct in assuming that the cost of used is going to go up the same way the cost of new goes up. So, every year, we just get behind. Just supporting your point here.

**Susan Ellis**

What if we went to \$25K there? Do we have three years?

**Ryan Cline**

To give you a kind of an idea of the boat we have now, I'm having engine problems with it and depending on when it goes to the doctor's next week, you could tell me it needs a new outboard which you're talking \$10,000 - \$15,000.

**Conrad**

Would it be possible for us to raise money? The fire and ambulance group has historically raised money toward an ambulance. If people understood that we needed money for a new Harbormaster boat, there might be people that would make contributions to the town that would be tax deductible that we could put in this pot to try and speed things up.

**Elwell**

Could it be bonded?

**Erb**

It is too small for bonding, but we could borrow it.

**Elwell**

That's what I meant. Even if we borrow it and give Ryan a year to find something, I don't think it would take us that long to pay it off. We have money and we can use that.

**Erb**

You probably would be talking about a town meeting article to raise a certain amount of money to authorize the Select Board to borrow a negotiable number of dollars.

**Irene Ames**

This budget was the last payment on the purchase of the Ten Cold Storage property. Essentially, we could budget \$25,000 - 30,000 this year, and then next year budget \$75,000 and not actually increase taxes because that loan will be paid off.

**Thompson**

I heard talk of putting \$25k in this year.

**Elwell**

I think this is something we need to escalate. This all started with Dave McCollum who was the Harbormaster before Ryan.

**Thompson**

Let me get this straight. That was taking the \$15k that's in the budget and adding \$10k to it for a total of \$25k to the \$15,000?

**Susan Ellis**

Add another \$10k to it for this year and \$75K next year using money that's currently being directed at debt payment, Cold Sun Generator. Now we've got \$160,000 and Ryan can go shopping.

**Elwell**

If Ryan keeps his eyes open and something comes along two or three months from now at a good price, we should revisit this and if we can get our hands on it now versus losing out because of delays.

**Susan Ellis**

We have a reserve here that you could put a down payment on. The town can borrow money and pay ourselves back.

**Elwell**

When that comes along, we can revisit it. Ryan can come to us and Rick if he is still here.

**Ryan Cline**

I am still working on the government surplus site daily.

**Speaker**

Will there be money left over from Ten Cold Storage? Is there any justification to use some of that towards a boat? That whole dynamics of Port Clyde is going to change when that project is done.

**Irene Ames**

The money came from a bond. The SEC has a lot of regulations as far as what we have to do for reporting on the bond. The IRS has a lot of regulations as far as what we can use the money for. Basically, the short answer is the IRS says "no".

**Percival?**

There'll be some interest from the bond, which would fall under the restrictions of the debt maybe, earned interest.

**Irene Ames**

The money that is being paid in interest on the checking account?

**Percival?**

Yes.

**Irene Ames**

Possibly.

**Susan Ellis**

We'll use it to pay down the bond.

**Irene Ames**

Any funds that we do not spend on the project can definitely be used to pay off the bond.

**Susan Ellis**

The principal but we could redirect some of the interest earned.

**Erb**

We'll find out.

**Susan Ellis**

Are we looking at putting \$10k more into the boat.

**Thompson**

Yes.

Next item is Animal Control. I had one other question. The mileage reimbursement there for the budget. The last few years we've spent around \$4300 - \$4600. We've only spent about \$1800 so far, and then the mileage rates going up a little bit. I don't know if that was factored in across the board like the other mileage categories.

**Erb**

Greg, are you asking about Animal Control?

**Greg Soutiea**

Harbor Committee.

**Elwell**

What's the federal reimbursement rate?

**Greg Soutiea**

That's going to be \$.67 next year.

**Irene Ames**

Ryan does seasonal driving, and he doesn't always submit his mileage reimbursement timely, so you're probably not seeing some of the expenses there.

**Greg Soutiea**

Do you think we'll still end up spending probably right around that same \$45 this year?

**Irene Ames**

Probably.

**Greg Soutiea**

\$70 over the last year.

**Thompson**

Let's move on to Animal Control.

**Erb**

The difference you see there is reflecting our having a new Animal Control Officer within the last month or so. We are having to pay more than previous animal control officers who retired. We looked around town. There is a full-time officer from Rockland who then works for other smaller communities. Working for South Thomaston, Thomaston and Owl's Head. He was willing to add us as well. We were paying less than any of them. It turned out that Owl's Head and South Thompson are very similar in size as far as population and St. George and Thomaston also are very similar in population. So, what we ended up proposing and he agreed to was that we would match what Thomaston was paying him. I haven't had a lot of experience yet working with him, but they say he is very professional, came fully certified, has the equipment that he needs and so far, so good. I've not had any complaints. He's responded to issues that have come up. It's a little bit more money but when I heard we were going to lose our animal control officer I knew this is going to be hard to fill. The last day animal control officer did not submit mileage. I actually ended up bumping his pay because he didn't put mileage in, I assume that this animal control officer probably will, so I put some money back in. Everything else is pretty much same as before.

**Thompson**

Let's move back to Parks and Recreation.

**Erb**

You and I have talked before. The questions are on the ball field maintenance, and property maintenance. Maybe you could explain the difference between the two and what we're trying to do here.

**Ben Vail**

In reviewing last year's budget, to prepare for this year's budget and talking about it with Tara, we couldn't really come up with what property maintenance was and why there was money in there because I associate property maintenance with Steve and there's no money in the Rec Department budget that goes to Steve. So rather than have two pots of money, when it's really all ball field maintenance, I zeroed out property maintenance and put it all under ball field maintenance. We're not making a drastic cut. It was just for clarity.

**Elwell**

Do you have Ballpark Maintenance do your fields?

**Ben Vail**

Yes.

**Susan Ellis**

Where are you spent very small amounts in the 21/22 and 22/23, you bumped this up a lot.

**Ben Vail**

Last year we had an opportunity so we bought soccer goals because the other ones were rusted and one of them was severely listing to one side and could land on someone. We had an opportunity when the price ended up plummeting.

**Susan Ellis**

Is there a project here in mind?

