

Town of Casco

Minutes of the July 7, 2015 Selectboard Meeting

Members Present:

Grant Plummer, Mary Fernandes, Holly Hancock and Tom Peaslee

Staff Present:

Town Manager David Morton and Administrative Secretary Bob Tooker

Approval of Agenda:

The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to approve the agenda for the July 7, 2015 Selectboard meeting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Approval of Warrants:

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to approve bills and signed warrants: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Approval of Minutes: (June 23, 2015)

The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Plummer) and voted to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2015 Selectboard meeting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Town Manager's Update: (David Morton)

Town Meeting approved the construction and financing of a new town office to be built on the fire station property. The new building in the process of design, and Planning Board review of the initial sketch plan will be on Monday, July 13. A preliminary hearing regarding the junk yard complaint at Shore Road took place today and the court has extended it for a month. The code and health offices are addressing a dangerous building situation on Highland Road. In the event of an emergency, citizens should call 911. There is no option to call the fire or rescue service of your choice or the people you would like to receive services from. The Fire Department is making reflectorized street number signs available for a donation of ten dollars. Please inquire at the Town Office. Folks who maintain a mooring or float must obtain a mooring permit. Moorings and floats are not grandfathered without a special permit from the State of Maine. All buoys and markers must be permitted by the State of Maine. Shoreline alteration projects within one hundred feet of the shoreline such as rip rap, walkways, gardens, fill, etc., require a shoreline review and permit. Please inquire at the Town Office. Casco Days are a

couple of weeks away on July 23, 24 and 25. The entire community is invited to a special celebration on July 17, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. at the Casco Community Center to celebrate Casco resident Kate Hall's National Championship long jump of 22' 5". Kate also holds the ninth longest long jump in the world.

Committee and Staff Reports:

None.

Selectboard Comments:

Holly Hancock commented that the banner honoring Kate Hall hanging in the Community Center is the length of Kate's long jump.

Holly Hancock noted that she is spending time with Tom Mulkern, Casco's Addressing Officer, on public work and Casco Days in particular. The sign near the grange hall parking lot has been removed due to aging until a decision is made about the sign's future. Holly and Tom assisted the Nortons who live next door to the grange hall with the removal of an unsafe lilac bush that was blocking the view along Route 121. The Nortons will be assisting with the repair of the presidential sign. Holly questioned a rumor that the Raymond/Casco Historical Society was considering moving the school building. David Morton clarified that the three year old rumor is based on the Historical Society's long term goal of consolidating operations at the museum on Route 302.

Holly Hancock commented on an ongoing discussion regarding the need for funding for an updated GPS unit. In response to an inquiry from Mary Fernandes, David Morton stated that the unit would be in the \$2,500.00 range including the necessary software, adding that in addition to current needs, it could be used by the Fire Department for marking way points and dry hydrants, etc., and help with mapping ATV and snowmobile trails. In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer, David confirmed that the purchase is budgeted.

Public Participation:

Kevin Keniston of Casco, executor of the estate of his late younger brother Robert Keniston, approached the Selectboard with an offer to settle and close out his younger brother's delinquent personal property taxes for old unregistered excavating equipment. Kevin described the circumstances that resulted in the current principal and interests charges. Mary Fernandes expressed condolences for Kevin's loss. David Morton explained that twelve years of interest on the delinquent account resulted in the current balance. Kevin explained that most of the very old equipment had no value beyond scrap. Grant Plummer added that a piece of equipment with some value had been stolen recently. Based on advice from an attorney, Kevin offered to settle and close out the account for \$1,316.50. In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock, David stated that there was no precedent for such a settlement and that this is new ground.

The Selectboard discussed the potential consequences of setting such a precedent and the uniqueness of these particular circumstances.

The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to accept a payment of \$1,316.50 to satisfy all of Robert Keniston’s personal property taxes and interest and move to abate the outstanding balance: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Nadia Hermos of Casco, a member of the Conservation Committee, presented the Selectboard with samples of Japanese knotweed, an invasive plant species that can spread exponentially and outnumber native plants if not eradicated. Nadia commented on a variety of invasive plant species and encouraged everyone to fight them. Mary Fernandes added that the Towns of Yarmouth and Falmouth are taking aggressive, proactive steps in their stance against invasive plants.

Selection of a Chair and Vice Chair for the Selectboard

As the current Chair, Grant Plummer expressed his view that it is a shared responsibility and that more senior members of the Selectboard are expected to take some of that responsibility, adding that it’s important to hear how others want to process the business of the community. Grant expressed his view that anyone on the Selectboard should have an opportunity to serve as Chair, and that he was thrilled and appreciative to have had the opportunity to serve as Chair. Tom Peaslee thanked Grant for his service.

Tom Peaslee nominated Holly Hancock to serve as Chair of the Selectboard. Grant Plummer seconded the nomination. The Selectboard voted: 2 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention.

Grant Plummer nominated Mary Fernandes to serve as Vice Chair of the Selectboard. Tom Peaslee seconded the nomination. The Selectboard voted: 3 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.

Mary Fernandes commented that although she felt that Holly Hancock would be a good choice for Chair of the Selectboard, she was thinking about transparency, objectivity and due diligence, specifically as it relates to the challenges of small town coziness and close relationships, adding that coziness can sometimes breed a deep sense of inclusiveness that works for some and not most. Mary focused her concerns on Holly’s various titles, calling for clarification of a “murky” area in the Town policy concerning political activity while performing normal work duties or seeking or accepting nominations for election to offices of town government. Mary expressed that this is a precedent, suggested a workshop to clarify these issues, and wished Holly the best of luck.

