

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

**St. George Town Office**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

October 19, 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, and Wayne Sawyer. (Tammy Willey was absent). Also present: Tim Polky, Terri-Lynn Baines, Tara Elwell, David Percival, Scott Vaitones, and Susan Ellis.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

#### **REGULAR SESSION:**

- Adjustments to Agenda: The following adjustments were made:

- Quarterly Financial Review by the Budget Committee was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Session
- Annual Review of Select Board Policy Manual was removed from the agenda
- Discussion to Accepting Credit Cards for Real Estate Payments was moved from New Business and taken up under Regular Session
- An Executive Session with the Select Board was added and held after the Regular Board meeting.

- FY'2021 Quarterly Financial Review: The Budget Committee and Select Board reviewed the first-quarter financial report. Budget Committee Chair Susan Ellis led the review.

Utilities: The percent spent in many of the Departments was low. Polky cautioned that this category also included fuel purchases.

Payroll for Elections (PR): This area was a little high due to election expenses being held in this fiscal year. The primary was supposed to be held in June but was held in July; the town meeting was supposed to be held in May but was held in August. Ellis noted the PR line could run over. It is not known what the cost of the elections will be as also two town meetings will be held this fiscal year. Chair Bates noted the town was anticipating a grant for the Elections and that would offset some of the expenses but would not show up in this expense report.

Office Expense: The increase was due to the printing of tax bills.

Insurance: Insurance was mostly an accounting/timing issue. (There were no rate increases.)

Select Board/Assessors: There was a discussion on why abatements were moved several years ago from this department to overlay and why they should be placed back under this department. Selectperson Hall, Baines, and the Budget Committee felt abatements should go back under Select Board/Assessors. The Budget Committee would recommend moving abatements back to this department if the Select Board chose to do so.

Planning: The Planning Board member expense had a slight increase as more on-site visitation inspections were held during the summer; Board members are paid a stipend for attending each on-site.

Fire Department: Property Maintenance and Supplies - The elevator needed an inspection. The elevator door would not close properly and needed repair.

Emergency Management: This expenditure was for the generator (located at the school).

Roads & Property Management: The Vehicle Maintenance line was high because the F-350 truck needed new tires.

Solid Waste: SW & Recycling - Wire was purchased for baling. Sawdust was purchased for use in the compost pile to break down the fish waste. The Equipment Lease spending was low because of errors in billing. This has since been corrected.

Medical: No expenditure on this line item. Due to COVID-19, drug testing has not started.

Recreation: Ballfield Maintenance – A little maintenance was done in October 2020 and some will be done in the spring of 2021.

There were no questions regarding Animal Control, GA, or Social and Community Services.

GRRSM (Georges River Regional Shellfish Management): This Department includes the salary of the GRRSM Warden and other related expenses. The Town will manage GRRSM until June 30, 2023, then it will move to the next town.

10 Cold Storage Road: Ellis asked if all the permits had been filed. Polky said the town had filed all the permits and was just waiting to hear about the grant. Chair Bates thought the committee reviewing this grant application was also reviewing applications for the pandemic grants, and because of this perhaps the town did not have the priority it might have had before the start of the pandemic.

Chair Ellis noted that the first quarter spending was under 25% and everything seemed to be going okay. She stated it was hard to get a quick look at revenue because of the way property tax is reported. Ellis asked Baines if she could come up with a different report so the Budget Committee could see the town's expenses versus the town's revenue in real numbers. Baines said she would try.

The Budget Committee had no further comments on the review. Chair Bates asked Terri-Lynn how \$61,046 in motor vehicle and excise tax compared to previous years because in the 3rd and 4th quarters the numbers were all over the place compared to previous years. Baines said sales appeared to be slowing down, but she would get some figures together and forward those to him.

- Accept Real Estate Payments Online: Office Manager Tara Elwell explained the office staff would like to accept credit and debit card payments online. She said many taxpayers in town

have requested this service. The staff would like to implement the online payment through InforME and TRIO. TRIO is already connected to InforME, the company that handles some of the town's other credit card transactions. The cost per year is \$3,025 with an annual maintenance and support fee of \$625. This figures out to be around \$320 a month. Elwell would like to start this service around December 1st. Selectperson Hall asked about the service charge fee. Elwell said the person using the credit card service would be charged 2.5%. She said the fee gets passed onto the user and not to the town.