**Ben Vail**

Under Ball Field Maintenance, there are a couple of things. The fence at the landing field, the landing field kind of operates under the radar, the one right in town by the ball landing field there. That fence is in a couple of places severely leaning and I'd like to get that reinforced. Another piece of that is we've had a couple of volunteer gentlemen who have done a tremendous amount of work saving this town some money and I'd honestly like to pay them to do this job. If you happen to be along at the right time, they were all the way at the top of the backstop on the big diamond, way above, literally above and beyond the call. I feel like these guys would do a great job, but I think to ask them to just do it for free is unreasonable. We don't have, and I hope I'm not offending anyone, a local fence person that I consider reliable. You'd have to go a long, long way. These guys have fixed all the fence down in a big field and I think they could handle this. So rather than have it fall down, I'd like to see that done. It is going to involve some gravel and so forth. The other piece of it is, I don't know many years ago it was, I'm going to guess five, we repaired the dugouts on the big ball field. The other two have a lot of rot. And so, \$1000 of that is to get some sills replaced and a couple of pieces of the siding replaced. I think Steve could do the work. Just getting material to make sure we don't let something fall over. So that's \$3000 for fence repair, \$2000 dugout maintenance.

**Conrad**

And the tennis court, I missed that earlier.

**Ben Vail**

That's separate. Those who have been around for the last three years, we've started to establish a reserve fund. We put \$2000 a year in. A couple of things have happened. First of all, prices like everything else

have gone way through the roof. I was attempting to get the company here to resurface the courts this coming fall. I found out that the company that had been doing it no longer comes this far because of costs since the pandemic. So, it left us with one company who was booked for 2024. So, we're on the schedule for April or May of 2025, if you can believe it, to get those courts resurfaced. In the meantime, he has given me an estimate of about \$25,000. \$2000 a year is not going to do it. The premise was that if we put \$7000 in this year plus the \$6000, we already had, that would be all half of it. Rather than deplete the entire reserve maintenance fund that was set up when the courts were built, we would take half from each.

**Susan Ellis**

Can you take principal from the Lipson Fund?

**Ben Vail**

Yes, that's what we've done in the past, pretty much taking the entire thing from the Lipson Fund, rather than zero that out.

**Susan Ellis**

Zero out your reserve fund, take part from the Lipson Fund and this will bulk up your reserves.

**Ben Vail**

That was our understanding also. He was giving me a ballpark for something's going to happen sixteen months ahead, and not having seen the court yet. He said it might not be that bad, but it might be that bad. It might be worse. I talked with Tim and with Rick. It seemed not right to just eliminate the Lipson Fund. That wasn't the idea, for something to be there to continually draw from. And to the credit of a number of people who are tennis and pickleball fans, I've received a number of donations in the last six months that have gone into the Lipson Fund. Obviously, we will not turn any of those down. So that's the tennis court thing. And again, we all know the danger if you don't maintain the court because a new one would be astronomical. That is the answer to that.

**Elwell**

How is the Port Clyde Playground doing Ben?

**Ben Vail**

The last couple of years have been much nicer. I've been here eleven years. We had a really bad year and a half where there was some damage done down there. We had to replace equipment and we had to take equipment out that wasn't being treated well. Except for that year and a half, people have been good in that we haven't had any issues. We did have a young man who was running a dirt bike through there last year. We eventually worked it out and found who it was. I learned something I didn't know. The Warrant Service tracked that man down and got things straightened out.

**Elwell**

Do you have any concerns?

**Ben Vail**

No, other than regular maintenance. I think everybody understands if you don't do it. You end up paying a lot more later. I think the town's support of Parks and Recreation has been stellar from the second I've been here.

**Thompson**

Should we go to Unclassified.

**Erb**

Some of this was talked about with the Budget Committee. Family Health Contingent is the way we have set up here to deal with the unpredictable nature of what's going to be the makeup of the town's workforce, and will they require family health coverage or not? The town's policy is that we pay 100% of the employee's health insurance. We pay 75% of eligible family members. I made an estimate. It looks like we shot high last year and are looking to bring it down. It's guesswork on our part to tell you the truth. I put in \$70,000 in this year's budget. That's down \$81,515 last year, but it's more than we've spent for the previous two years. I felt comfortable with the number I put in. We probably could go lower than that, but I really don't know for sure. We're going to have some turnover in the town's workforce. It just sort of depends on who comes in and what they qualify for.

**Susan Ellis**

We have \$20,000 left for this year still and that could get rolled over, so my suggestion would be to drop this \$10 and add it to the efficiency reserve which I understand is going to pay for the panels but the next thing is going to cost more than the panels, whatever the next thing is. I wanted to see ten more added to that line anyway, and it seems like it could come out of Family Health and leave this page untouched.

**Erb**

Would you drop it to \$60,000?

**Susan Ellis**

I would.

**Thompson**

Sounds like a reasonable idea.

**Speaker**

Rick, with the \$20k in there, do you think it could get dropped even lower?



**Erb**

With the \$20k, are you talking about carrying that forward?

**Susan Ellis**

Does that lapse to fund balance?

**Erb**

It will lapse unless we do something to avoid that.

**Susan Ellis**

We could drop this to \$60k.

**Thompson**

And then we'll see where we stand at the end of the year.

**Susan Ellis**

Or it will lapse to fund balance which is good too. But then bump up the energy efficient reserve.

**Greg Soutiea**

Is that something that we might see if the new Town Manager comes in with a couple of kids or a family that are on insurance?

**Irene Ames**

Yes.

**Erb**

That's one position we know of where there's going to be turned over. We don't know beyond that.

The next item there is the fuel purchase. You're probably aware we have a fuel depot at the Transfer Station. What's sort of interesting about that is that while we do use it ourselves for the fire, and ambulance and for Steve's trucks for maintenance work, the biggest users there actually are the school department and the contractor who plows and sands the roads for the town. We get paid by those non-town entities. So, what we're really talking about is really what is what is the net cost. If you go over to the revenue sheet, you will see that there is funding budgeted there as well. I just decided to go with the previous year's amount. It seems to be working for us. As everyone knows, gas prices are volatile. So, we're only sort of guessing what next year's fuel prices will be like. I feel comfortable going with the same amount as last year.

**Greg Soutiea**

Are there contractors that use the fuel, and is there any markup from the town to what they pay?

**Erb**

No. It's only the contractor that has our winter roads and that's when he fuels up? Of course, he needs to be able to do that in town, so it works out for both of us. He reimburses us for the cost.

For fireworks, I don't know what to say about fireworks. We certainly had our issue this year with fog. But each year we have put in \$10,000. I understood that before I was here, it sometimes was controversial whether it was funded or not.

**Susan Ellis**

It is a great fundraising day for St. George.

**Elwell**

People have come to expect it now.

**Erb**

Irene, can you explain where we are at with the energy efficiency reserve.

**Irene Ames**

As far as energy efficiency, the reserve is essentially to purchase the solar panels. We have enough in the reserve account now to purchase the panels which is scheduled to happen March 31st of this year. Once we've purchased the panels, we're not going to be paying for electricity anymore from the company that we're leasing them from, but they are going to need maintenance and they're going to need to be replaced. So, it is a good idea to continue funding that account simply to be able to maintain and replace them when it comes time.