Mary continued by highlighting certain achievements of the previous Selectboard including the collection of a quarter million dollars in back taxes which resulted in some foreclosures,

development of a tax acquired property policy, development of a policy for Selectboard acceptance of grants or funds on behalf of the Town, and actions concerning dangerous buildings, junkyard and shore land violations. Mary emphasized the importance of creating, reviewing and reviewing policies and the need to continually enforce them. Mary commented on the many meetings and projects underway affecting the Planning Board and the School Board, and expressed her support for Grant Plummer's idea of having a member of the Selectboard attend these meetings. Mary called for a more aggressive response to invasive plant species and expressed that she liked guest speakers, adding that perhaps Kevin Joyce could be invited to speak on crime and statistics as well as jail funding and consolidation, particularly its potential effect on county taxes.

At this point, David Morton intervened to state that the Selectboard had not elected a Chair because there were only two clear votes in favor of Holly Hancock's nomination and three votes are required. It was noted that Holly Hancock had abstained from voting for herself and that she is allowed to do so.

Grant Plummer called for a second vote on the nomination of Holly Hancock for Chair of the Selectboard: 3 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Old Business:

1. Discussion regarding moving forward with the Town office project.

David Morton explained that the Town had its first sketch plan reviewed by the Planning Board and that public safety officials prefer that it be built at the front of the property along Route 121. In response to an inquiry from Tom Peaslee, David stated that the location allows a forty to forty-five foot wide building, adding that public feedback will be solicited in an effort to make the building look as nice as possible. David commented on the process of working with the Planning Board, adding that the Subcommittee consists of Grant Plummer, Tom Peaslee and himself who will copy the Selectboard on everything and provide an update at each Selectboard meeting. David commented on the possible reconfiguration of the parking area and relocation of the fueling station. Holly Hancock added the need for a new Casco community sign for the Fire Station and the new Town Office.

Lynn Potter of Casco, Chair of the Planning Board, expressed her hope that the design will reflect a New England look and feel.

2. Discussion regarding interest in acquisition of property adjacent to the Fire Station property on rte. 121.

David Morton assured the Selectboard that the new Town office can be built on existing land, cautioning against any appearance of additional land being acquired for that purpose. David discussed the available parcels and questioned whether this was something the Selectboard wanted to give voters an opportunity to look at. David stated that aside from giving voters more

control over the land, there are no plans for how it would be used, adding that previous ideas included senior housing and community gardens. Grant Plummer expressed that the Town might have an interest in at least part of the land. Tom Peaslee expressed that he is in favor of going forward with the investigation. The Selectboard discussed various ideas and concerns related to the size, shape and code requirements for various uses of the parcels. The Selectboard directed David to speak with the real estate broker.

3. Review of purchase of new Rescue unit vehicle with update from the Fire Chief.

David Morton stated that the Fire Chief will be attending the July 21, 2015 Selectboard meeting. David explained that the initial purchase of a new rescue vehicle is typically for the chassis only, after which the Selectboard will need to vote to accept the build proposal recommended by the Fire Department. Grant Plummer expressed that maintenance costs on existing vehicles are very high and that a new vehicle will save the Town money in the long run.

Mary Fernandes handed the gavel to Holly Hancock, who assumed her new role as Chair of the Selectboard.

New Business:

4. Review and award of Bid for reconstruction of a portion of Libby Road.

David Morton announced the results of the bidding process as 1) Khiel Excavation and Construction at \$217,830.62; 2) T. Buck Construction at \$299,250.00; 3) Shaw Brothers at \$271,490.00; and 4) R.N. Willey at \$186,663.00, adding that the Town had estimated the project at approximately \$245,000.00. David stated that R.N. Willey's low bid is within the Town's budgeted amount and that Sebago Technics, the Town's engineering consultant, indicated that their bid is complete and responsive, that they are the responsible low bidder, and they are qualified to perform the work. David stated that he discussed with Sebago Technics its offer to provide periodic construction oversight. Mary Fernandes commented that Libby Road was an approximately \$900,000.00 project broken into sections over three years and that R.N. Willey did a fine job on a previous section. David clarified that R.N. Willey had done two of the three previous sections.

The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to accept R.N. Willey's bid for the segment as proposed: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

5. Review and approval of a special events liquor license for a catering service.

David Morton explained that the application was for a licensed catering service for a cocktail party/celebration of life to be held at a private home on July 12, 2015 at 24 Mayberry Hill Road.

The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Hancock) and voted to approve the permit for July 12, 2015: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer regarding revisions to the Town Personnel Policy, David Morton explained that he provided redline copies to the Selectboard. David suggested that the revisions be approached in two phases: 1) accepting the Town attorney's recommendations; and 2) adopting progressive disciplinary procedures, adding that this would be a good agenda item for the July 21, 2015 Selectboard meeting.

In response to an inquiry from Mary Fernandes regarding the Social Media Policy, David Morton explained that it would be a separate policy and not part of the Personnel Policy, adding that although the Community Center has a Facebook page, the Town wants to prevent the posting of comments from the public. David expressed that the issue goes beyond social media and public use, adding that it's really an electronic use policy. Holly Hancock suggested that Jason Moen could weigh in on all of this as well. Mary expressed that she would like clarification from legal counsel concerning political activities.

There being no further business, the Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Plummer) and voted to adjourn: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

ATTEST:

Robert C. Tooker