Chair Bates said the Policy Manual allowed the town to use credit cards for other things except property taxes, and that credit card information could be taken over the counter, by phone, over the internet, and by mail. Office Manager Elwell recommended accepting credit and debit cards for property taxes over the counter and via the internet. She felt that prior concerns on accepting credit cards for property taxes were now more manageable. She said InforME does not allow a debit card transaction to go through if there are insufficient funds in the account. If using a regular credit card, the credit card company makes it hard to back out of a charge because the person agreed to the charge at the time of the transaction.

Elwell explained that TRIO is the operating system for the town office and provides information about what the customer owes and is paying. InforME provides the pay part of the service and will receive the 2.5% service fee. For instance, the system will allow customers to go into their accounts to see exactly what they owe, see if a payment was missed, any interest charges, and make partial payments.

Chair Bates asked if the cost of \$3,650 would be worth it in time or convenience? Is it more for the customer? What is the primary reason for this? Elwell thinks it will be more convenient for the customer to make payments online because of the coronavirus pandemic and will lessen their worry of having to mail in a check.

Selectperson Sawyer said he felt it would also be a convenience for the staff. Baines said when she worked in So. Thomaston, they took credit cards to pay for property taxes at the counter, and their customers liked the service.

Selectperson Elwell asked about the security of paying online. Tara Elwell said she did not have an answer to that. Baines noted the town was already connected with InforME and if anyone tried to hack in, InforME would know. Elwell said the system features encryption technology and is compliant with PCI Data Security Standards.

On a motion by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, it was voted 4-0 to authorize the town administration to implement the online payment of property taxes by use of a credit or debit card through InforME and the TRIO system.

- Minutes: The Select Board minutes of October 5, 2020, were corrected as follows:

Page 3, paragraph 6, correct name to Elwell

Page 4, paragraph 2, line 2, change to read: ...the average ratio of sales to assessed value...

Page 4, paragraph 4, line 2, delete the word than

Page 4, paragraph 5, line 4, correct the word to not

Page 5, first paragraph, line 8, change the word in to **and**

A motion was made by Selectperson Sawyer, seconded by Hall, to approve the October 5, 2020, Select Board minutes, as corrected. The vote was 4-0. Motion carried.

- Communications: There was one communication to the Select Board which Chair Bates read. “We respectfully request that you consider joining cities and counties across the country in officially recognizing January 24-30, 2021 as School Choice Week in St. George.” Chair Bates explained that the request was for the town to issue a proclamation about school choice week where a group was trying to encourage more charter schools. Chair Bates felt the town of St. George had an excellent public school and encouraged everyone to use the public school. The consensus of the Select Board was to not act on the letter’s request.

- Warrant: The warrant for the week of October 19, 2020, was reviewed. The total expenses were \$1,850,719.58 and included an October school payment of \$449,279.57, a County tax payment of \$1,008,464.74, a Debt payment of \$173,956.25, payments totaling \$159,694 for Social & Community Service requests, and other regular expenses.

Chair Bates asked why \$175.40 was paid to Hannaford’s. Baines said that expense was for the Senior Luncheon.

Select Board members will sign the warrant then scan, fax, or email it into the town or go into the office and sign it.

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

Paving. He is trying to get paving done. Hagar Enterprises will not do it, but he will get Performance Paving to repair the town landing in Tenants Harbor, possibly next week.

Streetlights. All the streetlights should now be changed over to LED lights, and the town should be seeing a reduction in the electric bill. All the old lights in the town office will be replaced with LED lights. The town cannot get an Efficiency Maine grant to replace the surface-mounted fixtures, so the town will replace those.

Chair Bates noted how some cities and towns in the state were offering Saturday, in-person absentee and early voting, opening for a few hours on Saturdays. Chair Bates believed there was a grant from the Zuckerberg Center and asked Polky if that was something the town should think about doing. Polky did not think so as staff are currently overwhelmed with work.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Cemetery Committee: Selectperson Hall reported the cemetery committee would meet on Wednesday, October 28, 2020.

- Fort Point Trail and Site Project ad Hoc Committee: Selectperson Hall reported the committee met on October 15, 2020. It was an organizational meeting. Oelberger had organized an aggressive agenda. He created a PERT chart to look at the various pieces of the project with an emphasis on timing. Hall noted that a survey of the property needed to be done and a right of

way for maintenance needed to be considered. He also noted there were issues with the MDOT that could knock the project off as a possibility, so the committee needed to know where they stood with DOT before they proceeded. He said it was suggested that someone from the state come down to better explain the timing of the grants and how the grants would work.