**Erb**

Right now, everything that's appropriated on that line goes to the company, correct?

**Irene Ames**

The energy efficiency reserve is the money that goes into the reserve account.

**Irene Ames**

If we're going to continue to put money in that reserve account, it will be used for maintenance and replacement.

**Susan Ellis**

But it's energy efficiency so we could use it to put heat pumps. You're very conservative and that's why you're really good at your job. A lot of times there aren't a lot of maintenance issues, at least not in the first 10 years but I want to keep funding this line for whatever comes next.

**Cartwright**

I would like to see more efficiency projects around town.

**Susan Ellis**

Even if it goes into a bridge, or it goes into raising things so that we don't get flooded out.

**Greg Soutiea**

We want to have a different Resiliency Reserve then.

**Conrad**

Right. I think so. Because if it's infrastructure, that's not quite the same thing.

**Susan Ellis**

We can retitle it, but I just want to keep funding something that is going towards resiliency, which is what the panels were. The panels were just step one and have been enormously successful. Are we putting that up Van.

**Thompson**

It goes up to \$10K.

**Conrad**

Van there may have been some people that came in not realizing what we already covered. For everything else, there were really no changes, like with Social and Community Services we had no changes or questions.

**Thompson**

Budget Committee, thank you for being here.

**Status of Land Use Ordinances Amendments**

**Anne Cox**

Did you all get copies of the memo? I'm going to ask Michael to take the lead since he is the one who drafted this.

**Jordan**

You all know that the legislature adopted a new law in 2002 I think it was and then amended in 2003 to impose on municipalities some requirements for affordable housing. Two of those requirements apply to us. The first is something called accessory dwelling units. What those are is a second structure on a lot either in an existing house or separate from the house are attached to the house. Now, our ordinances are

for one acre zoning and for every additional unit that you put on a residential unit you put on a lot, you have to have another acre. One of the things that the state law now does is say that you can't enforce that. You have to allow one more accessory dwelling without regard to lot coverage, lot area or those things. The first thing that the ordinance does is to provide for that. We decided to do a few things that we were apparently allowed to do under regulations of the Department of Economic Development to refine the definition of accessory dwelling unit and one thing they say you can do is to put a maximum size on it. The other thing that they said we can do is do things about short term rentals since this law was intended to enhance the housing for people who live here. We think it's probably a mistake to allow people to put an accessory dwelling unit up and rent it out for a week at a time or for the summer, or things like that. With that in mind, we've done two things. We set a maximum size of 1500 square feet of floor space, which is not terribly restrictive, but at least you're not going to put a mansion on it. The other is to provide for no rentals for terms shorter than a year. So that's the first thing that the proposed ordinance would do.

The second issue that we're required to address is density for developments in areas that are designated as growth areas, and they're designated in the Comprehensive Plan. Every town is required to designate growth areas and in our current Comprehensive Plan there are two areas. One is the central part of Tenants Harbor. The other is the central part of Port Clyde. In those areas, what the ordinance requires is that we have to allow two and a half times the density that we allow in general under our ordinance. Now again, we're one acre zoning, so for one acre, two and a half times is two and a half rounded down. If somebody wanted to develop affordable housing, defined by a formula about income versus housing costs, for a one-acre lot, you can have two. For a four-acre lot, you can have ten. Now this is all subject to compliance with the requirements for adequate sewage which we all know is kind of a limiting factor in this town because of all the shale and it's also dependent on the availability of water to support people living there. And as Anne and I thought about this, it seemed like there's not very many places in either of those zones that's going to really be able to benefit from this. But still, we have to change the ordinance. And so, what we've done is to pretty much just track what the ordinance requires us to allow. We're proposing two separate ordinances in case somebody has a problem with one and not the other, they don't both get voted down. If anything does get voted down, well, it doesn't really matter because we have to comply with state law in administering permitting.

### **Anne Cox**

I just want to underline that probably the two places where we've deviated from what we have to do is to say no greater than 1500 square feet and a minimum of one year rental trying to address what it seemed to us was the resolution from the state, the law the state is trying to address, which is sustainable, affordable housing for communities.

### **Erb**

I assume you sit and think that the state is not going to have a problem with that because you're actually living up to the spirit of the legislation.

**Anne Cox**

And we actually talked to Bill Kelly about it.

**Jordan**

We talked to the town attorney about it. He's on board. I actually went to a little session in Belfast a few months ago with some people from the Department of Economic and Community Development. They confirmed at that time and the rule that they put out also confirms that you can do the two things that we want to do, which is to impose a maximum size and to impose limits on short term rentals. I think we're right in line with what we are about to do.

**Thompson**

I have one question because we're going to be talking with Rob Kelly. Does that fit within the ordinances, what was proposed there?

**Jordan**

Actually, what's proposed there we think, based on a preliminary meeting with Rob, we think that fits under the existing ordinances. He's got enough land.

**Anne Cox**

It would need to be a designated growth area for that to apply but right now what he was proposing seems okay.

**Thompson**

Double check it.

**Jordan**

One possibility is if they wanted to find ways to put more housing in that spot. It could be designated as a growth area. That would take a town vote.

**Conrad**

Since the Comprehensive Plan is under review, by the time something actually happened, it gives us time to consider how we might address that.

**Cartwright**

Any community would face this but how would you ensure that people don't rent for a month or a week?

**Anne Cox**

That's the question, isn't it?

**Jordan**

You have to get a permit. And so, we can make clear on the permit application that they're not allowed to do it. So, they can't say, "no". You should have seen the first draft of this. I was going to propose a civil penalty of \$100 a day for every day that the lease term is less than 365 but Kelly would not let me do it.

**Greg Soutiea**

I'm just curious how we came up to the year and I think we'll support anything we can do for housing and workforce type housing. I think there's also been some pretty good data to show that especially in areas like ours, there would be people who benefit to help out with their everyday expenses or the increase in taxes, things like that, to allow some amount of shorter term rental up to two weeks a year or even a six month lease instead of a year lease. Something like that. I'm just curious how you kind of came to that term.

**Anne Cox**

We wrestled with it. We had quite a discussion at the Planning Board and because there are seasonal workers as well and things like that, but what we settled on, and we can't solve all of the problems, but what this seems to be trying to solve is the problem of affordable housing stock for year-round residents. That's what it seems to be trying to solve.

**Erb**

Were you able to delineate what part of Port Clyde and Tenants Harbor are affected by this?

**Anne Cox**

There is a map in the Comprehensive Plan and it's not very clear, but I really blew it up and I think we actually can identify where it is on the plan.

