



Town of Casco
Selectboard Minutes
April 7, 2020

Selectboard Chair Tom Peaslee opened the meeting with the following announcement:

Due to the Governor's COVID-19 Stay at Home Directive, live public attendance will not be permitted at this meeting. The Selectboard will be participating via teleconference and the public will be able to view the meeting live on Lake Region Television and the LRTV website. The public may call in to the meeting via telephone by calling 627-4515 and dialing 0 during the Public Participation section of the agenda or by emailing manager@cascomaine.org prior to 5:30 PM on 4/7/20. Please keep comments brief and to the point, so as to not hold up the line for other citizens. Comments received after the public participation portion will be read into the record at the next Selectboard meeting.

A recording of this meeting is available on the Lake Region Television website at www.lakeregiontv.org.

Selectboard Members Present:

Mary Fernandes, Holly Hancock (Vice Chair), Calvin Nutting, Tom Peaslee (Chair) and Grant Plummer

Staff Present:

Town Manager Courtney O'Donnell and Recording Secretary Robert Tooker

1. Review and Approval of the Meeting Agenda

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve the agenda for the April 7, 2020 Selectboard meeting and roll call vote was taken:

Hancock- Aye

Nutting- Aye

Vienessa Fernandes- Aye
Plummer- Aye
Peaslee- Aye

2. Approval of Bills and Signing and Approval of All Open Warrants

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to approve bills and sign and approve all open warrants and roll call vote was taken:

Hancock- Aye
Nutting- Aye
Vienessa Fernandes- Aye
Plummer- Aye
Peaslee- Aye

3. Approval of Minutes (*March 10, 2020*)

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2020 Selectboard meeting and roll call vote was taken:

Hancock- Aye
Nutting- Aye
Vienessa Fernandes- Aye
Plummer- Aye
Peaslee- Aye

4. Public Participation

Courtney O'Donnell read a comment from District 66 Representative Jessica Fay. Jessica wants everyone to know that she is available as a resource for anyone with questions or who would like to know what services are available during these challenging times. Jessica along with volunteers will be making district-wide check-in calls to people over sixty-five just to make sure everyone is okay. Jessica thanks everyone in Casco and those on the front lines working to keep everyone healthy and safe. Jessica's cell phone number is 415-4218.

5. Manager's Update (*Courtney O'Donnell*)

a. COVID-19 Update

The Town is taking the COVID-19 pandemic seriously and doing everything it can to protect staff and citizens while following the Governor's mandates. The entire state is required to stay at home unless there is an essential reason to be out. Patience and willingness to follow these directives and work with the Town is much appreciated and could quite possibly save lives. The Governor has announced that the Maine National Guard and other resources will be utilized to set-up alternative care sites and more. It is the Town Manager's opinion that this is a clear indication that State officials expect things to get much worse with COVID-19 and are trying to adequately prepare.

Please keep in mind that Casco's response cannot be the same as all other Towns for a variety of reasons, most importantly because the Town does not have the same authority as some Towns. It would require a Town Meeting vote to give the Town such authority. Towns without a Town Meeting form of government are in a much better position to pass ordinances related to the emergency and provide enforcement via police departments, which Casco does not have.

i. Office Coverage

The Town has taken incremental steps to minimize the risk of exposure as the emergency has evolved. There is a schedule for staff so that someone is in the office during normal business hours to provide essential services. Staff is processing everything they can given the circumstances. Please be patient and keep in mind that under the Governor's mandate, people should only be out for essential business. Most registrations and things like dog licenses are not essential as they have been extended for thirty days after the state of civil emergency is over. Many services can be processed by mail. Otherwise, staff is continuing to work from home and the Town is working to make sure they have what they need to do so. The Town is tracking expenses as it expects to be reimbursed through FEMA for 75% of COVID-19 related costs.

ii. Signing of Warrants

The Town continues to process payroll and payables weekly. Warrants are available in the Town Office storage room for Selectboard members to physically sign, preferably on Tuesdays.

iii. Elections and School Department Budget

As of today's press conference by the Governor, it sounds like elections are likely to be pushed to July 14, 2020, which would have an impact on local elections and Town Meeting. There are many unanswered questions and a better update will hopefully be provided at the next Selectboard meeting. It is important to note that schools and municipalities can operate into the next fiscal year under the current approved amounts.

iv. Property Taxes

The second half of taxes were due early in March. The Town has received requests to waive interest. Although some Towns are doing this, legal counsel has advised against it because only Town Meeting has the authority to waive the interest. For this fiscal year, Town Meeting approved waiving interest for the first two weeks after the due date. If anyone is unable to pay their taxes, please keep in mind that poverty abatements exist for this reason.

