

Town of Casco
Minutes of the February 10, 2015 Selectboard Meeting

Members Present:

Grant Plummer, Mary Fernandes, Holly Hancock, Calvin Nutting and Tom Peaslee

Staff Present:

Town Manager David Morton and Administrative Secretary Bob Tooker

Approval of Agenda:

Grant Plummer added two items to the Agenda under Old Business as 2) Discussion about the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam; and 3) Special Town Meeting.

The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve the agenda for the February 10, 2015 meeting: 5 in favor, opposed, 0 abstentions.

Approval of Warrants:

The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve bills and signed warrants: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Approval of Minutes (January 6, 2015):

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2015 Selectboard meeting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.

Town Manager's Update (David Morton):

The kiosk for public sand is open. Anyone with concerns about winter road maintenance should call the Town Office and ask to speak with the Town Manger. Back-to-back storms have made it difficult for road crews to do a thorough clean-up before the next storm. Please be cautious when traveling as high snow banks restrict visibility. Mailboxes are the owner's responsibility. The Town apologizes for any damage to mailboxes resulting from snow plows. It is illegal to plow snow across public roads, or to blow or shovel snow onto public roads. Vehicles impeding snow removal efforts will be towed. Thus far this winter, 5,000 yards of winter sand and 500 tons of road salt have been applied to Town roads. A public ribbon cutting ceremony for the first public electric car charging station in Casco will be held tomorrow behind the Casco Community Center. Finance Committee schedules will be released by the end of this week.

Committee and Staff Reports: None.

Selectboard Comments:

- Holly Hancock displayed a house number sign produced from a kit purchased from some of the proceeds from Casco Days. Holly expressed that these house number signs and assistance with installing them are available to any Casco resident who may be interested. Holly mentioned that currently high snow banks are a good indicator as to how high house numbers should be in order to be visible in case of an emergency. Tom Peaslee inquired about a recommended height for house numbers. Holly replied that visibility is the key. Grant Plummer clarified that the house number signs are at no cost. Mary Fernandes clarified that the house number signs are reflective.

Public Participation:

- Peg Dilly of Casco reminded everyone about the ribbon cutting ceremony for the electric car charging station that the Town voted for, that both Chambers of Commerce will be represented, and that refreshments will be available. Peg inquired as to whether money obtained from Tenney Hill for water could be used for the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam since it involves water. Peg suggested that a possible hydro-electric component included in the dam repair could pay for itself if money derived from the electricity is used to pay for future dam maintenance.
- Linda Mocello of Casco thanked Holly Hancock and the Fire Department for the house number signs, and inquired about a timeline for a new Town Hall. Linda commented on the firehouse setting, the former bank building and the former Grange Hall options, and emphasized the need for a timeline.

Old Business:

1. Discussion regarding Town Office options.

Grant Plummer agreed that the Town Office project has been around for a number of years, and expressed that the Town has been working on it behind the scenes. Grant stated that renovations to the former bank building and new construction near the fire station have been identified as the two options, and that for various reasons, the former Grange Hall is not an option. Grant mentioned that an estimated cost of \$900,000+ for both options was of significant concern, and that the Board needs to look at scaled back options, do the math, present to the Town exactly what it will look like and how much it will cost to build with local contractors. Grant expressed a rough range of \$600,000 to \$900,000, and that the Board needs to determine how to financially manage a project of this scope. Tom Peaslee expressed that the project could be put out to bid.

Grant emphasized that a new Town Hall will be owned by the Town for a long period of time and that cost effective investment and energy choices will eventually result in “money in the

bank.” David Morton described location and cost as the two biggest hurdles as they relate to the least impact in taxpayers. Calvin Nutting inquired as to whether the estimated cost was for the building only or inclusive of geo-thermal energy, etc. Grant replied that specifications called for basic energy choices only.

Lynne Potter, Chair of the Planning Board, described Dayton’s experience with using volunteer labor to construct a new Town Hall, that in the interest of diligence, it behooves the Town to speak with Dayton, and that its new Town Hall includes geo-thermal and other energy efficient measures that make money for Dayton. Lynne expressed that the Board needs to let citizens know that it hears them. Mary Fernandes agreed about Dayton, that it saved approximately \$200,000 by using volunteers, and encouraged the Board to invite a representative from Dayton to come and speak about it.

Grant Plummer expressed that the Board needs to determine what to build and how to finance it before determining how to build it. Lynne expressed that Dayton has gone through this process and perhaps the Town could learn from its experience.

Tom Mulkern of Casco approached the Board and advocated for the former bank building option and investment in the Village area.

Peg Dilly reminded the Board that the Town outgrew the former bank building and moved into space at the Community Center before relocating in favor of further renovations at the Community Center, and that it makes no sense to wait to identify volunteers because they might have good ideas.

