Select Board Meeting Minutes

January 23, 2024; 5:00 P.M.

Board Members Present: Carmen E. Lone, Chair; Robert J. McHatton, Sr.; Vice-Chair; Paul A. Tworog; Carrye Castleman-Ross; Kenneth J. Murphy

Administration Present: Town Manager Robert Peabody, Jr.; Deputy Town Manager Georgiann Fleck; Town Clerk Laurie Chadbourne; Deputy Town Clerk Veronica LaCascia; Community Development Director Victoria Hill; Public Services Director David Madsen; Recreation Director Gary Colello; Fire Chief Gren Garland.

1. Call to Order

Chair Lone called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Board recited the “Pledge of Allegiance.”

3. Approval of Minutes:

**Motion** was made by Vice-Chair McHatton for approval of the minutes from the January 9, 2024, Select Board Meeting starting at 4 P.M; second from Member Murphy. 5 approve/0 oppose

**Motion** was made by Vice-Chair McHatton for approval of the minutes from the January 9, 2024, Select Board Meeting starting at 5:00 P.M.; second from Member Murphy. 5 approve/0 oppose

4. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There were no public comments on non-agenda items.

5. Committee/Liaison Reports

Pondicherry Park Committee Liaison Member Tworog notes they will continue with the overall management plan. This entails taking down dangerous trees close to the trails. He also noted that the “No Dog” sign has been removed from the Willette Rd. side of the park. Member Tworog suggested when the sign is replaced it should be moved to the parking lot. Town Manager Peabody asked if the committee would replace the sign or will a member be reaching out to Public Works Director David Madsen. Member Tworog clarified that a member will be reaching out to Mr. Madsen to replace the sign.

6. Correspondence, Presentations, and Other Pertinent Information

a. Bridgton Memorial School Ad Hoc Committee Presentation

Christopher Walton, member of the Memorial School Ad Hoc Committee, begins the presentation that Select Board had previously requested. There are three main concepts for future use of the Memorial School property: Health & Wellness Hub, Community Development Hub, and Open Space. This will be managed by the town. The sight will in no way be commercial. It was noted that the school is in rough shape, however they seem optimistic that the building is still structurally sound. Windows and doors will need to be replaced as well as the known asbestos in wall panels and floor tiles. Committee Member Peter Lowell suggested the next step be a building evaluation to get more accurate cost numbers. Member Murphy asked about the idea of an amphitheater. Mr. Walton replies saying yes, it has been discussed, however there is some contaminated soil in the ground. Once disturbed the soil needs to be removed. Member Murphy believes repairing the current building might not be as cost effective as a full tear down and rebuild. He also believes the whole area should be an event space for the arts and not municipal space. Member Tworog thanked the committee for the well-thought-out presentation. Member Tworog also believes the next step is evaluation the building. Chair Lone interjects, reminding the Board there is private property, including a residential home, on Skillins Circle. **Motion** was made by Member Tworog to accept the report; second by Member Murphy. 5 approve/0 oppose

7. New Business

a. Awards and Other Administrative Recommendations

1. Dedication of 2022/2023 Annual Town Report

**Motion** was made by Member Vice-Chair McHatton to dedicate the 2022/2023 Annual Town report to Doug Taft and Fred Packard; second by Member Murphy. 5 approve/0 oppose

2. Property Tax Information Online

Citizens are requesting to opt out of having their tax record appear in the Assessors on-line database. Town Manager Peabody explains that people use the database to properly notify citizens when legally required, such as planning board matters. Member Tworog makes a **motion** to eliminate the opt out option. Vice-Chair McHatton seconds the motion. 5 approve/0 oppose

b. Permits/Documents Requiring Board Approval

1. Victualer’s License Noble House Located at 81 Highland Road

Chair Lone **moves** to approve the Victualer’s License for The Noble House. Member Tworog seconds the motion. 5 approve/0 oppose

2. Sewer User Commitment #283

Chairman Lone **moves** to commit the October 1st, 2023 to December 31st 2023 sewer user rate commitment #283, comprising of 7 pages totaling $37,634.13 to the treasurer for collection. Member Tworog seconds the **motion** for discussion. Member Tworog asked for clarification on the Transition Billing for December 2023 page of the billing packet. Member Tworog hopes customers weren’t overcharged with a quarterly rate. Mr. Madsen reassured him customers were not overcharged. Member Tworog asks if after ADU’s are added to an existing structure will there be another EDU added to the bill. Mr. Madsen answers, yes if you add an additional structure the EDU will rise accordingly. No further discussion. 5 approve/0 oppose

c. Select Board Comments

* **Member Murphy** had no comments.
* **Member Castleman-Ross** had no comments.
* **Member Tworog** had two budget related questions; how many individuals participated in The Property Tax Stabilization Program and the total amount of Bridgton funds spent in calendar year 2023 on engineer firms and lawyer fees. Town Manager Peabody assured Member Tworog he would get that information to him.
* **Member McHatton** had no comments.
* **Chair Lone** is requesting the Board receive a spread sheet once a year. The spread sheet would list active projects happening in the town.

d. Town Manager’s Report/Deputy Town Manager’s Report

Deputy Town Manager Fleck read the following report into the record:

