

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office MEETING MINUTES

June 8, 2020 – 7 p.m.

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Members present were: Richard Bates, Chair; Randy Elwell, Jerry Hall, Wayne Sawyer, and Tammy Willey. Also present: Terri-Lynn Baines, Tim Polky, John Falla, Michael Felton, Scott Vaitones, David Percival, Susan Ellis, Crystal Tarjick, Elizabeth May, Ken Oelberger, and Stephen Betts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda:

- Discussion of the St. George MSU Warrant Article Summary FY'2021 Amended Budget by Superintendent Michael Felton was added and taken up first under Regular Session.
- Governor Mill's "Keep Maine Healthy" Plan was added and taken up at the end of the meeting.
- A Report by Ken Oelberger on Fort Point and Possible Grants was added under Old Business, Discussion Items
- The Quarterly Financial Review was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Business
- Revised FY'20-21 Budget was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Business

- School Warrant Discussion by Superintendent Michael Felton: The Select Board had received a first draft as well as the final copy of the school warrant. Chair Bates noted that Felton's financials were similar to those in the first draft.

Felton apologized for the late receipt of the reports. "Friday, around 10 a.m., the Department of Education sent us a new Executive Order from the Governor that essentially waived the requirement for a district budget meeting if certain requirements were met. I talked with some people at the DOE and other superintendents. We thought we understood how to waive the district budget meeting and not to do an in-person meeting due to public health concerns. But a DOE attached guidance (sent out with the executive order in the email) wasn't helpful. So, we spent many hours on Friday trying to figure it out. Around 5 p.m., Cassie Kilbride got on the phone with a lawyer and they walked us through what the process needs to be.

"What I am asking you to approve and sign tonight is the warrant that calls the validation referendum and puts the budget validation referendum questions on the ballot. The total numbers are the same as the budget we shared with you in May (that the Board approved), but it is a different format prescribed by the state that breaks things out according to the different articles and how it needs to be presented. The result is that the school's portion of the assessment is down just over \$40,000."

Felton noted that Selectperson Hall asked a good question earlier regarding Question 1 in the warrant. (Hall) 'Shall the town of St. George appropriate the sum of over 6 million dollars and raise the sum of about 5.2 million dollars?'

Felton, "So to figure out what we are asking the town to raise to support the school, you have to take that 5.2 million dollars in Question 1, add it to the \$92,000 in Question 3, which is the school nutrition program, then add the \$3,849 for adult ed. So, all the numbers are the same as what we gave you in the past, they are just presented (formatted) in a different way according to how the state needs it presented.

"These are the questions that will go on the referendum but also establish the various reserve funds we discussed. Part of the rush in this is we have to get this document approved by you and signed and also signed by the (School) Board then we can give it to Tara, so she can get it on the absentee ballots. Cassie and Tara have been talking a lot over the past month or so and really the two of them deserve the most credit for figuring how to make this all work."

The Select Board voted to approve the St. George MSU Warrant Article Summary FY'2021 Amended Budget, 5-0.

As the town office is again open and following COVID-19 protocol guidelines, Select Board members said they will go to the town office within the next two days to sign the document. Felton said the School Board scheduled an emergency meeting on Wednesday to approve the budget.

- Quarterly Financial Review: Chair Bates explained that the Budget Committee met with Terri-Lynn Baines and Selectperson Hall earlier today to review the revised budget. Susan Ellis, Chair of the Budget Committee, said Hall and Baines answered the majority of their questions but did have several items to discuss with the Town Manager. Chair Ellis led the budget discussion.

Town Office:

Payroll. Some of the staff are not at 75% but was told that was likely timing.

Ellis asked Mr. Polky when the roof would be replaced. "When do those funds get spent?" Polky said probably late in the summer. He could not give a definite date, but it could be carried forward into the next budget year.

There were no questions under Select Board/Assessors or the Planning Department.

Fire Department:

- A large credit in vehicle maintenance: it was from an insurance payment on the accident that happened on Clark Island Road during the fall of 2019.

- Employee Benefits. Chair Bates asked why the Solid Waste employee benefits were over 75% but not the Fire Department employee benefits. Baines said Fire Department personnel got paid when they had a fire call. If there were no fire calls, they did not get paid and the town did not pay worker's comp and other benefits. Chair Bates said that was why that number was low on

the Fire Department but under Solid Waste, it was a bit higher. Baines said the Fire Department did not work a set number of hours plus they did not have health insurance.

