

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2019 – 7 p.m.

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. Members present were: Richard Bates, Chair; Jerry Hall, Wayne Sawyer, and Tammy Willey. (Randy Elwell was absent.) Also, present: Tim Polky, Terri-Lynn Baines, Dale Pierson, John Falla, Carolyn Garrett-Reed, Beth Smith, and Bruce Flaherty.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (nonverbatim and edited) Bruce Flaherty spoke on behalf of the Spirit of America Volunteer Recognition Program. "As you know, Mainers do great things to help others, including the youth who raised \$275 from hot chocolate sales to buy needy children Christmas toys and the police officer who saved the lives of two youths as their home was engulfed in flames. However, it happens that people like this who do very nice things to help their community and others, often times do not get the recognition they deserve from their officials or from anyone else.

The Spirit of America Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity based in Augusta, Maine. Its purpose is to encourage volunteerism. It allows the Spirit of America Foundation tribute to be presented in the name of any Maine municipality to honor a person, project, or group for commendable community service. Last year, the best year ever for the Spirit of America program, over 160 Maine municipalities picked Spirit of America recipients. This year that was topped. So far, over 190 Maine municipalities have picked Spirit of America recipients.

Maine Municipal Association and its current president, Mary Sabins, are very supportive of the program. Information can be found about this on the MMA's website, scrolling down to the recent announcements. In the "MMA this Month" January newsletter, there is mention of the program. Mary Sabins is not only very supportive of the program but her town of Vassalboro has been involved in this for many, many years. As you might know, there is no fee whatsoever to participate and there is a lot of information about the program on the website, spiroaft.com.

The Spirit of America winner the town of St. George selects this year - will be honored at a Knox County ceremony. In a previous year, your former Town Manager was honored at that ceremony and very, very much deserving of the recognition. (Falla: 'You cannot do it twice, though'). Let me qualify one thing. It can happen but it would not be nice to be every single year. You know what I mean. Ten or fifteen years after, it is very, very appropriate. It is strongly encouraged but it does not need to be the case that it be the one that the town report is dedicated to.

I had not heard back from your town. Was talking with Tim in the fall; just a discussion - listening and hearing what Sally Robinson Long has done. She as you know has done some phenomenal things for your community for a long period of time. From the sounds of things, is the oldest resident in town. I am here visiting some other towns and said maybe St. George might have made a selection, and I haven't heard back from and thought, in any case, come by just to see what the scoop would be."

Because a decision was needed as soon as possible, Chair Bates and the Select Board agreed to discuss the issue later in the meeting. Chair Bates thanked Mr. Flaherty for coming.

REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda - The following adjustments were made:

- The Historical Society Proposal was moved from Old Business to Regular Session
- Tax Commitment, Action Item was moved from New Business to Regular Session
- Discussion on the Spirit of America Volunteer Recognition Program was added to New Business

- Historical Society Proposal for the 38 Main Street Property: John Falla, President of the St. George Historical Society, distributed a Proposal to the Select Board asking for the Board's consideration that the Town enter into a Lease Agreement with the Historical Society for the property known as 38 Main Street, and that the lease be similar to the lease the Town and Historical Society currently has regarding the Marshall Point Lighthouse property.

Mr. Falla explained the Trustees of the Historical Society met and voted to submit the proposal to the Select Board and that of the six bullets in the proposal, most of the wording was the same as the current lease for Marshall Point. He said the Trustees felt it would be a good addition for Main Street and to the community. Mr. Falla felt it would be a positive for the community and for the Historical Society, as the town had worked with the Historical Society for over 30 years on preservation and promotion of the town's history. Mr. Falla said the Historical Society hoped the Select Board would look upon this favorably.

Chair Bates said he did not think the Select Board would come to a decision at this meeting. He stated the Select Board had talked with the realtors and had some ideas about the options, if they decided to sell. The Select Board will discuss the proposal at the August 5, 2019 Board meeting.

