

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS
St. George Town Office
MEETING MINUTES
August 24, 2020 – 7 p.m.

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Town Manager Tim Polky. Members present were: Richard Bates, Randy Elwell, Jerry Hall, Wayne Sawyer, and Tammy Willey. Also present: Terri-Lynn Baines and Beth Smith.

ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIRPERSON: Town Manager Polky congratulated Wayne Sawyer and Richard Bates for being re-elected to the Select Board. Mr. Polky then entertained nominations for the office of Select Board Chair. Selectperson Hall nominated Richard Bates. A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall that nominations cease. The vote was 5-0. A motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, to elect Richard Bates to serve as Select Board Chairperson for the Town of St. George for the ensuing year. The vote was 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda:

- A Discussion Item was added under New Business: "Was there any feedback Regarding the Town Meeting?"

- Minutes: The minutes of August 3, 2020, were corrected as follows:

Page 1, under FY'20 Year-End Financial Review, paragraph 2, change to: ... FY'20 Year-End **Financial Report**

Under Town Office, line 3, delete the word **several**

Page 2, corrections under Harbors, paragraph 1, line 1, change to read: ... there so **little** spent on **floats** and landings...

Line 2, change to read: ... was **delayed** in Port Clyde until...

Under Classified, line 2, change to read: ...drivers **purchased fuel elsewhere**.

Under Solid Waste, line 2, end sentence after the word brush.

Page 3, corrections, paragraph 4, lines 1 & 2. End the sentence after the word down and strike the remaining part of the sentence.

Last paragraph, line 4, change to read: could get some money **i**n advance to help...

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, to approve the August 3, 2020 minutes, as corrected. The vote was 5-0. Motion carried.

- Communications: Chair Bates received a letter from CPA William Brewer to confirm he was ready to audit the town accounts for the year ending June 30, 2020.

- Town Warrant: The town warrant for the week of August 24, 2020, was reviewed and signed. The total expenses were \$559,712.53 and included the August MSU (school) payment of \$449,279.58, a Knox County Dispatch payment of \$85,603, postage for mailing tax bills of \$1,385, Keep Maine Healthy grant of \$17,621.97 (which was reimbursed by the State of Maine), and other regular expenses.

- GRRSMO Warrant: The warrant for the week of August 24, 2020, was reviewed. Ms. Baines reported on the expenses listed.

Chair Bates explained that as of July 1, 2020, the Town of St. George will be the five-town representative of the Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Ordinance (GRSSMO) for the next three years. Selectperson Sawyer will chair the committee and Tim Polky said he will assist Selectperson Sawyer with that duty.

Town Manager Polky asked if the St. George Select Board had the authority to approve the warrant or did the warrant have to be approved by the joint Board of the Shellfish Committee? He said it was his understanding that the joint Board would have the authority over approving the warrant. Select Board Sawyer said he was not sure.

Mr. Polky stated that there is a GRSSMO Board which meets, and he feels reviewing and signing the warrant should be part of GRSSMO's business. Polky said he and Sawyer will check into this issue and get back to the Select Board.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT - Tim Polky reported the following:

The paving company appears ready to start the work, but the State has been finding new issues and this has been causing delays. Polky hopes paving on Glenmere Road will be done before October 2020.

The town's LED streetlights are in. The project has been contracted out to ON TARGET Utility Services who will start installing the LED lights within the next two weeks.

The 10 Cold Storage Road grant application was sent out earlier today. The Harbor Committee was told there were a few applications ahead of them, but the EDA would try to get back to the committee as soon as possible.

The town meeting was held on August 28, 2020, at 6 p.m., outside, under the tent, and was moderated by Michael Mayo of Thomaston.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Harbor Committee: Selectperson Elwell reported that Town Manager Polky had just given an update on the Harbor Committee.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on August 11, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

- The application for granite recovery by Wildcat Quarry, LLC at Atwood Quarry Road was reviewed; the Board concluded that no permit was required for these activities.
- The application for a ramp and float by Wheeler's Bay Oyster Company at 43 McCoy Road was reviewed and an onsite visit scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on August 31, 2020.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Update on Fort Point Trail & Fort St. George: Ken Oelberger of the Conservation Commission (CC) reported on the Fort Point Trail and Fort St. George.

Mr. Oelberger explained that over a year ago Fort Point Trail was assessed for erosion, deterioration, and safety issues. The trail was closed for three months as the trail kept getting wider and wider because of the wet conditions and poor drainage. As a next step, the CC looked into what they should do and how they could make it a useable trail for the general public. Oelberger noted that Fort Point Trail was the only trail that gave people public access to Fort Point, that Fort St. George had the highest trail usage in town, and it was considered a special place in terms of the views up and down the river.