Chair Bates said okay but did not understand why the Solid Waste was that much higher than the 75%. Baines said Solid Waste employees worked full-time and it could be the timing of payroll. She said everything did not end on March 31st. The Fire Department just did not have the health benefits and it could be payroll timing.

Public Safety – Animal Control: No questions.

Public Works – Roads & Property Management: Percival asked Polky if resurfacing had been completed. Polky said resurfacing for this past year had been completed. Ellis asked if the \$19,500 that remained was to be part of the road work prep for FY'2021. Polky said the original thought was it may have to be, but they were not sure.

Public Works – Solid Waste: Ellis said they asked about the large overrun of the repair and they were told it was for the compactor.

There were no questions under the General Assistance, Social & Community Services, or Parks & Recreation.

Harbors: The Budget Committee had asked how the debt payment got paid. Baines said in two payments: one large payment and one smaller payment. The Budget Committee had asked why the discretionary expense had gone over. Tarjick said the expense was a two-day training/workshop for the Harbormaster.

Unclassified: There was an overrun of the Family Health Contingent Fund. The committee was told there had been several changes in personnel. Ellis said the Budget Committee felt fairly comfortable with the amount of \$27,171.64 budgeted for next year.

Revenue Report: Chair Ellis said the revenue report was somewhat useful but they had to get better at using it.

Trust Funds: Chair Ellis noted that as of March 31, 2020, the trust funds had a substantial change in market value. The Budget Committee wondered how conservative the investments were since there was such a noticeable decrease. The committee wondered how the market looked at the end of May, and Baines said she would send out that report.

Chair Ellis said the committee had also reviewed the new budget and had no questions.

- Revised FY'20-21 Budget: Chair Bates said the subgroup, consisting of Susan Ellis, Tim Polky, and Terri Lynn Baines, Jerry Hall and himself did a time-compressed review of the expenditures that were agreed upon in March 2020 to see what they could do to save some money. The subgroup also had several meetings which included Mike Felton and Cassie Kilbride. Chair Bates acknowledged the work that Baines, Polky, Felton, and Kilbride did as a group. He said the overall goal was to keep the mil rate to the taxpayer unchanged from last

year. There were a lot of difficult trade-offs, particularly because the town's contribution to the county had already passed and increased by \$90,000. Chair Bates thought this was another instance where people could appreciate the good relationship between the municipal and the school side of the town. The overall municipal budget was reduced by 3.3 percent. The subgroup paid a lot of attention to not just the expenditures and how they could save money, but at expected state and local revenues, and the hope of an increase in the valuation of the town by the assessor's agent.

Chair Bates thanked Jerry Hall for recreating the budget worksheet into a tax commitment worksheet making it a working tool that can be used to explore the changes in the revenue expenses on the mil rate and vice versa. He explained this worksheet is not what the state uses and is not what is presented to the taxpayers at the annual meeting, but rather a very useful tool to keep track of expenses and revenues to see how they all tie together.

The Select Board reviewed the municipal budget and voted on each Department where changes were made. Chair Bates asked the subgroup to interject as they went through the review.

Town Office. The Town Manager and Town staff will not get a raise, there is a decrease in training, and under Capital - replacing part of the town roof has been postponed. Total savings of \$25,000.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Willey, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$621,659.79 for the Town Office. The motion carried.

Select Board/Assessors. No increase in salary and benefits and the Revaluation Reserve was reduced by \$5,000. Total savings of \$5,399.95.

On a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$73,921.75 for the Select Board Assessors Department.

Planning Department. No increase in salary and benefits. Total savings of \$18,979.14.

On a motion by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Willey, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding for \$106,872.46 for the Planning Department.

Public Safety – Fire Department. The Fire Department's budget increased as the three firefighters are needed on duty at all times, to manage the COVID-19 crisis. Salary and benefits increased for the firefighters but there has been a decrease in capital expenditure. The net increase is \$2,333.33.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted 4-0-1 (Elwell abstained) to propose funding of \$413, 536.10 for the Fire Department.

Public Safety – Animal Control. The funding request for Animal Control did not change from the March 2020 Select Board vote.

Public Works – Roads & Property Management. No salary or benefits, streetlight costs decreased, skillful negotiations by the Town Manager for the Winter and Summer Contract Services. Total savings of \$27,000.54.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$659,647.66 for Public Works - Roads & Property Management.

Public Works – Solid Waste. No increase in salaries and benefits, and a \$5,000 reduction in capital equipment. Total savings \$10,027.65.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$523,545.67 for Public Works – Solid Waste.

General Assistance. The funding request for General Assistance did not change from the March 2020 Select Board vote.