**Jordan**

For some reason I couldn't quite understand, it follows the curve on the way to Port Clyde.

**Conrad**

Just expect that you'll be hearing from the Comprehensive Plan Committee for your recommendations going forward. And since you've been thinking about this, you'll have it fresh at the top of your mind.

**Anne Cox**

I will send you the PDF.

**Conrad**

What do you need from us? This is obviously going on the ballot. Do you need a motion from the Select Board to adopt the recommendations?

**Jordan**

I don't think so. The Select board will approve it after the public hearing that we have to hold. The next step is at the next Planning Board meeting we'll set a date for the public hearing. There was a timeline. I think it was probably circulated to you. And then the Planning Board will approve the text of it to go to the public hearing and then once the public hearing is over, we will recommend it again. That's the point at which you will approve it or not.

**Anne Cox**

And if you do approve it, then have it for the vote at the town meeting.

**Jordan**

But it'll be a while before the public hearing because you got to do advertising in the newspapers.

**Speaker**

Ultimately, we need to have the warrant ready to go by March 31.

**Thompson**

All right. Thank you very much.

**Update on Housing Development at Kinney Woods Rd.**

**Thompson**

I'd like to move on to hear from Robert Kelly who is attending via Zoom.

**Rob Kelley**

Thank you. That was incredibly informative. I'm very grateful for what the Planning Board has been doing. Obviously, you need to solve this from a lot of different directions. I'm coming to you tonight with approval for the transfer of a parcel of Kinney Woods Rd. property the town owns to the Community Development Corporation. We've spoken about this a number of times before. We've done our homework and had a conceptual design that I just shared with Van and Rick, I'm hoping you all had a chance to see it. The Planning Board has seen it and obviously they can't approve it. It is not actually a proposal for a subdivision. But they did collaborate on making sure that it was consistent with the existing land use regulations. As we just heard, it is not about what's being proposed going forward though I am hugely in favor of what the Planning Board is proposing. This actually meets the criteria of the existing land use regulations. It is a seven-unit, single lot subdivision, which is somewhat unusual but works within the land use regulations. And the preliminary engineering has been done on the site. To take into account the fact that the vast majority of that 78-acre parcel is in fact wetlands and what are called federally significant wetlands. A definition I could not easily give you, but our engineer shared with me. That includes the setbacks. The plan demonstrates those setbacks and allows for both road and

building site placement that meet the criteria for those setbacks as well as potential locations for septic. That would be dependent on perc tests. I'll come back to that in a moment because part of that is the timing, I'd like to propose for us to consider.

These will be, and my apologies for the vagueness of what I am about to say. These will be affordable units. But affordability actually depends significantly on the funding sources that you require. Housing Urban Development has one set of criteria. Maine Housing has a related set of criteria. Other organizations have their own. It's all, as Michael said just a few minutes ago, it's all dependent on area median income. AMI is the term we're always very comfortable with. It is how much affordable housing is measured in terms of the eligibility for a family for a particular housing. Habitat for Humanity, who many of you know, works from an AMI model. Maine Housing works from an AMI model, although they differ. Some of this could change, density etcetera could change based on the funding that's available at the moment we the planning permit.

All of that ties into the plan I posed before. First of all, we've already spoken before reviewing this plan. You had, I think very intelligently, pointed us to the Planning Board who gave it serious consideration (Inaudible). This is slightly different than what you saw a little while back to make it consistent with our land use regulations. Today, working with you to review the concept and talk about scheduling the vote so that our community members could in fact weigh in on whether or not to transfer a partial a portion of that parcel to the Community Development Corporation. A technicality, but just for clarity, the transfer will actually be to a subsidiary LLC of the Community Development Corporation that (Inaudible) the liability concerns. It will be called the St. George Housing One. The implication being that this is not only a housing development. It will be more, that is a single member LLC, whose member is the CDC making it a nonprofit itself. In fact, St. George Holdings, which owns 47 Main Street, where our offices are, is the same construction so it is a nonprofit that happens to pay taxes because it does take in income, and we believe that's a fair exchange. St. George Housing One will likely be a fully nonprofit entity not paying taxes. It will hold the land lease, 99-year leases, for the property built on top of them. The homes, however, will pay taxes. So, the plan as currently constructed is that the property taxes will be designated as nonprofit and so, will not pay property tax. The homes themselves, however they're valued, will pay property tax and the homeowners themselves will pay.

Next steps, if we are shooting for a May vote, connected to the Town Meeting to get a marketing campaign and aggressively marketing out to our neighbors and making sure they understand what's proposed. What it means. What they are potentially giving up in terms of transferring this land and what the benefits would be. Across our website, our newsletter of the town website, and any mode we can basically reach out to folks, so they understand what they're voting on. There is of course the required official public hearing. My recollection is that sixty days back from the date of the vote. I think that would be a March timeframe. We have got to work on ballot language. Rick, my understanding is you have already talked with the Town Attorney.



**Erb**

Some.

**Rob Kelley**

There's a little bit of technicality here. We've done a preliminary survey; it's what you have in front of you, but to actually draw up the lines, to build the deed that would represent the land transfer, requires a much more detailed survey. Our intention is not to spend that money until the vote has gone through. And once the vote has gone through, do the survey, and have the town vote actually lead to empower the Select Board to delineate the final person based on that survey. The main vote, if positive, would result in a land transfer. We immediately do the survey and work with Landmark again, Mike Sabatini, who has been a great partner and, as I think I've mentioned before, a partner for Habitat for Humanity and much of their work. We would then basically sign the plot and then make the deed transfer from the town and from there begin design, subdivision design, planning and the permitting process. Simultaneous with that, we'll be doing funding. We anticipate funding will be a mix of public and private funds. We already have some soft commitments from the community members who have agreed to invest in this project. But we also assume will be taking in public funding, though none of it is from the town. We do not anticipate, nor do we desire tax funding for this. Our desire is to make this a fully self-contained funded entity. So that's kind of a high-level overview. I'd love to open it up to questions.

**Conrad**

Rob, when we talked before, there was discussion about having a provision that if you were not for some reason to construct the project with an "x" number of years, the property would revert to ownership by the town. Is that still what's contemplated?

**Rob Kelley**

I'm still very open to that Jane. I believe that should make taxpayers more comfortable. This is not some kind of gift or giveaway. This is meant to be a collaboration among the people who pay for the roads and services to St. George to collaborate and create housing for their neighbors. What that time period is I'm happy to discuss but I am more than happy to have that still be part of the way the vote is constructed. And again, I defer to attorneys for how to do that in a way that's reasonably enforced.

