

Town of Casco

Minutes of the August 18, 2015 Selectboard Meeting

Members Present:

Holly Hancock, Mary Fernandes, Tom Peaslee and Grant Plummer

Staff Present:

Town Manager David Morton and Administrative Secretary Bob Tooker

Approval of Agenda:

The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to approve the agenda for the August 18, 2015 Selectboard meeting: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Approval of Warrants:

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

Approval of Minutes: (August 4, 2015)

Holly Hancock amended the August 4, 2015 minutes to clarify that a Selectboard meeting will be held on September 22, 2015 and not September 23, 2015.

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

Town Manager's Update: (David Morton)

All shoreline alteration projects within one hundred feet of the shoreline such as rip rap, walkways, gardens, fill, tree removal, etc., require a shoreline review and permit. The Town has posted bid opportunities for supplying winter sand on the Town website. Information may also be obtained at the Town Office. A failing culvert on the Heath Road was temporarily repaired. It is anticipated that it may need to be replaced sometime this Fall. Roadside mowing has been completed. The Town will be removing a few dead or dying trees that could pose a danger to the roadway. The Town's legal counsel is working on the Lake Shore Road junkyard case.

Committee and Staff Reports:

Holly Hancock provided an update on the Pleasant Lake/Parker Pond dam project, and called attention to the agreement with Maine Land Development Consultants executed by Hal Ferguson, Town of Otisfield Selectboard Chair on behalf of Otisfield, and David Morton on behalf of Casco. Holly and David met on-site at the dam with Scott Dixon of Maine Land Development Consultants to look at access for a barge the drilling company will be using.

Scott has spoken with the Macklins at Pleasant Lake House who pointed out a trail that might provide good access and who requested that any work be put off until after Columbus Day. Scott also spoke with Steve Tremblay at Inland Fisheries and Wild Life regarding the benefits of possible work on an aging water line during the dam project. Holly assured the Selectboard that Scott is in contact with the various parties involved in the project and will keep it updated as to when drilling is likely to begin near the end of October. .

Selectboard Comments:

Holly Hancock noted that Jensen, Baird, Gardner and Henry, the Town's legal counsel, will be holding a municipal client seminar on September 24, 2015 and reminded the Selectboard of the need to RSVP with David Morton.

Public Participation:

Linda Mocello of Casco expressed that all of us are upset about the number of fatal collisions on Route 11 and that it's time for the Town to examine the situation and come up with solutions to prevent people from being killed. Linda offered possible solutions including bright street lights before, after and in the center of the curve, adding that the former Energy Committee may have made those recommendations. Linda also suggested solar powered signs to 1) alert people to the dangerous curve; 2) post speed limits; 3) display a vehicle's speed; and 4) warn drivers to slow down. Linda also suggested approaching federal, state and county authorities for funding and possible solutions, adding that with eight to ten deaths in the past ten years, the Town cannot afford to have more people dying on that road.

Old Business:

1. Discussion regarding progress with the Town Office project.

David Morton stated that the Town just received initial front and side elevations along with a revised floor plan that will be distributed to office employees for their comments and ideas. David expressed that further progress depends on this evening's Special Town Meeting vote on the acquisition of adjacent land. David added that it will be a challenge to have everything ready by the end of August, 2015 deadline for review by the Planning Board at its September, 2015 meeting. David reminded the Selectboard that the need to "do it well and do it right" was expressed at the Town Meeting, and that the Town is working towards a design that looks good,

is functional and serves the Town's needs.

In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock regarding the October, 2015 Planning Board meeting date, it was noted that the meeting will take place on October 5, 2015 with a September 24, 2015 deadline for the submission of materials.

New Business:

2. Discussion regarding committee appointments.

Holly Hancock directed the Selectboard's attention to an updated list of individuals who indicated a willingness to serve. The Selectboard reviewed various individuals' interests in various committees. Grant Plummer clarified that the individuals who indicated a willingness to serve were highlighted in red.

The Selectboard moved (Plummer), seconded (Fernandes) and voted to approve the committee appointments that are highlighted: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Holly Hancock added that there are others who may be interested in serving and that certain committees have openings.

3. Discussion regarding review of the tax acquired property list.

Holly Hancock directed the Selectboard's attention to a packet of tax acquired properties. Holly reminded the Selectboard of a fourteen business day deadline for a recently requested opportunity to redeem a property. David Morton stated that the taxes had just been paid, upon which confirmation the property was removed from the list. Holly reminded the Selectboard of a recent request for an extension of an opportunity to redeem a property to allow more time to handle legal matters. David stated that there had been no action on any of the remaining accounts and that the usual process before putting the properties up for sale is to 1) submit the list to the Open Space Committee; 2) have the Selectboard review the list for properties that may have value as a result of proximity to other municipal properties or opportunities to provide facilities in areas that are lacking; and 3) submit the list to legal counsel for final review.

In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer about whether properties on the list with improvements should be reviewed by the Code Enforcement Officer, David Morton explained that he wasn't sure about the status of properties with improvements and that the Code Enforcement officer can certainly be asked to review them. In response to an inquiry from Grant about a specific account, David confirmed that there has been no action. In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock about a specific account, David explained that it was a lot that the revaluation company had inexplicably created that doesn't really exist for which taxes had recently been abated.