Social & Community Services. A reduction in a grant to Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the CDC Joint Housing Assessment Study has been postponed. Total savings of \$14,000.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$223,424.00 for Social & Community Services.

Parks & Recreation. No increase in salary and benefits. Total savings \$1,798.38.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Willey, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$106,641.66 for Parks and Recreation.

Harbors. No increase in salary and benefits. Total savings of \$1,591.69.

On a motion by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Elwell, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$402,055.61 for Harbors.

Unclassified. St. George Days were canceled, therefore, no fireworks. Total savings \$10,141.00.

On a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, it was voted 5-0 to propose funding of \$107, 171.64 for Unclassified.

Chair Ellis reported that the Budget Committee had no questions about the Select Board's proposed requests and the committee made a motion to accept the Select Board's budget.

A motion was made and seconded by the Budget Committee to support the Select Board's budget as presented. A majority vote was taken, and the motion carried.

- Minutes: The minutes of May 18, 2020, were amended as follows:

Page 5, paragraph 2, third sentence, delete: **If we** and **remotely at 10 a.m.**; change to read: **The town** could meet on Wednesday morning and continue looking...

Page 7, under Comments by the Select Board, line 4, delete the word **group** and end sentence after the words that large.

A motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, to approve the May 18, 2020, Select Board minutes, as amended. The vote was 5-0. Motion carried.

- Communications: None.

- Warrant: The warrant for the week of June 8, 2020, was reviewed. The total expenses were \$558,645.06 and included three weeks of payroll, a health insurance payment, a school payment, and other regular expenses.

Chair Bates asked why the town paid \$973.00 to the Postmaster. Baines said tax liens and 30-day notices had to be sent by certified mail at a cost of \$6.95 each. Baines said the town did get the money back when people paid their taxes.

Select Board members acknowledged they would go to the town office individually on Tuesday and sign the warrant.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - Tim Polky reported the following: The crosswalks were painted before Memorial Day.

Assessing Agent Bob Gingras was at the town office last week to do pick up work and work on the new valuation. Gingras has not completed the valuation to date as he still needs to go out to the islands and has a few other items to do. As of Friday afternoon, Gingras picked up a little over \$4,000,000 in valuation. Polky said, "That puts the town on track with what we have had so far."

Polky said he had been working on paving issues. He talked with Hager Paving in Damariscotta and Performance in Owls Head. They got estimates and it looked like paving could be done on Glenmere Road and Mosquito Head Road with the monies the town had. Polky said there was another paving issue. The pavement at the top of the Tenants Harbor Boat ramp was coming apart and he would try to get that paved in the same time frame as the two other roads. Polky said he was waiting for one more estimate to come in.

The front office at the office building re-opened as of June 8, 2020. Everyone who comes to the town office must follow pandemic protocols set in place. Polky said if people did not want to wear a mask or had issues, the staff would do curbside service.

Polky said the Transfer Station had been taking cardboard only two days a week but people were bringing in so much in, they decided to take cardboard every day of the week. He said they would be working to open up the recycling for all the materials, possibly next week and staff had been working on getting the brush pile re-opened. Polky said the compost was tested and they were now waiting for the University of Maine to send the results.

Polky had a conversation earlier in the day with Noel Musson. The application was more than three-quarters completed. Noel needed to get in contact with EDA to find out how to answer some of the questions, then the application could be submitted, perhaps by the end of the week. Chair Bates said that was good news.

Chair Bates asked the Town Manager if they could recognize Recreation Director Ben Vail as he had resolved the issue at Collins Park. Bates thought it was a real tribute to his standing in the community and the regard in which he's held that the young people involved in the incident came forward and were now doing some restitution. Polky agreed and he thought the young people who were involved owned up to it and worked with Vail. Polky thought that showed respect on both sides.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Conservation Commission (CC): Ken Oelberger gave a brief update on the CC as Selectperson Willey said she was unable to attend their meeting on June 4th. Oelberger said the biggest issue accomplished recently was the work on their website. He said they had several meetings about it and several people worked to update pages. He said Tara Elwell granted permission for the CC to access the website so they could do their own updates and had various people do beta testing on the website. He thought they would be ready in about a week to make the switch over.

Oelberger said Tom Gorrill did a great job organizing trail maintenance work, and they did some temporary work on Fort Point and made it a bit safer. The CC did work at Meadowbrook laying down stone in the low points of the trail and would be doing bog bridging there within the next week or so. Oelberger said they preferred stone as opposed to bog bridging because bog bridging would rot, it required continuous maintenance, and would need replacement every few years.