Mr. Falla said he was under the impression the current lease holder was looking to continue their lease through the end of the summer and Chair Bates said correct. Mr. Falla said the Trustees discussed their need for a decision from the Select Board as soon as possible so they could start to get things set up and start fundraising.

Chair Bates had a concern regarding Bullet 5 in the Proposal that indicated the Society would maintain the building in the same order and repair as it was at the commencement of the terms of the lease. He said one of the issues was the quality of the roof. Chair Bates thought it would be prudent to re-roof the building; and the way the lease was written, it would be incumbent on the town to re-roof it. Mr. Falla said, "Before October 1."

Chair Bates asked if fundraising would be done to purchase articles such as museum cases and items from a professional exhibitor who would have quality exhibits. Mr. Falla said it would be for computers, printers, and utilities and special software, as the Historical Society had over 1,000 images on the website and people had asked him if they could get a copy of the image. He said they had been looking into software that could keep track of what was in the collection, where it was located, and the property owner.

Chair Bates asked if the Historical Society was anticipating the town would take care of re-roofing, so the funds raised would go on other efforts in the building. Mr. Falla said yes.

Chair Bates asked, "If the town was to have a tenant rather like the tenant we have had for the last couple of years, it would gain income of \$10,000 a year (the new lease). If we go with the Historical Society, we would forgo that \$10,000 a year. So, we could turn that around and say, what if instead we went and found a tenant to pay \$10,000 a year and then at the same time in the annual meeting, we have the approval of the town to spend \$10,000 a year regularly, not just like we did last year for the lighthouse, but every year for the Historical Society? In which case, would you do anything differently? Would you, for example, decide to start repairing and taking care of the Andrew Robinson house? Which every time I drive by, I wonder if it is still going to be there?"

Mr. Falla said someone had been assigned to that property. He said the Andrew Robinson House did not have a committee at this point but had one in the past. His goal was to have another community member focus on that property, do fundraising, and move the project forward.

Mr. Falla stated that Mr. Pierson drew up a Historical Society organizational chart and under the umbrella was Marshall Point, the School House Museum, Andrew Robinson House, and the Old Library (if that came about). Mr. Falla said these committees all have their own separate checking accounts and do their own fundraising.

Mr. Pierson quoted Mr. Skoglund who once said, 'How do you replace something that is one of a kind?' Chair Bates asked, "Which is irreplaceable? The 38 Main Street or the Robinson House?" Pierson said the Robinson House if he was just thinking of the dollars but added who at the end of their lives say they wished they had worked longer? He felt it was important to preserve the history of the town's forebearers and felt having a space to use would allow the Historical Society to do a much better job.

Mr. Falla explained the Robinson House and 38 Main Street were two different situations. The Andrew Robinson House is architecturally significant, historically and should be preserved the way it is and not put all different kinds of display items in there. He noted that 38 Main Street is set up for display as it has a small office, a storage area upstairs and it is all retail display, and before that, it was an old library.

Mr. Falla felt it was important to look down the road to the future and felt it would be in the town's best interest to hold on to the property at 38 Main Street because it was in a very critical location. Falla said, "Who knows what you may want to put there?" Chair Bates said if the town sold it then the town would have no control over what it might be.

Chair Bates was concerned that the Schoolhouse Museum did not attract a lot of people except on St. George Days. Mr. Pierson said the Society discussed how to make better use of the space and to have a schedule.

Mr. Falla said his vision as president of the Historical Society is to try to get the group organized and get others involved. He said there is interest out there, and everyone is busy, but he feels the Lighthouse committee is a good example of recruiting and scheduling volunteers.

Chair Bates suggested the Society could have office hours in the little school room for a couple of years to work on more exhibits and demonstrate these exhibits to bring in people. Mr. Falla said everything in the school museum is school related and there are still items that people are looking to give to the museum. Ms. Garrett-Reed said the schoolhouse is not heated, so it is really not a safe place to keep anything. Ms. Willey added the squirrels got in over the winter and chewed it up.