The goal of the Commission was to come up with a sustainable trail that had low maintenance. The CC engaged a professional trail designer who suggested the trail could be made UA compliant (Universal Access). The CC started looking into potential funding sources and one source was with the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The grant could pay up to 80% of the cost of trail improvement but the CC would need to have a 20% match which could be made up of town funds, volunteer labor, in-kind material donations, or in-kind labor.

Mr. Oelberger, "At that point in time, the CC knew the maximum allowable grant from RTP was \$120,000 which coincided with what we were looking at. The estimate we received from the trail designer to make it UA compliant was \$125,000. She added a contingency which brought it up to \$135,000. The CC thought this type of project had several unknowns. We thought we would be looking at a \$150,000 project and would have to come up with \$30,000." He said the town looked at providing some funding in this year's budget but due to budget constraints, could not.

The CC wanted to move forward with the project but decided to defer it for a year. There have been continued discussions with the Bureau of Parks and Land (BPL). Doug Beck, Outdoor Recreation Supervisor, who administers the grant programs for the BPL, made a site visit to Fort Point. Oelberger said Beck took the project back to BPL and explained to the Department that it was a gem of a site and that they should be doing something about this site. He said Beck felt if it was UA compliant that would make it unique and place it as a high priority in terms of awarding a grant.

On September 8, 2020, at 9:30 a.m., Doug Beck, Director of BPL, the Northern Regional Parks Manager, the Director of Real Property and Management, and possibly another administrator will be down to view the site and assess the situation at Fort Point. Since the whole site is partly on town land and partly on state property, they also want to talk about collaborating with the town. Oelberger invited the Select Board and Town Manager Polky to attend, and Town Manager Polky and Selectperson Hall said they could attend the on-site visit.

Chair Bates asked if the 80% funding from the Recreational Trail could be matched by other state funding. Oelberger said apparently not.

Chair Bates remarked that the CC was looking for the town to come up with \$30,000 of in-kind donations and town money but did the CC see any alternative? Oelberger said if they go ahead with a UA compliant trail, there may be other groups that could help with funding such as disability organizations.

Selectperson Hall noted that the state did not have a right of way to the property (except on the river). He said, "But if they would like to show this off, there is the question of, 'Can a value be placed on the town providing a right of way?' That might help. That isn't \$30,000 but if they can find a way to cobble pieces (funds) together, that might work."

Mr. Oelberger stated that when this was first presented, Richard Cohen said he would be willing to take one of his crews down and help them as in-kind labor, so the CC had some ways to get to the \$30,000. Oelberger said they were trying to figure out the next steps, so they could come back to the town during the next budget year and be ready to explain the CC's plan. Chair Bates thought it was great as one of the problems in February was the CC didn't have all the pieces needed.

Chair Bates asked Polky if he knew how the town got the land. Polky said just that in the agreement, Mr. Skoglund wanted to preserve the existing history of the site on the town's side. Oelberger noted that the foundation and the well were historical sites and that Mr. Skoglund also talked about access from Spring Road that he had used in the past. Oelberger did not know what that involved in terms of access. He said the CC had always had Richard Paulsen's handshake to access the Fort Point Trail and get equipment and other items down there. Polky said it may be fine if they looked at all the pieces.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Beginning of Year Items: Chair Bates distributed a handout considering "Beginning of Year Items." These are items that the Board reviews yearly.

- Vice-Chairperson or Acting Chairperson. To be addressed when the issue arises.
- Time and Place for regular meetings. To continue on Monday nights at 7 p.m.
- Time Duration. Continue with the two-hour limit.
- Handling Meeting Agenda. Baines to send agendas out on Thursday; items to be added, if needed.
- Public Comment. Will continue to be at the beginning of meetings.
- Appointment of Town Attorney and Assessor's Agent. The town will continue with the law office of Bernstein Shur for regular town business and continue with Robert Gingras as the Assessor's Agent.
- Approve the three Finance Policies that state law requires to be renewed yearly.
On a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Willey, it was voted 5-0 to renew the following three policies as of August 24, 2020: Treasurer's Disbursement Warrants for Employee Wages and Benefits; Treasurer's Disbursement Warrants for Municipal Education Costs; and, Treasurer's Disbursement Warrants for Payment of State Fees.
- Select Board Action Plan of Unfulfilled Goals. Goal items may include 10 Cold Storage Road and Sea Level Rise. Board members will continue to ponder this issue and discuss it at the September 28th meeting.
- Meeting date for Chairs of Boards and Committees. The Select Board agreed, that for this year, Chair Bates would email the Information and Procedures handout sheet on policies for conducting the meetings to the committee chairs.
- Date(s) for Annual Review of the Select Board Policy Manual. According to the Town Charter, the Select Board is obligated to review the policy manual. The Select Board felt

they did a pretty thorough job reviewing the manual the last several years and few changes should be needed. The Board agreed to review the policy in two parts and flag issues as they are seen. Dates of review will be determined.