Oelberger said the CC was planning an educational solar event for the fall and have had several subcommittee group meetings to discuss this. He said it would be a two-part event: a Thursday evening discussion and a Saturday tour of locations in town where there are already solar installations. He said the fall event was contingent on the COVID-19 virus but hopefully, the CC would have all the planning in place.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on May 26, 2020, at 7 p.m.

- The previous one having expired, the application for an addition to an existing building at 5 Clark Hill Cemetery Road was considered and a site visit scheduled for 5:00 p.m. June 18, 2020.
- The application to install a pile-supported pier, a seasonal ramp and float at 64 Pattern Point Road was passed over, as neither the applicant nor their agent was present.

- Shellfish Committee: Selectperson Sawyer reported the Shellfish Committee will be Thursday, June 11, 2020.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Fort Point Trail Plans: Ken Oelberger gave an update on Fort Point. Part of the money the CC requested from the town this year and from various grants were going to be used to do a major improvement to the Fort Point Trail, making it universally accessible for people with disabilities.

He said, "Understanding that was not a high priority this year, we then continued to talk to people at the state. We got some feedback this past Friday from Doug Beck who works for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) and administers two of the possible grants that we could apply for.

"The one grant we discussed previously was a recreational trails program and he is also the administrator for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)." Oelberger said the CC got pretty good news and very positive feedback from Beck who visited the site about two weeks ago. Beck also had the report and the proposal from Erin on the changes to the trail, so he was able to combine those.

Oelberger read a couple of excerpts from Doug Beck's letters. "While I am still enamored with the idea of making a trail that could meet accessibility standards such a short distance from the trailhead to the fort and associated vistas, overcoming an initial ravine is quite a challenge."

Beck went on to say, "I would love to see a bridge boardwalk from the trailhead to the other side of the gulley. I think it would be the only way to make this trail accessible. I am happy with the re-route laid out by Erin and think your best approach for funding is a Recreational Trail's Program but if you want to get big, I am on board with that, too. It is such a short distance to those vistas, right off the road. Such a nice spot for folks who are less than fully able if only we could get them there."

Oelberger said Beck talked a little bit about the Land and Water Conservation Fund and he said, "I have a lot of money that I would like to allocate to worthy projects. The downside of an LWCF is that it can only fund up to 50% of eligible project cost but again, more money on the table." Oelberger said Beck was willing to work with the CC to figure out how they could cobble together several different grants with appropriate funding from the town and there may be some other strings attached that the CC would need to understand.

Oelberger said the CC wanted to get together with Beck and go over those details first. The CC thought that possibly partnering with the Land Trusts and with some private fundraising, they could put together a package, come back to the Select Board at the end of 2020 with a projected budget and a funding request for the following year. Work would then be done in the summer of 2022, rather than in the summer of 2021.

He said they were still looking at other ways to cut Erin's proposed cost estimates. They talked about using the Civilian Conservation Corp to do some of the work and were looking at in-kind services. He asked if the Select Board would be in favor of the CC proceeding knowing they would need to figure out more of the details and bring those forward.

Selectperson Hall said Fort Point was a unique spot and agreed with Beck's comment about a great vista. Hall, "You get down there on that point, it really is something special."

Selectperson Willey said it was definitely worth looking into. Selectperson Hall said there was the question of how much, but it warranted looking into. Chair Bates thought it was a great project and good the CC was working now to see about getting these funds. Oelberger said as they move along and unveil more information and the types of agreements needed between the town and the state, they will come forward with that information.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Appointment of Administrative Positions: Terri-Lynn Baines sent out a list of Administrative Appointments that were recommended by the Town Manager to a term running from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. Chair Bates noted the Harbormaster vacancy but there were no other comments.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, to approve the Administrative Appointments for the upcoming year. The vote was 5-0. Motion carried.

- Appointments to Boards, Committees, and Commissions: The Select Board had received a list of Appointments to the Boards and Committees from Terri-Lynn Baines. She explained that the names in black had agreed to serve on the committees but the names in red, she had not heard back from and she did not know whether the people wanted to serve.

Chair Bates asked Selectperson Elwell to contact the Comprehensive Plan Committee and Harbor Committee members and Selectperson Willey to contact the Solid Waste Committee members to find out if people wanted to continue to serve on these committees. Mr. Polky said that Sherman Hoyt did not want to serve on the Clam Committee, therefore leaving a vacancy on that committee.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, it was voted to approve the appointments of those who have agreed to serve on the Boards, Committees, and Commissions. The vote was 5-0. The motion carried.