**Comprehensive Plan Survey** is live!  Please check your mailboxes at home for a post card with a link and QR code to the survey.  We have received over 150 responses over the past few days with very diverse opinions, don’t miss out on the opportunity to share yours!  **Comprehensive Plan Update,** there are multiple ways for you to share your thoughts with us online.  Also, be on the lookout for our **Vision Bridgton Logo** around town, in the newspaper, and in your mailbox.  The Town is hoping to engage as many people in this important planning process as possible.  For more information visit our new comprehensive plan project website, accessible through the Town of Bridgton Website, bridgtonmaine.org, or email the Community Development Director, Victoria Hill, at vhill@bridgtonmaine.org

**Bridgton Police Department**

**Officer Lee** has started the 18 week Maine Criminal Justice Academy.  Bridgton Police Department is taking part in the **bureau of highway safety distracted driver awareness and prevention campaign**.  We have dedicated traffic enforcement details for locating distracted drivers and issuing citations when appropriate.  **Public Safety Administrative Officer Gendron** is again partnering with the Bridgton Community Center to provide sand for seniors.  Bridgton Police Department is **still accepting applications for two full time patrol officer openings.**

**Bridgton Fire Department**

The Bridgton Fire Department has had another busy year with 483 runs and numerous details for public events such as Winter Carnival, July 4th events, Music on Main events, Halloween Parade and Festival of Lights parade to name just a few.  I am very proud of the level of dedication that our department members show throughout the year, both in handling calls and

non-emergency details.

**Bridgton Code Enforcement**

For the month of December 2023 the Code Enforcement Office issued the following:

Building Permits: Plumbing Permits:

2 New Building 10 Internal Plumbing

5 Remodel 1 Septic

1 Raze

3 Tree Removal Total Project Costs - $967,518

1 Shed Total Permits Costs - $8,228

1 Tennis Court

1 Roof Mount Solar Array

**Bridgton Recreation**

The **Ice Rink** is open daily Sunday through Thursday 10a.m.-6p.m., Friday and Saturday 10a.m-8p.m.  Daily programs are available at the Town Hall Gym -  Jumping Jane’s Senior Fitness, Walking, Tai Chi, Karate, 4 Square adult basketball, women’s night basketball, pickleball, table tennis, futsal (indoor soccer) as well as open gym.

**General**

Winter Carnival is scheduled for Saturday, February 17, 2024 on Highland Lake in Bridgton.  Events on Highland Lake will include:

Rail Jam at 1:30p.m. with registration beginning at 10a.m. $15.00 entry fee;

Kids Ice Fishing Contest;

Juggler;

Horse & Carriage;

Ice Bar;

Spicy Chili Eating Contest at 1:30p.m.– sponsored by Stella’s on the Square;

Freezing For a Reason - benefiting Harvest Hills Animal Shelter Inc. and pre-registration is required;

Craft and Vendor Fair 8a.m.-3p.m. Bridgton Town Hall 26 North High Street.

Please refer to our website [www.bridgtonmaine.org](http://www.bridgtonmaine.org/)  for more information on these events and more and to subscribe for alerts.  Also, check out Greater Bridgton Chamber of Commerce, [www.gblrcc.org](http://www.gblrcc.org/) for these events and more !

Town Manager Peabody asked Fire Chief Glen Garland if he would like to add his report on the past year of activity. Chief Garland noted there was close to a 30% increase in calls for 2023. There were still more calls in the year 2022, this was due to two storms within the same two weeks. Chief Garland was proud of the over twenty members of the department for dispatching to a structure fire on a sub-zero Sunday morning. Member Tworog asks if the Fire Department has any plans for training regarding electric vehicles. Chief Garland is happy to answer that there is a regional training scheduled for February 7th. This will take place in South Paris specifically on electrical vehicle fires and lithium-ion battery fires. There will be regional hands on training available in the fall.

Town Manager Peabody would like to update the Board on the transfer of the Memorial School to the Town. After speaking with the Superintendent and the Town Attorneys, Town Manager Peabody learned there would be certain limitations set by the school within the transfer of the property. The Superintendent has a Building Committee that will be formalizing the limitations to share with the Board. They informed Town Manager Peabody the Board would need to appoint a director for representation on the committee. Chair Lone would like the appointment of a director for the building committee to be on the next agenda. She also suggested someone from the Selectboard be on the building committee. Town Manager Peabody ends by sharing that the attorney strongly suggests completing a full phase two analysis of the property before the transfer is finalized. Town Manager Peabody stresses putting this on the next agenda, due to the cost and time constraints.

8. Old Business *(Select Board Discussion Only)*

a. Project Status Updates

Public Works Director Madsen is asked about the pumps at the treatment plant. He answered that there is only one pump not actively pumping into the plant. They are live and ready to take on new customers. The project is almost complete. Town Manager Peabody added there is still more to do until substantial completion. However, it is operational as of February 2, 2024.

9. Treasurer’sWarrants

Member Murphy makes a **motion** to approve the treasurer's warrants 266, 267, 268, 269, and 270. Tworog seconds the motion. 5 approve/ 0 oppose

10. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

11. Dates for the Next Select Board Meetings

February 13, 2024 @ 5PM (Regular Meeting)

February 27, 2024 @ 5PM (Regular Meeting)

12. Adjourn

Vice-Chair McHatton makes a **motion** to adjourn; Member Murphy seconds the motion. The meeting is adjourned at 6:07pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Veronica LaCascia

Deputy Clerk