Selectperson Hall thought it was a very good organizational meeting with very clear steps to be taken with timelines and they would meet again in two weeks.

Polky said the MDOT Supervisor for District II would be coming down next week to talk with the committee.

- Planning Board: Chair Bates reported the Planning Board met on October 13, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

- A hearing was held for the application to construct a private pier, and associated ramp and float at 87 Haupt Road; there were no comments.
- A hearing was held for the application to establish a medical marijuana growing plant at 56 Mussel Farm Road; comments and questions from the public lasted approximately 90 minutes. The applicant's responses to these were not to everyone's satisfaction.
- In the regular meeting, the Board considered the application to establish a medical marijuana growing plant. It was observed that the project appeared to be commercial, and not industrial, but it was not a functionally water-dependent use. The relevant issues revolved around Land Use #15 in Section 14, Table 1 on p.15, accompanying note 5 on p.16, and questions 1 to 9 in Section 16.D on p.50 in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance. The Board concluded the application was not complete and requested the applicant provide more details on the proposal.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Supplementals and Abatements: Finance Director Terri Lynn Baines explained the Supplementals and Abatements.

Justin Long split his lot and sold a piece of property to David Ames, but it was split incorrectly. Long was assessed for 2 acres and it should have been 8 acres. Ames was assessed for 8 acres when it should have been 2 acres. A Supplemental Tax Certificate was issued for \$115.20 for Justin Long and a Tax Abatement was issued in the amount of \$115.20 for David Ames.

Ryan Cline requested two lots to be combined for tax purposes and the two were mistakenly combined. Map 233-007 was mistakenly combined with Map 233-070A. A Supplemental Tax Certificate of \$182.40 will be issued to Ryan and Travis Cline.

Map and Lot 233-07A and 070 are now combined and a Supplemental Tax Certificate issued in the amount of \$62.40 for the additional acreage to Ryan Cline.

Map and Lot 233-070A have been deleted so an abatement will need to be issued for that.

Baines stated there were two Certificate of Abatements to sign: one was for David Ames and the other was for Ryan Cline.

Selectperson Hall asked about the Supplemental Tax Warrant and a Supplemental Tax Certificate. Baines said the Certificate says, "We have omitted the properties from our tax bill, so we are sending bills for them." The Tax Warrant is telling the tax collector, "We want you to collect this money. Here is your warrant to do so."

Select Board members will sign documents and forward them to the town office by scanning, faxing, emailing, or going to the town office to sign them.

A motion was made by Selectperson Hall, seconded by Elwell, to approve the two Supplemental Tax Certificates and the Warrant Abatement to correct the inaccuracies. The vote was 4-0. Motion carried.

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with St. George Community Development Corporation: Town Manager Polky explained that if the CDC does help with giving food to needy people because of the pandemic, the only way the CDC will get reimbursed is if they have an MOU with the town. He stated this means the town is asking the CDC to supply the goods.

Polky said up until late this afternoon, he did not think there was a problem with the MOU and sent it off to Ray Sisk, Knox County EMA Director who did not see any problems with it. But Polky said he received an email from Sisk who suggested Polky wait on the MOU because FEMA had made changes and he (Sisk) had not seen the changes yet.

Polky thinks FEMA may want more specific wording in the MOU. He said FEMA has been giving out a lot of money to a lot of projects, but they are not coming up the guidance until after the money has been issued.

Polky suggested they hold off on the MOU until they get the wording from FEMA as to what changed. Selectperson Hall said that sounded reasonable. Chair Bates said he had concerns about complications the town might get into if they had to require assistance yet at the same time validate that there were genuine hardships. He thought that could get very complicated, but it may be a hypothetical issue because the town may never require assistance.

Chair Bates asked hypothetically, how long would it take to get the MOU in place so they could get reimbursement from the federal government and why not wait until one was needed? Polky recommended the MOU be put in place, just in case because he did not support the idea of waiting for something until the town needed it. Polky said, "The reason you want to do that is what happens if we do not have enough of a quorum for the Board to approve it when we need it? That is one of the risks that could occur." Polky thought they needed to make sure the MOU was what the Feds were going to agree with.

Chair Bates agreed and stated the item would be tabled until they got more information.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: At 8:02 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, it was voted 4-0 to go into executive session pursuant to Title 1 MRSA Sec. 405(6)(E) – consultations with legal counsel. The Select Board came out of executive session at 8:15 p.m.

At 8:16 p.m., on a motion by Selectperson Elwell, seconded by Hall, it was voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson  
Select Board Recording Secretary