

## Town of Casco

### **Minutes of the April 26, 2016 Selectboard Meeting**

#### **Selectboard Members Present:**

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

#### **Staff Present:**

Town Manager David Morton and Administrative Secretary Bob Tooker

#### **Approval of Agenda:**

Holly Hancock amended the agenda to include approval of the minutes for the April 21, 2016 Selectboard meeting in addition to approval of the minutes for the April 12, 2016 Selectboard meeting.

**The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to approve the agenda for the April 26, 2016 Selectboard meeting as amended: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

#### **Approval of Warrants:**

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

#### **Approval of Minutes: (April 12, 2016 and April 21, 2016)**

**The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2016 Selectboard meeting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.**

**The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve the minutes of the April 21, 2016 Selectboard meeting: 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions.**

#### **Town Manager's Update: (David Morton)**

The junkyard issue on Mr. Lindeman's property on Lakeshore Drive has been resolved. The Town forcibly entered the property and caused the junk to be removed. Mr. Lindeman will be billed for the Town's costs to remove the junk. The drawn out court process required a year and a half.

The Town is sad to announce the retirement of Eric Hanscom, manager of the Naples/Casco solid waste recycling facility, who has been with the Town for more than twenty years. Eric's last day is Friday, April 29, 2016. Eric will be replaced by John Kimball.

The Town announces the resignation of Donald Murphy, Code Enforcement Officer, who has been with the Town for more than three years. Donald will be working through the end of May, 2016.

### **Committee and Staff Reports:**

Holly Hancock reported that bid packages for the reconstruction of the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam have been prepared and that multiple inquiries about the bid packages have been received. Holly stated that there will be an on-site meeting at the dam tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. for interested bidders with Myron Petrovsky, the designer, and representatives from Casco and Otisfield. Holly stated that the deadline for bids is 4:30 p.m. on May 16, 2016 and the Casco and Otisfield Selectboards will hold a joint meeting that evening to review the bids.

### **Public Participation:**

None.

### **Old Business:**

1. Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) process for delinquent personal property tax collections.

Mary Fernandes stated that there are several remaining questions that need to be answered and that hopefully this issue will come to fruition at the next Selectboard meeting. Mary stated that she needs information related to time frames and dates, especially after the tax commitment, and that a few issues that need to be discussed with the tax assessor. Holly Hancock stated that this agenda item will be included under Old Business at the next Selectboard meeting.

2. Update on the 86 Leach Hill Road property (former Holden property).

David Morton stated that the heirs of Mr. Holden were not able to resolve deed and title issues and the Town is now in a position to move forward with the sale of the tax acquired property. David recommended that the Selectboard include the property on a list of other tax acquired properties to be put out to public bid.

**The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to move 86 Leach Hill Road into the process of for sale by the Town of Casco: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

Holly Hancock noted that the Selectboard needs to direct the Town Manager to advertise the tax acquired properties for bid.

## **New Business:**

### 3. Discussion regarding the future of the Grange Hall building.

David Morton explained that the building needs quite a bit of work, adding that the Town voted to demolish it in 1977 and subsequently reversed its decision and voted to keep it in 1978. David stated that minimal maintenance has continued over the years with very little municipal use. David stated that the building is currently used by the Head Start Program without rent, adding that the program pays for utilities and has put a lot of work into the building, including interior paint, redoing the kitchen, new windows and bathroom upgrades. David stated that 1) the building still needs a lot of work; 2) he is proposing \$12,500.00 in the next budget mostly for a heating system; and 3) he estimates that \$65,000.00 to \$75,000.00 will be needed over the next three years for an electrical upgrade, plumbing, exterior siding and finish, exterior painting, entrance stairs and a contingency for framing and structural repairs. David stated that these costs will be necessary just to maintain the building.

David stated that an elevator at a cost of approximately \$100,000.00 would be required for public use of the upstairs of the building in order to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), adding that an interior elevator would take up considerable space. David inquired as to whether the Town was of a mind to continue the maintenance and upkeep of the building, adding that he was not aware of an alternate location for the Head Start program. Holly Hancock stated that the Town has easements for the septic system. David stated that the septic system, the shared well and the parking area are on other peoples' property.

Holly Hancock invited public comments.

In response to an inquiry from Linda Mocello regarding interest in using the building, David expressed that although a few groups have expressed an interest, a building that is not accessible for public use does not work well. In response to an inquiry from Linda, David explained that the building did not qualify for any historical grants the last time it was researched.

Becca Bear from the Head Start Program 1) briefly described the program; 2) expressed her understanding of the cost of the building; 3) thanked the Town of Casco for its hospitality and use of the building; and 4) expressed that she would like to keep the program in Casco. In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock, Becca stated that the program requires thirty-five square feet per child, an outdoor play facility and a kitchen, and that she is not sure if the program has access to additional funds to help maintain the building. In response to an inquiry from Mary Fernandes, David stated that the Town has no other municipal buildings that would be suitable for the program. In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer, Becca stated that the program could accommodate pre-kindergarten if it had enough space. In response to an inquiry from Mary, David explained that an elevator would only be required if the Town used the upstairs for public gatherings. In response to an inquiry from Tom Peaslee, Becca stated that she is unaware of the success or value of any grants obtained by the Head Start Program.

