

ST. GEORGE SELECT BOARD & ASSESSORS

St. George Town Office MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2020 – 7 p.m.

The Select Board meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. Members present were: Richard Bates, Chair; Randy Elwell, Jerry Hall, Wayne Sawyer, and Tammy Willey. Also present: Tim Polky, John Falla, and Tom Gorrill.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

REGULAR SESSION:

- Adjustments to Agenda:

- Added under New Business, Discussion Items: Holding Future Meetings in Person or via Zoom.

- Minutes: The minutes of August 24, 2020, were corrected as follows:

Page 1, paragraph 2, line 7, the vote was 4-0.

Page 3, paragraph 4, line 3, trail designer

Page 3, paragraph 5, line 3, site visit

Page 3, paragraph 6, line 3, change to read: Since the whole site is...

Page 4, 1st paragraph, line 3, delete the wording: and have

Page 5, under Remote Access, line 2, delete the 2nd a, change to read: ...in a weekly Zoom ...

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, to approve the August 24, 2020 minutes, as corrected. The vote was 5-0. Motion carried.

- Communications: Chair Bates stated that in February 2020, he asked the Board to support the town's participation in a project being proposed by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to receive a NOAA Environmental Literacy Grant. The project was titled, "Community Resilience Informed by Science and Experience (C-RISE)," to develop knowledge, skill, and relationships to build the capacity of rural coastal communities to plan and prepare for a resilient future. He learned last week that GMRI had received this grant, so in the coming three years, St. George and Vinalhaven will be the test sites for a coastal resilience community curriculum to deliver regional resilience training and community engagement events.

- Warrant: A warrant for the week of September 14, 2020, was reviewed. The total expenses were \$582,520.89 and included three weeks of payroll, a school payment of \$449,279.56, payments to J.K. Kalloch, and other regular expenses.

- Warrant: A warrant for 10 Cold Storage was reviewed and the total expense was \$7,660.00. Both warrants were signed by the Select Board.

Chair Bates asked Mr. Polky if Ms. Baines and the town administration were able to handle the issue of tracking refunds and revenue under the Federal Government COVID-19 Reimbursement program. Chair Bates explained there would be overages which meant some of the numbers

would look worse than they really were, and the town would likely see overages in the quarterly reports, and possibly in the monthly reports of the Fire Department and Solid Waste Department. Polky said the staff was using notebooks to document if a refund was received for an item, or if revenue had been received or was to be received.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Paving. Mr. Polky talked with the pavers from Hagar Enterprises. They plan to finish Rt. 131, and then do the town roads. Hager was not sure when the paving would be completed but estimated a target date of October 15, 2020.

COVID-19. Mr. Polky said he had received numerous complaints about COVID-19 violations. He said when the state receives a complaint, it is sent to the local health officer to investigate, but our town's health officer does not have enough staff to do that. Polky said when he talked with the people he had received complaints on, most were nice and had been doing what they were supposed to do.

Road postings. Polky received a number of requests from people asking that their roads be posted for speed limits. He said he told them that the state would have to come to the town and do a study to set speed limits and that he was not in favor of it. He explained that even if speed limit signs were out, the town did not have the manpower to enforce speed limits.

Mr. Polky, "A lot of people are not going to obey the signs; it comes down to enforcement. If we get more complaints about this, we may have to start looking at enforcement, but I do not think any of us want to do that." Polky said he told them they were welcome to come before the Select Board and request their roads be assessed for speed limits.

Mr. Polky, "We have had this issue before. I think that our relationship with the Knox County Sheriff's Department is as good as it has been in a long time, but I still don't think you will see them patrolling town-imposed speed limits." Chair Bates asked if the radar sensor could be deployed on these roads. Polky said absolutely but he did not think the speed limit sign or the sensor would slow the speeders down.

Zoom meetings. Mr. Polky said they ordered a Meeting OWL (a 360 degree smart video conferencing camera) which works like a Zoom projector, and he hoped this device would make it easier to hold in-person and remote meetings.

Chair Bates asked about the COVID-19 violations. "Were there any suggestions on what the town could be doing to make people more observant of the Governor's policies?" Polky said most of the complaints were about restaurants. He didn't know what more, as a town, they could do than what they were already doing. He said the word is out there. Every one of the establishments has posted rules on their menus, their website, or at their establishment, so people know what they are supposed to do. Selectperson Elwell said he thought the only thing they can do is reiterate what the rules are and to use common sense.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Solid Waste and Recycling Committee: Selectperson Willey reported the committee would meet on Wednesday, September 16th at 7:30 a.m.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on September 8, 2020, at 7 p.m.

- The application for a ramp and float by Wheeler's Bay Oyster Company at 43 McCoy Road was accepted as complete and, with the DEP and Army Corp permits already granted, and satisfying section 15-C and 16-D of the Shoreland Zoning ordinance, it was approved.
- The application to cultivate medical marijuana at 56 Mussel Farm Road was reviewed and an onsite visit scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on September 28.