- Review and Approve the Select Board's Annual Calendar. The Select Board reviewed the proposed Select Board schedule for meetings in FY'2021. The Board agreed to go with the schedule Ms. Baines had drafted. Adjustments will be made, if and as needed. This schedule will be posted on the town's website.
- As newly elected Select Board members, Chair Bates and Selectperson Sawyer need to read and review the Freedom of Information Act (FIA) and sign the required form stating they have done so.

Chair Bates read part of the FIA. "To refrain from using email as the substitute for deliberation or deciding substantive matters properly confined to public proceedings. Email is permissible to communicate with other members about non-substantive matters, such as schedules, developing agendas, and disseminating information and reports."

- Liquor License Application: Greg and Corrina Howland, d/b/a The Happy Clam.

Chair Bates said there had been no complaints.

On a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted 5-0 to approve the liquor license for The Happy Clam.

- The 2020 Tax Commitment: The Select Board reviewed the Maine Revenue Services – 2020 Municipal Tax Rate Calculation Standards form. Chair Bates asked Beth Smith to explain the results. She said Baines gives her the County Tax Appropriations and the school budget and she inputs the information into the State of Maine's tax calculation form. Chair Bates noted the overlay was \$87,670.27, and that Mr. Polky received a letter last week from the state saying their latest estimate of revenue sharing was going to be \$101,000. Selectperson Hall asked if the FY'21 mil rate was the same as the mil rate of FY'20, and Chair Bates said that was correct.

On a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, it was voted 5-0 to proceed with a 9.6 mill rate based on the 2020 Municipal Tax Rate calculations and to commit that tax rate.

The Select Board signed the Assessors' Certification of Assessment, the Certificate of Assessment to be Returned to Municipal Treasurer, and the Certificate of Commitment.

- Remote Access to Select Board Meetings: Selectperson Sawyer raised the issue of remote access to Select Board meetings. Mr. Sawyer said he was participating in a weekly ZOOM meeting regarding the town's response to COVID-19 and the group would like the town to be more involved in educating the public about the coronavirus. One question the group had was, "What has happened to remote access to Select Board meetings?" Selectperson Sawyer said he explained to the group that the meetings were now held face-to-face (at the town office). He explained that some members said they would like to attend a meeting but felt they couldn't and asked, how could they?

Selectperson Sawyer said he had spoken with Chair Bates about this matter, and Chair Bates suggested they use the Telebridge telephone system whereby people could call-in. Selectperson Hall thought there could be an issue in hearing the meetings using the Telebridge system. He said each Board member would need a microphone to speak into so the caller could hear them.

Mr. Hall felt they needed to have realistic expectations about how well the "call-in" would or would not work.

Selectperson Elwell said he recently attended a School Board meeting where they used a system called the OWL. Elwell thought the system worked well. Selectperson Hall explained it was similar to a ZOOM meeting but with a device (OWL) which creates a panoramic view of the participants and who is speaking at the time. Mr. Polky said he emailed Superintendent Felton about the possibility of using this device for Select Board meetings but has not yet heard back from him.

Selectperson Hall said there is a technological solution to the problem. For him, it is an issue of how effective is it, and what does it cost? Polky thinks the cost could be covered under the COVID-19 Reimbursement Program. The consensus of the Select Board was to borrow the OWL from the Island Institute or the school to see how well it worked before buying one. If they could not borrow one for the next meeting, they would use the Telebridge system.

Chair Bates recommended that for Select Board meetings, members either all meet in person or all meet on ZOOM. The Select Board agreed.

- Annual Town Meeting: Chair Bates asked the Town Manager to thank the staff for all the work that went into holding the town meeting.

Chair Bates asked the Board if anyone had feedback about the town meeting or on how it went. Selectperson Elwell said that Tara Elwell had worked out a good system for voters and that she and Terri-Lynn Baines were doing a great job. He thought the town meeting went well, it was brief, and there were no real issues that arose.

Mr. Polky said he had some feedback on the town meeting that it did not get put on the town calendar. Polky said it was posted in many places, i.e., on the front page of the town's website, Facebook, St. George Message Board, in the Town Report, and elsewhere. He said he explained that inevitably there would always be something missed, but it was not done intentionally.

At 8:20 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, it was voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson
Select Board Recording Secretary