Selectperson Hall asked if it made sense to consider a different term than 10 years? Mr. Pierson said they had not discussed that. Mr. Falla said the subcommittee would not be coming to the town saying the town needed to replace this or replace that. The intent of the lease is to treat it like it is our own. As far as set up, the insurance is cheaper for the town. The way the insurance is set up at Marshall Point is, the town insures liability and building, and the Historical Society insures contents.

Chair Bates asked what were the Historical Society's cash reserves last year when they filed with the IRS? Mr. Falla said, including what Marshall Point had, it was approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000. Chair Bates asked if that was after the completion of the new structure and Mr. Falla was not sure but said he did receive a financial summary at the end of 2018. He said currently, the Historical Society had around \$4,000 in the checking account. Mr. Falla said the Historical Society would not borrow from the lighthouse account because the money was raised by them for the lighthouse.

Mr. Pierson felt the Historical Society's goals were similar to the intent in purchasing 10 Cold Storage Road; it was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Mr. Pierson indicated that the Select Board said, "We (the town) do not want to miss this opportunity. We think it is the best thing we can do for the long-term benefit of the community." Ms. Garrett-Reed felt it was a convenient location for a genealogical resource center because community is important in St. George.

Chair Bates asked how many visitors a year did they think they would have. Mr. Pierson thought the majority of visitors would come when the weather was good. Mr. Falla said visitors will not happen overnight, but he gets a lot of emails. Chair Bates asked if they see this as attracting people. Mr. Pierson said people would probably not drive 150 miles just to go to the Historical Society center but if they were in the area, they might. He added that many Historical Societies in Maine that have made a significant impact, have succeeded.

Chair Bates said over the last few weeks, he had been asked, "What would the Historical Society building do for the other parts of town and would it bring people in and Mr. Falla's response was, 'Yes, it would'." Mr. Pierson felt it was hard to quantify how many people would come to St. George just for that, but Maine does advertise tourism. Chair Bates said that was one more reason to come down the peninsula.

Selectperson Hall said he was glad Historical Society members came to the meeting and talked about the issue as it had been helpful to him. He noted the Thursday night monthly meetings were getting much more publicity than they used to, and if the Society had rotating topics which were highlighted and featured in the paper that would cause people to come down.

Selectperson Hall said he now had a better picture about what the Historical Society would do. He added that the progression with the Robinson House had caused him to look negatively on this proposal up until tonight. Ms. Garrett-Reed noted that the timing of all this was rather perfect as the bicentennial was next year.

Mr. Falla explained their proposed lay out of space in the building. The small office would remain the office. The upstairs would be for storage of the inventory and be available to them for rotating stock. The main area would be for exhibits. Mr. Falla said they had a lot of information to review and exhibit. He said the biggest questions from people who move here are, "Can you tell me the history of my property? Can you tell me the history of my house?" He said he has done that for three different people over the last year.

Chair Bates thanked the group for coming, the Select Board would discuss this on August 5, and he hoped they could come to a decision then.

- Tax Commitment: Planning and Assessing Clerk Beth Smith distributed handouts on Appropriations & Reductions, Budget 2019-2020 and Maine Revenue Services – 2019 Municipal Tax Rate Calculation Standard form for St. George. Chair Bates noted the overlay was such that the town would have a two-month fund balance as called for in the Select Board policy.

Chair Bates said the increase in the mill rate was approximately 7.3% and was due to a combination of the County budget, which increased 4.4%, and the school which increased 9.6% because of the Special Education needs. The town increase was principally due to 10 Cold Storage Road bond. Selectperson Hall noted that on a net municipal spending basis, all expenses other than the bond on 10 Cold Storage Road, went down.