- Conservation Commission: Selectperson Willey said she was unable to attend the CC meeting. Gorrill, who sits on the CC, said they discussed holding a solar workshop this fall and talked about the Fort Point Trail.

- Harbor Committee: Mr. Polky said the Harbor Committee had not heard anything further on the grant application that had been submitted to Alan Brigham.

- Cemetery Committee: Selectperson Hall said the cemetery committee had planned to resume meetings in September but there was a question of whether there was money in the budget to fund legal counsel for the next phase of the committee's work. He added if the town were to take over the cemetery and maintain it, some issues needed to be cleared up. Hall explained that gravesites at Clark Hill Cemetery were deeded to people and ownership questions had arisen. He said the committee did not have a firm estimate on legal costs, but those could be in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000. Selectperson Hall indicated this had been an ongoing issue for a while, and the committee would like to resolve it, though the situation was not urgent.

Mr. Polky believed there was enough money in Professional Services to cover the project if that was what the Board wanted to do. He felt the cost could be in the range of \$3,000 to \$5,000 but also suggested that the committee might be able to get a better estimate. Selectperson Hall felt it made sense to resume the meetings and work on this issue.

A motion was made by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Willey, for Selectperson Hall and the Cemetery Committee to work with Town Manager Polky and Finance Director Baines on financial issues for the Cemetery Committee to seek legal counsel and resolve the property issues at Clark Hill Cemetery and continue to work on the issue of the overseeing and maintenance of the cemetery. The vote was 5-0. The motion carried.

- Shellfish Committee: Selectperson Sawyer reported the committee met. He, Town Manager Polky, and Selectperson Elwell attended. Sawyer said he did not chair the committee at this meeting because Dan Staples chaired it. He said they spent most of the meeting time on a purported violation in Thomaston and the frustration in dealing with the violation.

Chair Bates asked if the issue of signing their own warrants had been dealt with. Mr. Polky thought he and Selectperson Sawyer would have to guide the committee for a while, so they understood why they should be the ones to sign the warrants. Sawyer thought, with Polky's help, he would eventually take over chairing the meetings. Polky said Terri-Lynn Baines would also be attending the meetings and would help him.

Mr. Falla observed that Cushing's government is one where the Select Board runs the town government, whereas the St. George Select Board hires a town manager to run the town government. He thought Sawyer and Polky might explain to the committee how St. George has a different form of government than Cushing. Falla also noted that when St. George was the administrative town, all the chairman of the joint Board had to do was run the meeting.

- Sea Level Rise Committee: Chair Bates said a subgroup of the Sea Level Rise (SLR) Committee would be meeting on Friday, September 18th via Zoom. The group plans to discuss the results of February's meeting and what recommendations resulted from that meeting. The subgroup would then report their recommendations to the ad hoc committee. Chair Bates hoped a report could be made to the Select Board recommending short, medium, and long-term objectives.

Selectperson Hall reported another subgroup was meeting Thursday, September 17th on a different subset of the overall issue and would report back to the ad hoc committee. He said they were dealing with risks and vulnerabilities. Chair Bates hoped they would pick up the work they started at the end of last year and the beginning of this year and thought the NOAA grant would spur them on to try and write some guidelines.

Chair Bates said more information on SLR would be forthcoming.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Fort Point Trail Update: Selectperson Hall gave an update on the Fort Point Trail meeting with four representatives from the Bureau of Parks and Land (BPL). Doug Beck, Outdoor Recreation Supervisor for BPL, was down earlier in the year to look over Fort Point Trail. He later organized a meeting with other state officials to come to St. George and view the state-owned property, discuss improving access to the site, and discuss working in cooperation with the town to manage and take care of it.

Selectperson Hall said it was clear to him that the state officials were quite impressed with the Fort Point Property: Three of them had not seen it; it is a spectacular piece of property, and the trail is relatively short (about one-third of a mile) making it less expensive to build a Universal Access (UA) trail.

Selectperson Hall, "The other neat thing about it (Fort Point Trail) is that once you get to the end of the trail, there is this spectacular thing there to see. You could tell they want to find a way to help the town do this." Hall said the representatives' proposed solutions and thought there would be ways to fund the project by cobbling together funds from organizations or groups, but a detailed plan was required and it had to include the stamp of a registered engineer. The plan had to include the layout of the trail, what the town would do to the trail, and what would the town do

to the Fort Point site to make it UA, as well. Hall said there was no use making the trail UA and then not having the site Universal Access.

Selectperson Hall, "We concluded we should come to the Select Board meeting and ask if the Select Board would approve the Conservation Commission, Town Manager Polky, and others to explore possibilities for how we might fund the work that would be required to submit a grant application. There was some speculation there may be some grants available from disability foundations or other groups that would help the town pay for the study that would need to be done and submitted with the grant application. There is a question about whether we would have the option of raising private contributions for this to help support the pledge."

Selectperson Hall said he came away positive that the State was very, very interested in this project and they were interested in helping the town find a way to do this, but there was some work to be done to figure out some of the pieces. He said the timeline the town proposed fitted well with the steps because they would count in-kind contributions but only for certain periods.