Mary Fernandes stated that as a general rule, early education programs lead to positive adult lives, adding that fewer remedial programs are needed.

Sam Brown, Finance Committee Chair, expressed his view that it comes down to spending \$12,500.00 for a new heating system without a road map for why the Town is spending the money. Sam offered a view of a vibrant community use for the building versus pulling the plug, adding that the Town should either invest in the building with a plan for the future or sell or demolish it. Holly Hancock expressed that it is an old, interesting building that provides a home for a valuable community service, adding that 1) half of the building doesn't get used to its full potential; 2) it requires regular maintenance; and 3) there are a number of other directions for which dollars are needed. Holly stated that the Selectboard is hoping for some strong energy from the community to say yes or no. Sam described the circumstance as wanting to put a new engine in an old car in the back yard without having a reason or knowing why. Sam emphasized the need to come up with a game plan and truly own the building or get rid of it.

In response to inquiries from Dennis Strout regarding the integrity of the building and the septic system, David Morton 1) explained that the septic system is relatively new; 2) stated that the Town recently encountered some structural deficiencies; 3) stated that the building has not been inspected by a structural engineer; and 4) restated his cost estimates for maintenance and an elevator. Holly Hancock noted that an elevator would require a heated control room. Dennis suggested spreading the word that the Town is looking for some vibrant and creative energy to bring the building back to life. Tom Pealsee suggested the possibility of donating the building to the Head Start Program.

Lynne Potter, Planning Board Chair, expressed her view that the Town does not need any more open space in the Village and suggested improving the building to help bring more business and vitality to the Village, adding that options include selling or improving the building. David Morton noted that the Head Start Program is an important use for the building and questioned whether the program is significant enough to continue investing in the building. Sam Brown again called for a road map and questioned whether the Town values the building enough to make the investment necessary to make it useable to its full potential, adding that a \$12,500.00 budget item for a heading system would be worthwhile if there was a long term plan. In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock, David expressed that a similar level of budgeting would be necessary over at least four or five years just to maintain the building. Grant Plummer expressed that a significant amount of money will be necessary to maintain the building for the foreseeable future without ever catching up and that he believed a substantial investment would be preferable now if the Town wants to retain the building. Grant stated that the question is how to provide townspeople with the information they need to make an informed decision.

Alice Darlington expressed that the building has been retained largely out of sentiment and that she does not feel that it is fair to ask taxpayers to pay for emotions, adding that this is no time to throw good money after bad with so many other important needs. Alice expressed that many of the good ideas for use of the building are "pie in the sky" because they are not that easy.

In response to an inquiry from Calving Nutting, David Morton expressed his initial view that if the building is demolished, the vacant lot would not be buildable without extraordinary action from the Zoning Board of Appeals. Calvin stated that any decisions about the building should be based on financial common sense, adding that if the building is demolished, then the Town should do everything possible to find a new location for the Head Start Program.

Sam Brown suggested the possibility of constructing a more useable structure on the same footprint of the building, adding that old town structures in other communities often end up vacant or underutilized. In response to an inquiry from Joanne Vail, David Morton expressed that historical grants have not been available in the past. In response to an inquiry from Joanne, David stated that volunteer labor is typically not suitable when professional expertise is needed and for liability and insurance reasons.

Sam Brown, as Finance Committee Chair, expressed that he heard nothing in the conversation sufficient for budgeting purposes, adding that the Finance Committee is looking for a position from the community that will likely require a position from the Selectboard for the community to react to. Mary Fernandes supported taking a stand, finding a new location for the Head Start Program if necessary, and expressed that a substantial investment is necessary if the Town wants to keep the building. Grant Plummer expressed his view that the options are to keep the building with an understanding of the necessary investment or sell it, but not tear it down, adding that tearing down Town owned properties is extremely costly. Holly Hancock expressed a need to find out if the necessary easements related to the building are transferrable to a new owner.

Linda Mocello expressed a need to start a conversation in the community about the future of the building, adding that not many people know about the discussion taking place. In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer, David Morton explained that the Town would need to approve the sale of the building. Grant stated that in his estimation, \$80,000.00 will be needed over five years to properly maintain the building, which does not include fully restoring the building and making the second floor useable. Becca Bear reminded the Selectboard that the Head Start Program cannot use the upstairs of the building due to the lack of a sprinkler system. Nadia Hermos expressed her view that it is important to preserve the Town's history and that the Grange Hall is an important piece of history. Nadia offered ideas for use of the building.

Sam Brown encouraged the Selectboard to trust the process and make a proposal even if it is not a good one because a proposal is needed in order to start the process that will work itself out. Mary Fernandes agreed that a proposal is needed even if it is not right because the townspeople will eventually make the decision, adding that it is important to provide the townspeople with good information. Dennis Strout suggested investing in a grant writer or someone who could research possible community development grants. David Morton noted that a plan and community commitment are necessary prerequisites to applying for community development grants. Joanne Vail expressed that it would be a shame not to be able to use the upstairs of the building for an extended period of time due to lack of an elevator. Holly Hancock stated that although private citizens can use the upstairs, it cannot be used for public events.