Chair Bates said taxes would increase approximately (\$0.44) forty-four cents a day or approximately \$162 a year based on the median house price of \$250,000 at a 9.6 mill rate. Last year's mill rate was 8.95. Mr. Polky noted that the large increase in the school budget was due to special education and the school had needed two new boilers for the heating system. Selectperson Hall said the school was able to make a significant contribution from fund balance to get the rate down to 9.6.

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer to approve a mill rate for the Town of St. George of 9.6 for the 2019-2020 year. The vote was 4-0. Motion carried.

The Select Board signed the Certificate of Commitment, the Certificate of Assessments, and the Assessor's Return.

- Minutes: The minutes of July 8, 2019 were amended as follows:

Page 1 changes, first paragraph, Wayne Sawyer was absent. Last paragraph, correct to **Middle East** and line 2, change to read: ... can **try here**.

Page 2, changes: paragraph 3, line 4, correct word to bringing
paragraph 5, line 2, change to read: ... already **displaying** speeding.

Under Other Public Comment, lines 4 & 5, add quotation marks, ... 'I was late for the boat.'

Under Connect St. George, line 3, correct to residents

Page 3, last paragraph, line 13, correct an to **and**

Page 7, under Planning Board bullet 4 change word to **assessed**

Page 9, under Draft Cemetery, paragraph 5, line 3, change word by to **but**

Page 10 changes, paragraph 5 under the motion, line 2, change to read: ...Cemetery Committee **and a representative** chosen by the committee to consult ...

Under Approve 2019 Knox County Hazard Mitigation, line 3, correct to read: ...reported that **Knox County** had received...

On a motion by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Willey, it was voted 4-0 to approve the July 8, 2019 minutes, as corrected.

- Communications: The following communications were received.

- A letter from Karen Rizkalla stating she was still interested in working for the town of St. George if and when the town decided to list 38 Main Street for sale.
- A four-page letter from Julie Malecha, Tucson, AZ urging St. George to assist immigrants who were granted asylum to move here. The Select Board would review the letter for further consideration.
- A letter from Jane Conrad expressing concern about the major earth moving project on Barter's Point Road. Chair Bates noted the letter had been sent to the Town Manager and Chair of the Planning Board. He said he explained to Ms. Conrad that the Town Administration was reviewing this concern and it was getting the attention it needed.
- A copy of the letter from Steve Hinchman, Chief Counsel for ReVision Energy to Senior Counsel, Richard Hevey, Central Maine Power Company, seeking immediate action by CMP to fix the billing problems that remain unresolved for the Towns of Woolwich, St. George and Camden, and for the Riley School in Rockport, Maine.

Mr. Polky explained ReVision's lawyer contacted CMP stating they were not happy with their (CMP's) net metering procedure. In St. George's case, CMP credited the town in dollars. Attorney Hinchman's letter stated, "Because the Town is expected to almost completely offset its kWh charges with self-generated solar power, it will take quite a long time for the Town to draw down the negative balance on the account." Mr. Polky said Attorney Hinchman asked that CMP give St. George a refund (a cash reimbursement).

- Warrant: The warrant for the week of July 22, 2019 was reviewed and signed. The total expenses were \$618,238.24 and includes a July school payment, tipping fees, road maintenance and a 10 Cold Storage payment. Chair Bates clarified that the 10 CSR payment was for the property and not for the bond.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Polky reported on road paving, rigid plastic removal at the Transfer Station, and the HGAC contract.

He stated that paving would be done on Wallston Road, Fogerty Corner Road, Taylor's Point, and the entrance to English Town West and was expected to start on August 1, 2019.

Mr. Polky said the Transfer Station staff had cleaned up the rigid plastic, moved it and the area looked neater. He said one container would be replaced with three, open end containers allowing people to place the plastic directly into the container, rather than on the ground. Mr. Polky said the town sold a load of 3 through 7 (plastic) material for \$20 a ton and noted that markets were beginning to open up.