- William Brewer, CPA, Engagement Letter: The Select Board discussed the engagement letter for William Brewer. Chair Bates said when they approved Brewer's audit the last time, a question arose as to why the Select Board was approving the school budget when the Select Board did not understand the details of it, and they got Fred Brewer's explanation. Chair Bates said he would like to get a clear legal explanation. He said, "As a municipal unit with a municipal school, we have to take responsibility for that, but we have this strange situation where we have an audit which is very hard to disentangle the parts."

Chair Bates asked Baines if she could ask Fred Brewer, "Is he able to and what would it cost to have a municipal budget separate from the school, and a separate document which combines them?" Chair Bates said it would not have to be a complicated combination since the school and the municipal budgets would be clear in themselves. Baines said she could ask Brewer.

Chair Bates said he would talk to MMA legal to get their understanding of what the law says. Selectperson Hall added, "I talked with Mike Felton today. The school gets a separate audit for the school, by itself. Basically, what he said is something similar to what I've said, he said, 'I

have to have that. I have to have an audit for the school for itself.' And, I believe that the town administration should have an audit for town administration itself. If there is a requirement for a holistic approach, it seems to me that consolidation could be accomplished with a handful of displays which consolidate the financials for the two entities. Because the audit we got this year where everything was consolidated was nonsensical to me, and I would strongly advocate that we have an audit of the municipal finances similar to what the school gets for an audit of the school finances."

Selectperson Hall said, "It really makes sense for the town administration to have an audit which speaks to the operation of town government, separate from the school. If there is a requirement that there be a consolidation, fine, but I believe we should have one for the municipality."

Former Town Manager John Falla said he would not go to legal until the Select Board had reviewed other sources such as the Town Charter. He also noted that the auditor must follow governmental accounting standards. He thought that was where they would find the answers as to how things got presented and why things were presented the way they were.

Selectperson Hall, "Fair point, but I would be very surprised if anything in statute prohibits the municipal government from having an audit of the municipal government operations in addition to what may also be required."

Falla said, "As an auditor, you would have to do certain things that you would be required by law, by governmental accounting standards to do, but I would agree if you say 'we would like to have a set of financial records that would be pertaining only to municipal administration.' As they do one for school, have them do one for administration. It is going to cost a little more because it is not something that is typically required of an auditor."

Selectperson Hall, "The thing I would come back to is when we used to have a separate audit, and when we talked about the requirement of having an overall thing, my understanding was, we talked about having two separate audits and then consolidation of them. What I am asking for now is what I thought we asked for previously."

Chair Bates said they would hold off on the auditor's engagement letter as Baines would make inquiries, try to get answers on getting a standalone municipal audit, find how what it would cost, and go from there. Polky thought that was the way to go right now, and the Select Board agreed that was the way to proceed.

Selectperson Hall added that the Town Charter did not say anything specific to this issue.

- Governor's Mill's Plan to "Keep Maine Healthy": Chair Bates said Governor Mills released this plan today. He explained that part of the plan was to allocate \$13,000,000 to support municipalities in the area of public education, physical distancing, public health support, and local business assistance, all associated with the COVID-19 virus. He thought this should be explored to see how it could help the town.

Mr. Polky said he briefly looked at the plan but had not had a chance to thoroughly review it. Chair Bates said it looked like the governor was reaching out to all the municipalities to try and help particularly with the summer season starting. He thought it would be something that would benefit the Business Alliance or the Community Development Corporation. Chair Bates suggested the Select Board explore this plan. Hearing no volunteers, Chair Bates said he would like to explore what the "Keep Maine Healthy Plan" could mean for St. George. The Select Board agreed to have Chair Bates look into this.

- Town Meeting: Town Manager Polky said they needed to decide when town meeting would be held because the town report needed to get printed. Selectperson Hall said they talked about this at the last meeting. He thought they agreed on tentative dates and agreed if they needed to change the date they could do that and that there were provisions for allowing them to use the same warrant articles with the new date.

Mr. Polky said he had no problem with that but just wanted to reaffirm that the Select Board and the Administration were looking at Tuesday, August 18, 2020, at 6 p.m., outside under the tent. Chair Bates added that ballot voting for the School Board, Select Board positions, and two Ordinance changes would be on August 17, 2020, at the town office and could be done by absentee ballot, if necessary, for those who wanted to do that.

Polky said one of the Select Board members needed to write an article for the dedication and said he would call Selectperson Sawyer about this.

At 8:18 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson
Select Board Recording Secretary