**Conrad**

I think it's really important for the community to realize that this parcel has been sitting there owned by the town with nothing happening, and no plans for it. People aren't really losing anything as far as I can tell if we were to give it to the CDC for this purpose.

**Cartwright**

And it is just a portion of the parcel.

**Rob Kelley**

To your point with the proviso that it would reverse if for whatever reason, we are unable to pull this together, the town would still have it. In fact, frankly, from here forward, we're taking 100% of the risk because we'll be spending money on surveying etc. So, the town takes zero risk in making this gesture.

A motion was made by Conrad, seconded by Cartwright, to ask the voters to allow the Select Board to transfer to St. George Housing One, enough land of the town owned property off Kinney Woods Rd., to allow land for seven buildable acres for the purpose of construction of affordable housing and for both party's attorneys to work on language to be presented to the voters, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**Erb**

The next step is to work with the attorneys to draft a town meeting warrant article that comes back to you and that's when you will decide if it's going to go.

**Conrad**

At what point will there be these communications in support of this idea, like on the town website? I know what the CDC is doing.

**Rob Kelley**

As soon as I think as soon as we have something tangible. And we're, we're going to do whatever is consistent with what you all would like to do. I want to make sure our messaging is the same, and that it goes in the same direction. I think once we get word back from the attorney about the process, we're pretty much ready to go. While we're required to have one public meeting, we're happy to do more than one. If there's a desire for people to learn more, we will make ourselves available.

**Thompson**

It's a matter of establishing the communications that we have and maintaining them. I appreciate it.

**Erb**

I want to get into wordsmithing but let me just ask one question before I go off on this. I understand this would be to allow the Select Board to transfer land, appropriate, for up to seven buildable acres. My question is, in a warrant article, we would say for what purpose?

**Conrad**

That was in my motion, for the purpose of construction of affordable housing.

**Greg Soutiea**

Was that approximately or up to seven total acres? I think Rob suggested approximately and not up to.

**Carr**

That's a little dicey. A little loose for a warrant.

**Conrad**

If it says for seven buildable acres, and the idea is that more may be transferred to get to seven.

**Rob Kelley**

We could give ourselves some room and say up to ten or something like that, knowing that we have a handshake agreement that is with you as necessary. That's fine too. And just to follow up, Jane also, whatever language the Town Attorney might say around reversion, should building not begin within maybe five years, we're comfortable with that.

**Conrad**

We'll let the lawyers advise us and talk to you about that, because five years sounds like a long time, but you may end up deciding you'd like a little more time.

**Rob Kelley**

Thank you all very much.

## **Harbor Committee Recommendations on Fees and Uses at the Port Clyde Landing**

**Thompson**

We have from the Harbor Committee, a proposal for what they would like to have for the initial fees at Port Clyde Landing in the commercial realm. You have that in your hands right now and we have Dan Morris here who will answer any questions we might have relative to that. As you know, the original thought was in terms of the amount of lobster that would come in, in terms of the cost. It was decided that it was very difficult to get into some of that detail and so then Dan came up with the idea of boat length as a reasonable approach. And so here we are.

**Dan Morris**

Now, the Harbor Committee has been working on this use plan for the better part of six months now and in the process, we've formed quite a debate club. We've settled on most of the issues pertaining to the uses of finished facilities.

It's critical that you know that this is just the beginning. These rules that we're proposing are just to get the project off the ground. We want to do this in the most simple basic way possible, and not make it complicated. Make it easy for the town to change if something unexpected comes up. The Town of St. George hasn't done this before. Other towns have. And we've looked at those towns. But the Town of St. George hasn't done this before in terms of a commercial working dock. So, the recreational part of it is

pretty much going to be what it's always been down there, only more of it. The commercial part of it is a little different. So again, we're just trying to develop a real basic set of rules to get the project started and get it off the ground. With a year or two of experience, the town is going to find out what it needs to do to change this. And we took the approach that none of this would be cast in stone at the beginning. So, we looked at the different user groups and the different issues down there and basically broke them down into commercial user groups, recreational uses, parking in Port Clyde which is a big issue and all the other issues. We looked at the different commercial groups and broke those down even further.

This is a very difficult task to do because other towns that we've looked at are all over the board with these types of issues. For the fees that they charge, sometimes they charge by the foot or the boat length. Some towns charge by the amount of pounds landed. Most of the towns that we looked at set an arbitrary fee. And there's really no justification for the fees that they chose within their regulations. So, most of those fees are in the hundreds of dollars. Some of them vary quite a bit. Rockland can be substantially more expensive. Bar Harbor, for example, charges a lobster dealer on the dock \$5,000 to do business. So, there are some fees that are substantially higher than some of the towns and what we're proposing St. George falls in line with what most other towns have done. Our commercial fishing fees would be higher as proposed than most towns but in Port Clyde, the issue of affordability of the permit versus unfair competition to the existing docks down there became quite an issue for us. So, the fees that we're proposing for commercial fishing are higher, but they have a basis in unfair competition to the other docks.

### **Cartwright**

In an attempt not to undercut the operation.

### **Dan Morris**

That's right. We received input that too low a fee could result in unfair competition. Now having said that, it wasn't that long ago, fifteen years ago, there were four lobster buying stations off of Port Clyde and now there are two. The lobster buying stations that are there are full-service docks that offer the fishermen bait, fuel, excellent facilities, places to take up traps and store things. Whereas our dock is going to be a no service dock. There's not going to be any fuel or bait, and no storage of your fishing equipment. It's a bare bones operation. It's not a direct competition down there. So, the fee that we're proposing is cheaper probably what it would cost a fisherman to sell his lobster or fish at another dock. It's probably cheaper. But it also strikes a good balance with affordability for the town's fishermen. That's what we were trying to do, strike that balance. I think we've done so. The different user groups within the commercial areas, the heavy commercial uses, right now we have The Island Transport and The Reliance using the facility. A lot of heavy equipment comes and goes to the islands using those boats. Currently they pay a \$6,500 annual fee. We're proposing that they pay \$10,000. Sounds like a lot of money but when you break that down by twelve months, it is really not all that much money. We're not proposing the heavy equipment operators that come and go from The Reliance buy a permit but we are looking at a permit for The Reliance and other transport. Basically, our thought process was that if a

private company or individual is using our public facility for private profit, they should have a permit. That's something that the community felt very strongly about. For commercial fishing uses, we're looking at a fee. First of all, student license holders would use a facility free of charge. Student license holders are only allowed one-hundred fifty traps max. They are usually as gifts. They fish three months out of the summer when school was out, and we felt that as a town we should offer that facility for free for that for that kid that wants to try lobstering. We looked at different fee structures based on pounds landed. That works for certain species like lobsters, but it doesn't necessarily work well with other species that have landed. Rockland charges per pound fees and the per pound fees are different by the species. It gets very complicated, and we didn't really want to go down that road to stop it. So, we settled on a fee structure based on boat length. This is something to try to see how well it works. But we would propose that a person using a 29-foot boat or less pay \$1,000 a year. A person in a 30-to-39-foot boat would pay \$3000, and a person in a 40-foot boat would pay \$5,000 per year. Those equivalent fees and full-service docks, usually amount 20 to 25 cents per pound, and you can see that if a person lands 100,000 pounds of lobsters, what it costs them to use a full-service dock is substantial, and yet our fees are nowhere near that high. The difference between a full-service commercial dock and a bare bones dock like we are going to have makes quite a difference. In all honesty, not a lot of lobstermen land 100,000 pounds. Most are a lot less than that.