Mr. Polky said there is a signed contract with HGAC-Buy but that the cost of the contract with HGAC-Buy is zero; there is no cost to be a member. Mr. Polky explained that the town will pay a percentage when the vehicle is purchased.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Solid Waste and Recycling Committee: Selectperson Willey reported on the SW&RC who met on July 17 at 7:30 a.m. She said the committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and discussed many of the recommendations listed. The SW&RC felt they had reached many of the goals, but the larger issue was to continue to encourage people to recycle.

The SW&RC wants to get the recycling rate up. They want the public to know that the town still recycles, currently it is the best way for St. George to go, and it is the most effective and efficient way to do it.

The first batch of compost at the Transfer Station has sold out and more will be available as soon as it is tested.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met July 9, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

- The building permit application to build a garage at 93 Barters Point Road was accepted as complete and, with modifications agreed to maintain the required setbacks, was approved.
- The application to run “Ancho Honey” take-out at 6 Wallston Road was accepted as complete; the project was then assessed for its compliance with the performance standards of the Site Plan Review ordinance and, satisfying this, it was approved.

- Notes from Boards, Committees and Commissions: Chair Bates asked board members to remind the committees to get their monthly summaries to him by July 31, 2019.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Ancho Honey Virtual's License: On a motion by Selectperson Willey, seconded by Hall, it was voted 4-0 to approve the virtual license for Malcolm Bedell, d/b/a Ancho-Honey.

- Connect St. George: Selectperson Hall said he forwarded the group's statement of goals to the Select Board. Mr. Hall said he re-read the statement while emailing it and wondered if it would read better as "Universal access to reliable high-speed internet in St. George to support education, health care, civil engagement, aging in place and local businesses" rather than "Universal access to high-speed reliable internet in St. George." Selectperson Sawyer liked Mr. Hall's proposed revision. Chair Bates asked if the Board would like to endorse this as a goal. Selectperson Willey said she somewhat supported it but was thinking back to when they were giving the Select Board a number of 1,754 people in town that were able to connect but only 730 were connected. She asked, "Why?"

Selectperson Hall said he had two items he wanted to speak to regarding the discussion of the Connect St. George group. He said they have found major discrepancies in the data provided by ConnectME and Spectrum. It was reported in a newsletter article he read, that towns and areas around the country were wrestling with the broadband access issue. Another article was about the data available for North Carolina versus the reality. It talked about the systemic collection problems in the data and the way it is collected, and how the data is looked at it on a sector by sector basis. If one person in a sector has access, they count the whole sector as having access. Then they correlate that with the addresses. Some of this information is taken from federal agencies and given to the state agency like ConnectME.

Mr. Hall said the conclusion you draw is that Spectrum is probably using that same methodology. There are 2,129 numbered addresses in the town of St. George. That a place with a building would have a numbered address for 911 services, etc., is inconceivable that 1,745 of those have access to the Spectrum connection and only 700+ have signed up for it. He said his view and the consensus of the committee is the data Spectrum quoted is wrong; it is bad data.

Mr. Hall said John Maltais had mapped the areas that showed good connection based on the data provided by ConnectME. What it showed was that several areas had good service – State's Point, Snow's Point, and Scraggle Point, which we know do not. Once you see three neighborhoods developments where the data is just outright wrong, you conclude much of the data being presented is wrong.

Selectperson Hall said the first step is to have an audit of who has service and who does not. The committee feels they can do this without the need to hire it done, although it may need to. Mr. Hall said if you go through the neighborhoods in town and you look at the roads associated with all the neighborhoods, you can quickly figure out how many numbered addresses there are on each road. If you look at the neighborhood and the roads in that neighborhood, you can quickly figure out how many numbered addresses there are in each neighborhood. He said you know in most cases, whether that neighborhood has internet access or not.

Then you can put everybody into a yes/no/maybe category. For the maybe category, if you collect a handful of people together, it is likely that somebody will know somebody in that neighborhood, or they can call and say do you have Spectrum access at your house? The other thing is, you have people, like Diane Hall and Sandra Hall who know so many people in town. Selectperson Hall said the committee's view is that within a reasonably short period of time, they

should be able to get a much more reliable count than the numbers they have been presented from these other sources.