Calvin Nutting questioned why the Town would want to spend any more money on the building without knowing more about its structural integrity. In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock, David Morton stated that a structural integrity inspection of the building could be done by Sebago Technics. Grant Plummer noted that it would be helpful to have it done prior to the June Town Meeting, adding that it has been a priority for him to know “what we have” with respect to the building. In response to further discussion about the future of the building, Grant expressed that restoring the building to its full potential would cost approximately \$250,000. Holly suggested offering options to the community stating that if the building is structurally viable, then the Selectboard likes its current use but that it will cost approximately \$250,000 to make it fully useable and safe. Mary Fernandes agreed with Holly, adding that it is the Selectboard’s responsibility to put options before the townspeople.

David Morton asked the Selectboard if it wanted to take the position of investment in the Grange Hall subject to an engineering analysis of the building. Holly Hancock expressed a distinction between a motion in support of an engineering analysis and a motion in support of building improvements. Tom Peaslee expressed his reluctance to support building improvements prior to an engineering analysis. In response to an inquiry from Tom, David stated that Village District zoning allows retail, residential, arts and performances uses. In response to an inquiry from Calvin Nutting, David and Holly clarified that an engineering report will itemize the improvements necessary to keep the building viable.

**The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Nutting) and voted to approve a building inspection at a cost not to exceed \$3,500.00: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

**The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to recommend \$12,500.00 to the Finance Committee for a new heating system for the Grange Hall: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.**

#### 4. Discussion regarding possible recreational land acquisition.

David Morton stated that property belonging to Lucy Jackson adjacent to the Casco Town Office and Fire Department property has become available for sale, adding that the property is approximately eleven acres, wraps around the Town owned parcel and includes frontage on Parker Pond. David stated that an opportunity for a town to acquire eleven acres with lake frontage is an exciting opportunity that rarely occurs and that the Town has been in negotiations with Lucy Jackson for some time.

David stated that some of the ideas for use of the property include a park with waterfront access, community gardens, a walking path possibly linked to the Memorial School property walking path and senior citizen housing. David stated that a \$440,000 purchase and sale agreement for the property has been signed contingent on Town Meeting approval for funding and the erection of a plaque memorializing that it had been Barry Family property. David noted that the Selectboard felt that it would be remiss if it did not bring this opportunity before the voters.

In response to an inquiry from Norm Heald, David stated that Parker Pond Pines Road would not be affected, adding that there is no proposal for a boat launch. David stated that the Town would propose the removal of three residential structures on the property and that any senior citizen housing would involve a long-term lease of land to an appropriate agency. In response to an inquiry from Sam Brown, Grant Plummer expressed that the Selectboard's recommendation is "yes."

In response to an inquiry from Dennis Strout regarding the availability of funds budgeted for open space, David stated that this is the first time the opportunity has been presented to the public and that the use of open space funds would need to be discussed with the Open Space Commission. Dennis expressed that the use of funds already set aside for open space would likely increase public support. In response to an inquiry from Dennis, David stated that the land could be subdivided. Nadia Herмос expressed that she would welcome a better public beach. In response to an inquiry from Calvin Nutting, David explained that the use of open space funds to acquire the property would not place any limitations on how the property is used. Grant Plummer noted that the sale price is very close to the Town's assessed value of the property. David stated that he would approach the Open Space Commission regarding the possible use of open space funds.

**The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Nutting) and voted to recommend the acquisition of the eleven acre parcel to the Finance Committee: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

5. Review of requests for write-off of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) invoices.

Holly Hancock stated that the offer to pay \$586.00 is a little more than half of the amount of the invoice. Holly noted that the requestor's insurance company will not cover the charges because the provider is out-of-network, and that the offer to pay \$586.00 is a reasonable offer in line with what would be accepted from an insurance company.

**The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to accept the offer of \$586.00 as a reasonable payment for the service and to write-off the balance of the invoice: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

**Selectboard Comments:**

None.

6. Review of requests for abatement of taxes due to poverty or infirmity. (Requires executive session subject to Title 1 M.R.S.A., subsection 405, paragraph 6, part F., and pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. subsection 841 (2)).

**The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Plummer) and voted to adjourn to executive session to review requests for abatement of taxes due to poverty or infirmity subject to Title 1 M.R.S.A., subsection 405, paragraph 6, part F., and pursuant to Title 36 M.R.S.A. subsection 841 (2): 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions**

**The Selectboard entered into executive session at 8:45 p.m.**

**The Selectboard returned from executive session at 9:17 p.m.**

**The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to return from executive session: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

**The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to deny the request for abatement of taxes for request 42616-A because the property is not in eminent danger of foreclosure: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

The Selectboard tabled the request for abatement of taxes for request 42616-B because the requestor was not in attendance.

**The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to grant the request for abatement of taxes for request 42616-C: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

**The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to adjourn: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.**

ATTEST:

Robert Tooker  
Administrative Secretary