One of the simple sentences in here was that this would apply to all fisheries. And as simple as that sounds, it really has two different meanings. I didn't realize it until just recently. When I wrote that sentence, it meant to say other boats catching other species would be charged by the foot just like a lobster boat. So, if a fish dragger came in there and he was fifty feet long, he would pay on the forty-four-foot fee, pretty straightforward. But since then, I've realized that there are fishermen using one boat that's engaged in several fisheries. So, we have fishermen that do lobster fishing, scalloping, aquaculture fish dragging, (Inaudible). We have versatile fishermen who jump from one fishery to another. This wouldn't propose separate fees for separate fisheries. They would propose one fee based on the boat length and then the facility is theirs to use for a year regardless of what fishery they are in. So, a simple sentence that had too many meanings really. For as many fishermen in town to benefit from the facility, we're proposing that we only sell one permit to one individual and having been in the business myself, and watching it for many, many years, you don't want to be in a situation where some entity comes in and buys up five or ten permits and parcels them out to the fisherman or their choice. We didn't want to be in that position. We're proposing one permit, one fisherman, that fishermen being a licensed harvester from the State Department of Marine Resources. We're also proposing no subleasing of those permits and no sale of those programs. We also give the town the discretion not to renew those permits or to revoke them if there were violations of the rules. So, a pretty straightforward set of rules, aimed at having as many fishermen as possible, being able to use the facility. We're not proposing a limit on the number of fishermen that can use the facility. It probably will be limited by the parking down there. We can only offer so many parking spaces to commercial fishermen. We've left that largely to the town, letting the town have maximum discretion in how the parking spots are allocated. We're proposing a couple of spots for The Reliance crew down there. If they are spending \$10,000 a year to use it, they

probably ought to have a couple parking spots. The town is obligated to give the family two parking spots somewhere on the property down there. So those two are pretty much a given. The rest of it is going to be up to the town. Obviously, we don't know how many fishermen might come down there to begin with. So initially, the permits that a fisherman would get would include parking, taking space and use of a hoist. If we should happen to run out of parking, we will give the town the discretion to sell a permit at a discount or steal some of the public's parking for commercial uses. That's going to be something that the town would have the authority to decide.

### **Thompson**

I think you've given us a nice overview. The rest of it. I think it's in the document you gave us. I'd like to open it up. Are there any concerns about what we could do because the idea is we're trying to craft an ordinance that will go before the town.

### **Dan Morris**

We have other permits that we're proposing. Light commercial would involve charter type operations or kayak rentals, very light service docks use that wouldn't involve a lot of infrastructure cost to the town, whereas The Reliance is probably the maximum amount of infrastructure cost to the town. Commercial fishing also is going to put some wear and tear on the facility. Where we have miscellaneous users, the Harbormaster has had the discretion to charge a \$100 per day fee to use the facility down there for just day users for and we propose to keep that going. Recreational users, like I said, would be the way it works now, there would be no fees and no charge for recreational pleasure use facility.

There would be some time limits. We're proposing that the town have the authority to tie up time limits at the floats. We're going to have more float tie up space than we've ever had. Just like the parking lot, where there should be some time limit restrictions and no overnight parking during the busy season. We felt there should be some float tie up restrictions as well. One important thing about parking is that the committee recommends that any restrictions the town has for parking go away during the offseason and that there'd be no restrictions during the offseason. I'd leave it up to the town to use best judgment on when the busy season begins. It begins earlier than it used to, and it ends later. That might vary. Island access was a question that came up and there's no fee for islanders to use the facility. If an island fisherman wanted to bring his catch to it, the commercial fishing fees would kick into that.

We talked about porta potties and trash receptacles. They're going to be down there. We have plans for that to happen. EV Chargers were brought up. The committee has a neutral stance on establishing those down there and the electrical infrastructure would largely control what can be done with EV chargers. We're recommending at the very least security cameras and perhaps a webcam. I think that would assist the town with any scofflaws. I think it will really assist the town with any liability that might pop up. Somebody saying they were hurt doing something down there. You have a record of that on a camera. We'd like to keep the facility open year-round. The problem becomes will the floats that we're going to have down there withstand the beating that the winter weather will give them and it's

more than likely not. I would leave it up to the town's discretion to take the floats, although the place would be open. There's some nice green space on one end of the facility that's elevated and that would make a great picnic area for families. It has a beautiful view of the harbor and the facility itself. It's where the work trailer is for our contractor right now. It's in that area. We've also talked about the two parking spots for the family being up in that area away from the rest of the property but that has to be decided. The effective date, we're anticipating that the facility will be finished in June of 2024 so any of these fees can be prorated for 2024 or you could decide to start them in January, the 25th.

**Thompson**

Dan, we'd like to put this report on our website for review and understand the comprehensive nature of which the Harbor Committee's approach to this is to be commended. I open it up to the committee.

**Carr**

I worry about putting all this in an ordinance, even setting aside the fees. I still think before we've collected data and before we see how this is being used, to me it doesn't make sense to create an ordinance right now, even bare bones.

**Conrad**

If we're going to start charging fees, we need to be authorized to do that, right?

**Erb**

I asked Bill that question and do not have an answer yet. I've had that same thought. How much would we need to do? You know, at the very least, I think it goes back to the bare bones approach that perhaps without detail the board could be authorized.

**Conrad**

I've been assuming if we need authorization at all, what we'd be asking the public for is authorization for the Select Board to set the fees based on recommendations from the Harbor Committee and input from the public.

**Thompson**

With a yearly review.

**Conrad**

You're right. It's nuts for everybody in his brother to be coming in and complaining about what's happening down there but if we already have authority to set these fees, we can figure it out before the grand opening.

**Thompson**

My suggestion is why don't we make sure that we post the recommendations as a committee report so that it's out there, and in the meantime, talk with Bill on where we stand on this, because we really don't know.