Selectperson Hall said the second step, and may be the subject of the next meeting, is once the audit is done and we can identify on a map what areas have service, what roads have service and what roads don't, how do we get a cost estimate for providing service to those areas? What will that cost and how do we pay to get that estimate put together? You are going to want to ask more than one provider that question. Mr. Hall added this audit is a way to get the process started without having to spend money or without having to wait and wade through the debate of how do we get the money to do this first step?

Selectperson Sawyer said a lot of municipalities had spent huge amounts of money to provide internet access for their residents so why isn't this a federal government project?

Chair Bates said it seems at this stage that every community is basically handling this issue themselves. Selectperson Hall said the complexity of the problem varies enormously by community. Many communities do not have anything which is actually a simpler problem to address than a town like St. George who has some people well served and some people served not at all. If you do not have anything, then you can get broad support for bringing something in and setting up your own quasi utility.

Selectperson Hall said his view is that somehow the cost has to be shared between the state, the provider, the town, and the users. For example, Snow's Point. Even if you run a line all the way down to the end of Snow's Point, you have a lot of people living at the end of dirt roads on Snow's Point. Aren't they going to have to contribute something?

Selectperson Hall said what the committee says the goal should be is for everybody to have broadband access. He said you can debate whether that is a realistic goal and in what time frame, but his view is that is a good goal.

Chair Bates suggested the Select Board strongly support the goal of the Connect St. George Committee. Selectperson Willey said she was looking down the road and would be interested to know the cost. Mr. Polky said this is the first step before knowing the costs and he (Polky) believes that everyone should have access to the internet. It does not mean they have to take it; but there are a lot of people in town who would like to have it that cannot.

A motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall that the Select Board strongly supports the goal of the Connect St. George Committee to provide universal access to reliable high-speed internet in St. George to support education, health care, civil engagement, aging in place and local businesses. The vote was 4-0. Motion carried.

- Cemetery Ordinance: Town Manager Polky said he had not received a call from John Falla who was going to talk with Attorney Brannan. Mr. Polky thought the committee had talked it over because he was under the impression that Mr. Falla said there probably would not be an ordinance. Selectperson Hall said he thought that was what they concluded at the last meeting. Mr. Hall said he was very supportive of the guidelines but had concern about creating an

ordinance in such detail. Mr. Polky said he did not think the town needed a cemetery ordinance. Mr. Hall said a policy can be created for the Seaside Cemetery and he did not think they needed to consult an attorney, and Polky agreed. Selectperson Hall said he would talk with John Falla about tonight's discussion.

NEW BUSINESS:

Quitclaim Deed: A Quitclaim deed was presented to the Select Board on acquired property due to a tax lien and a bank foreclosure. The property was sold, and the new owner paid the back taxes; the town is signing off its interest because the town received its money. Select Board members signed the Quitclaim deed.

- Catering Permit: Maurer & Partners Corporation, d/b/a Stone Cove Catering applied for a catering permit for a chartered event to be held on the Elizabeth Ann owned and operated by the Monhegan Boat Line.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Willey, it was voted 4-0 to approve the catering permit for Stone Cove Catering.

- Solar Panels – ReVision Maintenance: Mr. Polky updated the Board on the status CMP and ReVision billing and the solar panels. He said there had been a problem with the solar panels from the beginning. ReVision now thinks the problem is with the main breaker which has been tripping a lot. Mr. Polky explained that the confusion was caused because town staff was resetting the main breaker instead of contacting ReVision about the problem.

Mr. Polky said ReVision ordered a new breaker because they thought the breaker was defective. The cost was substantial, and the manufacturer of the breaker would not make good on it. ReVision had to buy the breaker and send the old one back. Polky was told if the manufacturer found it was defective, they would reimburse ReVision.