In response to Holly's inquiry to the Selectboard regarding the need for any further action, Grant Plummer expressed a need for a quick review by the Code Enforcement Officer for any current or recent activity, and for the Open Space Committee to review improved properties to come up with a proper understanding of their value, adding that he was looking for an opinion from the Town regarding the values of improved properties to determine whether the assistance of a real estate broker might be helpful. Grant stated that there is a policy in place that outlines steps concerning the handling of tax acquired properties. Holly concluded the agenda item by stating that it was time to follow those steps.

4. Establish a date for the manager's performance review.

Holly Hancock directed the Selectboard's attention to its planning matrix that includes a line for Town Manager David Morton's performance review. Grant Plummer stated that a big part of the review process is to ensure that staff reviews are completed prior to the Town Manager's review, adding that with David's vacation coming up, he wanted to see the process completed prior to the budget process. Holly expressed that the Selectboard is looking at late October, 2015 for David's review to give him time to complete staff reviews. Holly added that she and Mary Fernandes will look into evaluation tools and what resources might be available from the Maine Municipal Association.

In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer regarding any standard procedures David might have for his review process, David replied that he has a standard form process that provides employees with an opportunity to evaluate the Town Manager, which he finds helpful.

In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock as to whether department heads or the office manager conduct reviews or if David conducts all of them, David replied that except for public safety staff, he conducts all of them.

Holly Hancock directed the Selectboard's attention to the agenda for its next meeting on September 22, 2015 and inquired as to whether the tax acquired property list will have made the rounds by then. David Morton expressed that he believes so.

In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock regarding any action that needs to be taken on the personnel policy, David Morton stated that the Selectboard needs to look at the more recently revised policy in relationship to the version the Selectboard has already updated and approved to date, adding that a redline version that includes the Progressive Discipline Policy remains outstanding.

In response to an inquiry from Holly Hancock regarding the progress of carry forwards, David Morton stated that the Town should have a list ready for the September 22, 2015 Selectboard meeting. Holly stated that auditors will begin working at Central Station on August 24, 2015 and stay until their work is complete.

In response to an inquiry from Grant Plummer, David Morton stated that the Town will be accepting winter sand bids.

In response to an inquiry from Mary Fernandes, David Morton stated that he will be meeting with engineers, contractors and Holly Hancock as Selectboard Chair to review 1) the Libby Road project; 2) the two roads the Selectboard approved for engineering; and 3) best ways to utilize money saved from bidding the Libby Road project, adding that some of that money may go towards the Heath Road culvert.

Mary Fernandes took advantage of an opening in the agenda to thank Irene Morton, who is retiring from her position as Casco's EMA Director, for nearly two decades of service. Holly Hancock added that a replacement has yet to be identified and appointed.

Turning the Selectboard's attention to the situation on Route 11 and the earlier public comment, Holly Hancock expressed that it is unfortunate that it's a section of the road that has cost some lives, primarily as a result of bad judgment. Holly added that there have been media inquiries at the Selectboard level as to whether the State had been contacted because Route 11 is a State road, and if any actions had been requested. Grant Plummer expressed that it was tragic that a four year old boy lost his life, adding that there are a couple of areas that are "heavy hitters" for accidents. Grant stated that it's time to sit down with the State and look at these segments of Route 11, and that it's worth trying to get the State to buy into some of the recommendations that have been made. Grant added that the Town has good reason to look at a few segments and ask the State what can be done.

Holly Hancock stated that there are costs related to public safety staff as well, citing that arrangements were made for a critical incident stress debriefing with professionals for the people involved. Holly expressed that the Town worries about the effects these repeated types of accidents have on the firefighters and emergency medical technicians who answer those calls, adding that it's a cost the Town bears for its employees. Grant Plummer offered that in addition to those costs, the replacement of several costly telephone poles added to reasons for approaching the State.

In response to an inquiry from Tom Peaslee regarding the State's previous responses to this issue, David Morton explained that the State's position has changed over time, adding that previous requests were simply to reduce speed limits. David expressed that a lower speed limit would not have prevented these accidents and that, referring to suggestions made during public comments, perhaps it's time to think outside of the box and ask the State to look at the situation more comprehensively. David noted that the State engineer who handles these matters has indicated a willingness, and that the State is interested in the Town's perceptions about traffic safety. David called for innovative ways of addressing the problem, citing the Webbs Mills Village signs along Route 11.

Mary Fernandes commented that three cars have ended up in a culvert near her property along Route 11, adding that early morning traffic begins at 4:00 a.m. and sounds like a secondary super

highway between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.

The Selectboard moved (Hancock), seconded (Peaslee) and voted to recess in order to hold the Special Town Meeting and reconvene following: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

The Selectboard moved (Peaslee), seconded (Plummer) and voted to reconvene: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Following Special Town Meeting approval of the purchase of a portion of land adjacent to the Casco Fire Station lot, Holly Hancock turned to Mary Fernandes to make a motion.

The Selectboard moved (Fernandes), seconded (Plummer) and voted to request the Town Manager to contact the town's attorney and have appropriate title work done and documents completed for the purchase and authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the purchase documents on behalf of the Town, and also to authorize the Town Manager to engage a land surveyor for the purpose of delineation of the parcel to be purchased: 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Mary Fernandes commented on the need to give the Town Office project some time and maybe stand back and take another look at it, including the orientation of the building. In response to an inquiry from Mary regarding solar panels, David Morton stated that the Town had looked at a number of energy saving features including solar voltaic, heat pumps, quality construction and all of those issues. Holly Hancock added that the Town's Building Committee has some direction.

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
Administrative Secretary