**Conrad**

Do we charge fees for other things?

**Thompson**

There are daily use fees there now.

**Speaker**

The transporters are using it (Inaudible).

**Conrad**

What I don't know is whether we had specific authorization to set up those once upon a time or whether that's just an inherent authority that the town has.

**Cartwright**

Rick, don't you talk with some other managers you could check on what happens in other communities?

**Thompson**

Rick made the suggestion that we just accept the report as a recommendation for how we might proceed.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Conrad, to accept the report as a recommendation, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**Elwell**

I'd like to thank Dan. The committee's concerns were there.

**Cartwright**

I bet there was no shortage of opinions.

**Dan Morris**

I'm a lobster fisherman. It's a double-edged sword for someone like me. I've been in the regulation of the fishing business for a long time. I know that no matter what you come up with, somebody's going to be very unhappy with it. And so, again, the key to this whole fee structure thing and the amount of fees that we charge is to strike a balance between affordability for the town's fishermen, especially in light of what they're paying for full-service docks now and the unfair competition with those docks. I think we've done our best to strike that balance.



**Conrad**

It is really important, as you said at the beginning, that once we have a history of usage, we can revisit any of this.

**Erb**

One of the things people should know is we have to have the EDA's approval to charge fees and I've had conversations by email with our contact at the EDA and I believe we now have agreement that the town's proposed use of the funds passes their scrutiny. I'll be sending a copy of a letter to him tomorrow, describing what we have in mind, and he said he'll have to run it past the EDA's attorneys, but he believes that we meet the criteria that they laid out.

**Conrad**

What you're talking about is how we would use the money we collected because we've talked about and I looked at the language in the grant, so that we were all clear that we would be using the money we collect from these fees toward maintenance of the landing and operation of the landing both so that we don't have to have it in a pot that sits there until there's a repair twelve years from now.

**Erb**

You can though if there is excess revenue.

**Conrad**

Right, if part of the operation includes part of the Harbormaster's salary, some other enforcement issues, or equipment that we would be able to spend it on. That's important.

**Request for the Town to Apply for a Community Development Block Grant to Support Local Business**

**Thompson**

Greg Soutiea wanted us to look at our Community Development Block Grant.

**Greg Soutiea**

There is a community grant program through the Economic Development, the ECD; it's called Community Block Grant. There are several different types of block grants. What we're qualifying for and asking for the Select Board and Rick's assistance with is a job creation and training grant. What we're doing is, for the last five years, we've spent a good chunk of money out of state to full-service marketing firms. We found a really good candidate who lives locally and who's actually here in St. George, which is not necessarily a requirement of the grant itself to employ somebody from the same municipality, but who's going to be a really good fit for us and has a really good skill set so that we can create a new full time position here that's going to be year round that will help with our marketing and

our website building, the back end connecting to our Google ads and a lot more there. The grant itself is eligible for up to \$30,000 for job creation and training. Ideally at a minimum, our hope is to cover two months of overlap with the new marketing director with our existing firm so that we're not dropping any balls going into summer and just making sure that there's a smooth transition. There are some other training costs and hardware costs, software, a new computer and things like that that are eligible as part of the program as well. I think we will probably be, give or take, in the \$15,000 to \$17,000 range.

I'm working with Doug who's the chair of the grant here and the DECD as we go through some of the other expenses, he's helping us to essentially maximize what we can utilize the grant for without taking advantage of anything we don't want to do. One of the requirements is that the new hire, the job that's being created, is an economic benefit to the employee and to the area as well. There were certain requirements where this new person had to be making under a certain threshold, the new job creation is above a certain threshold to create that kind of difference in what was already here. So, we met those requirements, as well. The first step, because this is an old program that was funded from HUD, it requires an environmental review, which is pretty straightforward on paper. So that is the first step that Rick and someone else from the Select Board will have to sign off on. They'll take care of all that at the state level and delegate at the DECD level. They'll do the research and just look at the map. There shouldn't be any issues passing that quickly once it's on paper.

**Thompson**

Is what you're looking for from us a letter of support?

**Greg Soutiea**

It's not a letter of support because the DECD doesn't do any direct funding to any for profit businesses in the state. The funds flow through the town.

**Thompson**

I wasn't aware of that.

**Conrad**

I must have missed something early on. What are we thinking this person is going to do and for whom?

**Greg Soutiea**

For me. She's going to be a full-time marketing director.

**Conrad**

For your business.

**Elwell**

You need the money to come through us?

**Greg Soutiea**

Yes. Basically, I'm asking the Select Board to approve Rick to move forward with assisting with the application and the requests from the DECD to help us secure the grant and if secured, and all initial discussions show we qualify for it, the DECD would then give the money to the town to give to us.

**Thompson**

Is this something the Business Alliances is aware of and might look at?

**Greg Soutiea**

Rick said you've never done one of these before working in the state and in talking to the DECD it sounds like this part of the program is not very well utilized. I think it's something that if we get a process down, there are definitely some other businesses that would benefit from it, if there is money there.

**Erb**

Community Development Block Grants are actually quite common but one reason I've never done one was most of my career was in Kennebunk and at least there any programs that were interested had requirements, unemployment levels and poverty levels and we didn't qualify. We tried to make the case that we hired people from communities around us that did qualify.

**Speaker**

Didn't (Inaudible) Seafood use a Community Block Grant to start up operations at the Mussel Ridge?

**Conrad**

At Eastern Muscle?

**Carr**

Yes. Kyle.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Cartwright, that the Select Board support Greg Soutiea in his endeavor for his Community Development Block Grant to support local business, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**Greg Soutiea**

I'll do all the paperwork. Rick has already seen the initial application for the environmental review, one page, and then the town submits it.

**Carr**

Do we have any responsibility to pay it back?

**Greg Soutiea**

No. It's a grant designed for municipalities for direct business support.

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Cartwright, to extend the Select Boart meeting past 9:00pm, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**Conflict of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest.

**Minutes**

A motion was made by Conrad, seconded by Elwell, to approve the January 22, 2024 Select Board Meeting Minutes, as revised, and with a unanimous vote, the minutes were approved.

**Warrant****Ames**

I have two of them. One for the General Fund and one for 10 Cold Storage Rd.

The warrants were signed.

**Town Manager Report****Erb**

We have gone back out for RFPs on revaluation in the town. I have received one, which is better than last time when we had none. I have heard from another company that says that they intend to submit a proposal. I don't know if we'll get anything beyond that, but they are due three weeks from today. It'll be during the daytime of your next meeting.

The town has been contacted by Maine Revenue Services on hiring because we do not charge personal property tax.