Calvin Nutting expressed that for various reasons, the use of volunteers to construct a new Town Hall in Frye Island resulted in prolonged construction time.

2. Discussion about the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam.

Holly Hancock stated that the Subcommittee met to review three bids for a study necessary to identify possible solutions. Subsequently, the Casco and Otisfield Selectboards met with representatives from the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond Association to discuss the bids. The Selectboards and Subcommittee were concerned that the lowest bidder did not include a “not to exceed” clause or a dam replacement option. Subsequently, the lowest bidder included “not to exceed \$9,000” and a replacement option. David Morton clarified that the “not to exceed \$9,000” bid would be split equally with Otisfield.

3. Special Town Meeting.

Grant Plummer questioned whether a Special Town Meeting scheduled for February 26 for the purpose of funding the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam study and presenting a new animal control ordinance is necessary. David Morton expressed that funding the dam study is the most pressing issue, and that the animal control ordinance can wait for the regular Town Meeting in

June. David informed the Board that it could choose to pay the \$4,500 for the dam study out of the Town's contingency fund, or choose to seek authorization for the funds from the Town at a Special Town Meeting. Holly Hancock inquired about Special Town Meeting costs. David indicated that a Special Town Meeting would cost between two and six hundred dollars depending on whether a notification mailer is included. Holly inquired about public awareness of the dam project and whether it's a hot button issue. Grant replied that the next (facts/solution) phase could be a hot button issue. Grant proposed paying for the dam study out of the Town's contingency fund and moving forward with the study in order to have a plan and costs ready for the June Town Meeting. Holly expressed that with a potential Departmental of Environment Protection non-compliance issue, the dam study really isn't an elective matter. Tom Peaslee and David Morton clarified that a recent letter from one of the bidders did not represent a lower bid. Grant expressed that the new animal control ordinance is indeed a hot button issue and that legal work remains in progress.

Calvin Nutting asked if a Special Town Meeting might be necessary to secure additional funding for winter road maintenance, and expressed that it would be unfortunate if two Special Town Meetings became necessary. David expressed uncertainty about the winter road maintenance budget, that it's okay for now, and the Special Town Meeting could be cancelled.

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to draw up to \$4,500.00 out of the Town's contingency fund to pay for the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam study, one half of the cost of the dam study in preparation for a final solution to the dam: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

New Business:

4. Discussion regarding community concerns with proposals for SAD 61 elementary schools.

Grant Plummer expressed that six proposals for how to handle overcrowding at Songo Locks School were brought to public forums, and the two options remaining are 1) to place separate modular classroom units at Songo Locks School; and 2) to repurpose Crooked River School and reopen it as an elementary school. Grant described the options that drew the most attention from the public, expressed his personal opinions about various options, offered some perspective on future enrollment, curriculum, logistics, etc., and mentioned that the School Board is working quickly on the budget. Tom Peaslee inquired about Crooked River School and why it was closed. Grant described circumstances leading to its closing.

5. Discussion following a joint workshop held with the Casco Planning Board on February 3, 2015.

Lynne Potter, Chair of the Planning Board, stated that the Planning Board decided to give Point Sebago a one year extension of its current contract zone agreement, during which year Point Sebago will explore items of concern identified by the Town. Since it may take a number of years to sell remaining lots under the current agreement, Point Sebago believes that it could be

four to six years before it's in a position to start a new phase. Consequently, the Town and Point Sebago both felt no need to rush into a long-term contract extension. Lynne expressed that a one year extension will give both parties more time to explore fire suppression, water treatment, water runoff and other important issues to determine what needs to be done to bring everything up to today's standards. David Morton clarified that an extension requires Town Meeting approval.

Grant Plummer expressed the Selectboard's view that certain important items of concern to the Town require more immediate attention. Lynne expressed that based on the contentious atmosphere surrounding the discussions, both parties felt that a one year extension was the best approach, and that from a long-term perspective, one more year wouldn't make much difference. Mary Fernandes expressed that the Town is only requesting prevention and safety measures. Lynne added water quality, which the Resort bases its business on.

Tom Mulkern expressed his opinion that the Town is "folding" when it grants an extension without getting anything in return, and that the Town should at least get something in return.

Grant Plummer instructed David Morton to obtain the Town Planner's thoughts on the matter.

6. Discussion regarding initial proposals by the governor to shift costs to local property taxes.

David Morton summarized the issue as the governor proposing a radical change to taxes as they currently exist in Maine. David encouraged each individual to look at the proposals closely to determine how they will be affected because eliminating aid to municipalities, reducing or eliminating income tax, increasing sales tax, etc., will affect each individual differently. David expressed that the proposals will certainly increase property taxes, and that rather than a reduction in taxes, the proposals will shift the burden.

There being no further business, the Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to adjourn: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

ATTEST:

Robert C. Tooker
Administrative Secretary