v. Budget Process

Remote budget workshops will need to be set-up for the end of the month or early May. Due to the significant amount of the Town Manager's time being consumed by COVID-19 issues, more time is needed to re-evaluate and wrap-up departmental budgets that have not yet been reviewed. It is anticipated that the budget will be impacted by COVID-19. Hopefully money from the federal government's emergency response will help ease the burden. Keeping taxpayers in mind, the Town is re-evaluating the budget to cut costs in a responsible manner while taking into account potential hits to revenue. A Town-wide spending freeze on all non-essential purchases has been put in place. Overall, the Unassigned Fund Balance is in good shape and the Town is in a good position, but steps are being taken to maintain that position.

vi. Town Meeting & Ordinances

Although it remains uncertain, pushing out elections will have an impact on Town Meeting. School, local and state elections may be combined. Town Clerk Penny Bean continues to work on the Annual Report. The goal is to wrap things up by the middle of May so that everything is ready when Town Meeting is scheduled. In order to hold

necessary public hearings, ordinance changes may need to wait. A Special Town Meeting will likely to be necessary to address things that have been disrupted by COVID-19. Citizens can request to be added to a distribution list for Selectboard agendas and other vital information via email to manager@cascomaine.org.

vii. Memorial Field Park Construction

Work continues on the Memorial Field Park project. Construction is considered essential under the Governor's mandate and the Town has been advised that it should continue with the project. A public bid opening will take place next week on Thursday, April 16, possibly via Facebook Live, and the bid award will be included on the April 21 Selectboard meeting agenda.

viii. Postponement for Nonessential Tasks/Services

Please be assured that if anything is pushed off, it is for a good reason and in everyone's best interest. Planning Board and other boards/committees are canceled for April. If the stay-at-home order continues into May, the Town will look at other options. Reviewing technical documents in a remote setting could be difficult but the Town will prepare for it should it become necessary.

b. Transfer Station/Bulky Waste

Please be respectful and observe the Governor's mandate related to social/physical distancing when using the Transfer Station/Bulky Waste facility. If there are many people already out, please wait in your vehicle until you can dispose of your items safely.

The Transfer Station side has remained open throughout this stay-at-home directive. The Bulky Waste side will be reopening on Saturdays and Tuesdays moving forward. Rules will be put in place about how many folks are allowed in. Please be respectful of the red light at the scale. Please keep in mind that 1) the staff is putting themselves at risk in order to do their jobs; 2) it is important that people only come to the facility when necessary; and 3) it is important to remain at least six feet away from everyone.

Courtney O'Donnell stated that 1) she is working with John Kimball, the facility manager, to hire a seasonal part-time yard attendant; 2) the staff is doing a great job under the circumstances; and 3) the Town is fortunate to have such a great team.

c. Other

Agenda items for the April 21 Selectboard meeting include a consent agreement for Crooked River Campground, walking trail bids and the Town Fee Schedule. The Town Manager making arrangements with the auditor to review of the 2019 Town audit remotely with the Selectboard.

6. Private Road Policy Discussion

Courtney O'Donnell stated that the draft Private Road Policy distributed at the last Selectboard meeting remains substantially the same and requested feedback from the Selectboard. In response to inquiries from Grant Plummer, Courtney stated that the goal is to make citizens aware of what is in the draft policy and to put it before Town Meeting for approval. Grant stated that the draft policy appears to be complete. Courtney stated that she would have legal counsel review the draft policy and suggested that citizens be given an opportunity to review and comment on it. Courtney suggested that perhaps a postcard could be sent out informing citizens that the draft policy is posted on the Town website and encouraging them to comment on it via email. Alternatively, Courtney suggested waiting until the beginning of May when more information about COVID-19 restrictions might be available before deciding how to proceed.

7. Selectboard Comments

- Holly Hancock advised that due to many active scams, citizens should be cautious about giving out any personal or banking information, especially when so many people are expecting federal emergency relief checks to be distributed soon. Holly 1) reminded everyone that the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration only correspond via the U.S. Postal Service; and 2) stated that citizens should hang-up if anyone calls requesting such information claiming to be from the IRS, Social Security or anything else.
- Mary Fernandes stated that the same precautions should be taken regarding the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Grant Plummer stated that the winning bid for the Crooked River School came in lower than expected and work on the project will begin in the next few weeks.

8. Executive Session 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(E) – Consultation with Legal Counsel Over Pending Litigation

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to enter into executive session subject to Title 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(E) for consultation with legal counsel over pending litigation and roll call vote was taken:

**Hancock- Aye
Nutting- Aye
Vienessa Fernandes- Aye
Plummer- Aye
Peaslee- Aye**

The Selectboard entered into executive session at 7:16 p.m.

The Selectboard returned from executive session at 8:53 p.m.

The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Plummer) and voted to come out of executive session and roll call vote was taken:

**Hancock- Aye
Nutting- Aye
Vienessa Fernandes- Aye
Plummer- Aye
Peaslee- Aye**

The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to hold a Selectboard meeting on April 14, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. and roll call vote was taken:

**Hancock- Aye
Nutting- Aye
Vienessa Fernandes- Aye
Plummer- Aye
Peaslee- Aye**

12. Adjournment

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to adjourn at 8:58 p.m.: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

ATTEST:

Robert Tooker
Recording Secretary