**Conrad**

Do some towns charge?

**Elwell**

It is required by law. That was a big debate probably thirty years ago.

**Erb**

We're not the only town in that situation. But most towns do; most want to. When I had that industrial tax base, their equipment was worth more than their buildings.

**Conrad**

That was business, not individual. I know the term as a legal term.

**Elwell**

A hot debate was technically every lobsterman pays a tax on their lobster traps. And for business, when I was doing the sculptures, each one of my sculptures was worth a certain amount in inventory. That was a big debate in town.

**Erb**

They are not demanding that we immediately do this, but they want a response from us.

**Elwell**

I think every year we've gotten something from them.

**Conrad**

We can't be in violation. We are going to have to figure out what to do about this.

**Erb**

We have a revaluation coming up, so I asked if this is an appropriate time for us to address this and the answer I received was that it would be.

**Conrad**

But then that would have to go into our contract with the evaluation people and that's not going to be free. We're already talking about \$300,000.

**Elwell**

I think all these years we haven't worried about it, and I don't think we should worry about it until we actually have to.

**Conrad**

I think we have to be in compliance with the law even if we make a decision to charge everybody \$1.

**Thompson**

There are other parts of this. Businesses are in a position to apply to get reimbursed. There's some interesting stuff that's available on that so it says that there's a personal property tax and how you apply to get "x" amount back. Several programs, BETER and so forth that are there online, are specifically associated with this. In many ways, you don't like to do it, but in many ways, it brings in more revenue to the town and potentially could lower the tax rate.

**Elwell**

It lowers the tax rate, but you end up paying it on the other end.

**Erb**

One thing I learned today because I knew that this would have an effect on our state valuation. As you know, that's the figure that they use to calculate county tax and things like that. They are already adding some amount to our state valuation.

**Thompson**

It's not a real number. It's just a portion.

**Erb**

Yes. They're already doing that.

**Conrad**

Because they know we're not charging.

**Erb**

Yes.

**Conrad**

I feel like we should have some little group, maybe the Budget Committee or some people to look at this in context. We need to hear recommendations that are based on something that other communities do that are real numbers.

**Carr**

Do you know off the top of your head like what Camden does or what Rockport does?

**Erb**

I don't. My assumption would be the larger the municipality, the more likely they do what they are supposed to do.

**Conrad**

We don't have many manufacturers or businesses that are going to be heavily taxed. It would be good to have that information about what other communities are doing. We have to do something that's rational and defensible.

**Erb**

I will explore further. I can certainly ask. I'd be interested in the numbers from some comparable towns.

**Elwell**

Maybe we can get Susie to look into it.

**Erb**

I have just a couple of other things to go through quickly. We have been notified by the state that our ambulance service will receive the financial support that the legislature passed. The first payment from the state on this will be \$49,000. The second has not been determined yet, but I understand it will be at least the amount of the first one. We're going to have to decide how do we want to deal with this revenue. There are limited ways to use it, however, the wages and ambulance replacement are allowable uses. We can talk further about it. We do have some issues in comparability with what we pay our ambulance attendants and what other towns do so I think it's something we ought to look at.

**Conrad**

Is this going to be a one-time thing?

**Erb**

I don't know.

**Carr**

I think so. There's a pot of \$31 million.

**Erb**

Except I've also seen the news stories that the same groups that were advocating for this, are making it clear that obviously a one-time payment is not going to solve the problem.

**Conrad**

I think the chances are that we're not going to be able to count on this going forward, and that would argue for spending it on something like an ambulance as opposed to starting to pay people more. That's going to be an ongoing expense. I think we should just look at that.

**Erb**

I'll get you all of that information.

**Cartwright**

The people getting paid don't want to hear that.

**Conrad**

I'm not saying we shouldn't pay people more in general. Where are we going to get the money three years from now? It's not going to be from the state.

**Erb**

We have received our first check from the EDA to reimburse us for the Port Clyde project. It was \$1.3 million. They said the first one will take significantly longer than subsequent requests so we will get the new ones in soon, but that was important to get that. That's pretty much it other than some repair costs for storm repair. You saw what we put together there.

**Conrad**

That is just town owned facilities or roads.

**Erb**

It has nothing to do with private property. The path for town reimbursement is much more straightforward than private property, as you can imagine. They came here, we had FEMA, we had state officials, we had local officials all on board. It seemed to go well; I met the deadline to submit that information. I did hear back from them, asking for more info and I have almost all of that collected now. Just because something isn't on that list doesn't mean that we won't get paid for it. They need some idea of how much we're talking about. We've been working at Marshall Point. We've already done the road there but now we've also done repairs to the riprap in front of the keeper's house there. We are talking with contractors about repairs on piers and the walkway. That's all I have right now.

**Schedule a Special Meeting to Review Town Manager Applications**

**Thompson**

I have that on my calendar for February 28<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.

**Conrad**

It is going to be in executive session. We should put it on the agenda, so people don't attend for that.



## **Establishing an ad hoc Traffic Safety Committee**

### **Cartwright**

We have a meeting this Thursday at 4pm upstairs at the Town Office. There should be quite a turnout. I contacted Sheriff Polky. He couldn't make it but he's sending his Chief Deputy Kurt Hendrick to be on hand at the meeting which will be good. I asked Ann Matlack to come, and she said she'll try. Also, I heard that a reporter will be there. We will actually be in the news. We should remember that too. If we want something covered, sometimes if you just call the newspaper, they will send someone if you make it sound "newsie". In this case, she thought it was interesting enough to come.

### **Conrad**

Do we need to approve having an ad hoc committee for traffic and safety if we're going to entertain recommendations from this group?

### **Cartwright**

I have a proposal on that. At this meeting, we could hand out information and people who actually want to be appointed members could bring those applications back.

### **Thompson**

I'd like to go that way first.

### **Cartwright**

I've been fishing around to see if someone would like to chair it. Hopefully someone will come along who would like to do it. I can be the liaison to the board, but they would be their own committee and come up with their recommendations.

### **Conrad**

We heard a lot about that in the Comprehensive Plan surveys, speeding and traffic safety issues.

### **Cartwright**

We hit a nerve with this issue for sure. There is a lot of interest in it.

## **Executive Session - Acquisition of Property at Old Woods Rd.**

A motion was made by Elwell, seconded by Cartwright to enter Executive Session at 9:12pm for the purpose of discussing 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 Elwell, seconded by Cartwright, to end the Executive Session at 9:35pm and the public meeting was re-opened for the purpose of adjourning.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Conrad, seconded by Cartwright, to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 9:35pm, and by a unanimous vote, the motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Taylor  
Recording Secretary  
Town of St. George, Maine