Mr. Polky said ReVision resolved the tripping problem by cutting back on the production of the system, so it was not producing as much. Mr. Polky said last Monday, ReVision had to shut down the system and install the new breaker. When ReVision brought the system back up, they put it up to full power and as soon as they put it online, one of the inverters blew. Mr. Polky said the technician was on the phone with the manufacturer of the inverter and they now think everyone of the inverters had been doing the same thing. Polky asked, "Do you wait to do them one at a time or replace all six of them at once?"

Selectperson Hall asked how much did the inverters cost? Polky did not know the price but in his discussion with the technician, Jonathan Hart, he said he had to re-emphasize that it is their system and Mr. Polky said, "It is not going to be ours until the contract says we buy them out after seven years." Mr. Polky said ReVision had reassigned tasks. Mr. Hart was now the maintenance department and not to be doing any installs.

Mr. Polky said he was feeling better about ReVision and things seemed to be getting on track. Mr. Hart guaranteed Polky that he would be monitoring the town's system. He said there had

been better communication between he and Revision's contact person, Phoebe Hunt, and communications between he and CMP were better.

Selectperson Hall said, "Until they get it fixed, the system does not produce as much power, so the town does not buy as much of their electricity from ReVision and the town has to buy more from CMP but that works down the credit balances the town has."

Mr. Polky noted that St. George was in better shape than some of the other towns because they gave the town a credit, but it did cost the town more last year than it should have, so the town expenses went over. Selectperson Hall said they should run under this year and Polky agreed.

Mr. Polky said it was a little complicated because the town was still paying ReVision the full amount, so there would not be a huge savings on the (budget) utility line. Selectperson Hall said the town would save approximately 10% or more if it did not put out as much. The 10% could take two years to work off. Mr. Polky noted that the system was designed to produce 90% and the technician told Polky said it was producing 110%. Selectperson Hall said, "This is one of the things we suspected. That the output of the system was higher than the design."

Selectperson Hall explained that the price for power from CMP increased much more rapidly than they (the Administration) projected in the payback, so the payout would be significantly better than the town forecasted.

- Solar Panels – Property Tax Exemption: Chair Bates followed up on some of the issues Mr. Lord raised during public comment at the July 8, Select Board meeting.

An Act to Create Tax Equity among Renewable Energy Investments

- Maine State law requires a town to consider just fair market value. If a deck is put on, house is insulated, paint color, solar panels installed, etc.; these increase the value of the property and the town has no discretion on that.
- The State recently recognized this problem and passed a law to exempt residential solar and wind energy equipment, signed by the Governor on June 20, 2019.
- The state will figure out the way to make appropriate valuation by 12/1/19.
- A taxpayer claiming the exemption must file an application with the municipality in the first year the exemption is sought.
- It will first apply to property taxes based on the status of property 4/1/20.
- The state will reimburse the municipality for 50% of the claimed exemptions, but in arrears, i.e. starting in 2021.

Chair Bates explained, "As Assessors, we do not have any power to arbitrarily decide to give people a tax break. We cannot do that." Mr. Polky agreed. Chair Bates noted the public should pay attention to the town website for information about filing for an exemption as filing would be required in order to get the benefit.

Mr. Polky thought the process would be complicated, but the state needed to make it fair. Mr. Polky said he would contact Mr. Lord to discuss this matter.

On a motion by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, it was voted 4-0 to continue the meeting beyond 9:00 p.m.

- Spirit of America Award: The Select Board discussed the presentation given by Bruce Flaherty from the Spirit of America Volunteer Recognition Program. The nominee (or designee) would be honored at ceremony in Knox County. Nominations were discussed and Sally Robinson Long was nominated for her many years of support and contributions made to numerous volunteer organizations in the town of St. George.

Chair Bates will contact Mr. Flaherty on Tuesday with the Select Board's nomination for the Spirit of America Award.

At 9:12 p.m., there being no further business, a motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, to adjourn the meeting, 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson
Select Board Recording Secretary