Mr. Gorrill thought Selectperson Hall did a great job summarizing the Fort Point Trail meeting. He said the State was really excited about the project, but they did talk about the need for a property maintenance agreement.

Selectperson Hall, "The site needs to be maintained. There is not a lot of maintenance, but you do need, on a periodic basis, to pick up the trash. You do not need to have trash cans down there or regular garbage service. You don't need to have port-a-potties or anything like that, but keep it mowed, keep it from growing up into alders, maintain the site the way it is, and maintain the signs."

Mr. Gorrill said if the Select Board decided to move forward on this project, one of the things to be explored was a maintenance agreement. What would that look like? The CC had talked with the state about this and the state gave them a general idea of what one should include. Gorrill, "If the town wanted, they could explore with us what their maintenance agreement would look like and draft one up for your consideration." Bates asked if the agreement would be in perpetuity?

Mr. Gorrill, "They did say that you could actually get out at some point. There is a clause in it so if the town wanted to get out, there are certain notices. So, that is all part of what the agreement would consist of." Selectperson Hall, "Somebody asked, 'What if the town 15 years in, decides to walk away?' They said they would have to pick up the responsibility for it." Hall said there are a number of details to work out, but one is a way to get mowing equipment down there. He said right now, there are just handshake agreements with abutters, but there needs to be an agreement that cannot be revoked.

Selectperson Sawyer, "The State is not interested in maintaining their own site?" Selectperson Hall said the state is willing to give a lot of money towards the construction of this trail if the town will agree to maintain the site. Polky emphasized, "The town *may be* willing to maintain." Selectperson Sawyer asked if it would still be a State Park? Selectperson Hall thought it would need to be defined as publicly owned. Right now, one group owns the point, the municipality

owns the property with the trail, and then DOT owns the parking lot. The boundaries would need to be mapped out as part of the site to be addressed.

Chair Bates said in February, to make the trail UA compliant, the town needed to find approximately \$30,000, although the Select Board was not quite sure how the town was going to do that. Now, the town might end up spending around \$10,000 to get a plan approved and stamped by a professional engineer. The budget request could be made at either a special town meeting or in May 2021 at the annual town meeting.

Selectperson Hall asked, "Is the Select Board willing to support further exploration of the idea with the understanding that there would be periodic updates on this and what the expectations from the town might be?" The Select Board agreed.

Mr. Polky added, "One of the reasons I asked Falla to come tonight is that I know that the Andrew Robinson House committee, the one that was formed years ago, always had some idea that maybe we should connect the Andrew Robinson House with Fort Point. Actually, the fort is kind of a historic place. I think that bringing the Historical Society in on this does two things for the town. It brings more people in that are willing to work and it also brings in a non-profit organization where we can accept donations for that where the town cannot."

Mr. Polky recommended setting up an ad hoc committee, and Falla suggested they may want to have one or more meetings of interested parties discuss this before moving forward. Chair Bates thought that was a methodical way to go about it. Gorrill said he thought members of the CC would be interested and hoped Selectperson Hall would continue to work with the CC on this.

Chair Bates asked Selectperson Willey if she wanted to be involved in this project or be briefed with the rest of the Select Board. Willey was okay with getting briefed. Chair Bates suggested Gorrill, Falla, Hall, and Polky be involved and that they get together in the next couple of weeks to think about who else should be involved and discuss a charge for the committee. Gorrill suggested Doug Beck be involved, though he might have time constraints, as he would be the one the maintenance agreement would be going through.

Chair Bates hoped the committee's charge would include covering the sensitivity of the spring (water well). Falla suggested they address the parking area issue. Gorrill said the CC had discussed the issue of parking at their meeting and was felt by all that there were opportunities to address it in a variety of ways.

Polky said the committee would need money because they would have to get an estimate for an engineering study and take that request to town meeting. Gorrill said it was his understanding that the maintenance agreement would need to be approved at a town meeting before the grant application could be submitted. Gorrill also explained that a requirement of the grant application is the property be surveyed and the engineering study would need a P.E. stamp.

Chair Bates thanked Gorrill and the Conservation Commission for getting the state representatives down to look at the site.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Virtualers License: The Sugar Tree, LLC, Tenants Harbor. On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, it was voted 5-0 to approve the victualer license for Darci Lynn Chickering, d/b/a The Sugar Tree, LLC.

- Discussion of Future Select Board Meetings: Chair Bates said there were as many active cases of COVID-19 in the state now as there was on July 5th. The case numbers dropped but were rising again. He thought it was only a matter of time where holding face-to-face meetings in a room without the windows open and inadequate ventilation would come to an end. He said if there was concern, the Board would need to go to Zoom meetings.

Selectperson Sawyer thought they could meet face-to-face for a while longer. Chair Bates felt they might have to decide sometime this fall to move to Zoom meetings. Selectperson Willey said it did not matter to her which way they met, and Selectperson Hall was happy with Zoom meetings. Selectperson Elwell suggested they watch the weather, keep an eye on what was happening in the area, and take it from there.

At 8:10 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Willey, seconded by Sawyer, it was voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson
Select Board Recording Secretary