

MINUTES
TOWN OF TOPSHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
OCTOBER 18, 2018 - 7:00 p.m.
(With 6:00 p.m. Workshop Meeting)

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Douglass
Marie Brilliant
Ruth Lyons
William Thompson
Roland Tufts

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: All present

STAFF PRESENT: Richard Roedner, Town Manager

A meeting of the Topsham Board of Selectmen was held on Thursday, October 18, 2018, in the Donald A. Russell Meeting Room, at the Municipal Building, 100 Main Street, Topsham, Maine. The Board first met in a Workshop Meeting to discuss personnel policies at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Douglass called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

All present were invited to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The recording secretary took the roll call and noted that all Selectmen were present.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

We have two retirements to announce. First, Detective Mark LaFountain has announced his retirement from the Topsham Police Department. Mark notified us this week that his last day will be October 31. Mark has been with the PD since 2006, as an officer and then as a Detective. Mark has several plans for retirement that will keep him fully employed.

The other retirement is from Gerry Ouellette, the Program Director in our Parks and Recreation Department. Gerry has worked for us since 1997, helping to organize all of our sports programs and recreational activities. Gerry is planning on enjoying his retirement, including spoiling his grandchildren.

It is dog licensing time once again, and licenses are now available. Stop in after the election (to avoid lines) and get your pre-Christmas licensing needs taken care of.

Election Day is November 6, with polls open from 8 am to 8 pm at the Topsham Fairground Exposition Building. As of yesterday, all voter registrations must be done in person at the Town Clerk's office – make sure you have appropriate proof of identity and residency. On Thursday, October 25, the Clerk's Office will be open until 7 pm for voter registration. Finally, the last day to request an absentee ballot is Thursday, November 1.

A reminder from our Fire Chief that Saturday, November 4 is the start of Daylight Savings Time, and the time to turn your clocks back, and change batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

This year's Halloween Parade will be held on Wednesday, October 31! The parade will kick off at 4:15 pm by Smitty's Cinema, and will continue down to Hannaford's at Winner Circle. As always, Police and Fire will be present to ensure a safe time is had by all.

On a sad note, we have learned of the passing of Bob Williams. I got to know Bob through his interactions with the Planning Office for many years, and I came to consider him a good friend. His loss will be felt. Condolences, thoughts and prayers are sent to his wife, Carol and his children.

Expressed Concern

Selectman Thompson expressed concern regarding an incident that recently happened at the town office where a resident, unhappy about their tax bill, completely lost control of their temper and was unacceptably irate at the Town Manager. Selectman Thompson said, in instances such as occurred, that perhaps it was time to give thought to installing video cameras in various officials offices at the town office and in the schools, including entrances and exits as safety should be paramount.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

1. **CORY E. GARVER AMERICAN LEGION, POST 202** – Josephine Eltzroth presented a plaque to Linda Dumont honoring Ms. Dumont for her professionalism while performing her duties at Town Clerk. Ms. Eltzroth said Ms. Dumont is always very helpful and courteous in handling the paperwork for the Legion and other organizations and that she is “A diamond in the rough.”
2. **UPDATE FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION** - Raija Suomela was originally scheduled to present an update from the Conservation Commission, but was unable to attend. Victor Langelo stepped up and gave a report of activities of the Commission.
3. **UPDATE FROM THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE** – Susan Rae Reeves presented an update on ongoing work in updating the Comprehensive Plan. The focus has been on community involvement. A preliminary draft has been completed. Face-to-face involvement has been enjoyed working with over 500 citizens. There is a site on line to comment on the plan, which 180 residents have already responded to. Plans are in the works to include a summary in the Forecaster next month. The Committee hopes to have the plan completed and ready for adoption at the May, 2019 Town Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Karen Murphy, 23 Arbor Avenue thanked Ms. Reeves for her presentation. She suggested that individual links be added to the Forecaster presentation for each section. Ms. Caron said she forwarded a letter to the Town Manager that she didn't get a response to. The Board asked her to send the letter to the Board of Selectmen and assured her it will be addressed.

CORRESPONDENCE – Selectman Brilliant said a citizen called her with a request for the Town to have an animal control officer as she is having a problem with skunks. Response was that the Town does have an Animal Control Officer – Bill Collins. Selectman Brilliant will inform the caller to call the Police Department and request Mr. Collins' assistance.

Selectman Brilliant also noted that she had been contacted by Karen Murphy, who asked to have a special meeting about the parking lot on Thomas Avenue. Chairman Douglass said the request for a special meeting will be added to the next agenda.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA – None noted.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Selectmen's Meeting of October 4, 2018.

Motion was made by Selectman Tufts, seconded by Chairman Douglass, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To approve the minutes of the Regular Selectmen's Meeting of October 4, 2018.

PUBLIC HEARING – None noted.

OLD BUSINESS - None noted.

NEW BUSINESS

18-87 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN MANAGER TO SIGN A SCOPE OF WORK CONTRACT FROM TOM ERRICO AT TY LIN TRAFFIC ENGINEERS FOR A MAIN STREET STRIPING/TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

Rod Melanson, Town Planner, spoke to this item saying this area (from the Volvo Garage to Canam Drive) has been budgeted for striping. He recommended engaging Tom Errico from TY LIN, who is the Town's peer reviewer for traffic studies to conduct a striping/traffic management plan based upon the scope of work. The scope of work was included in the Board package for review. Mr. Melanson said the Planning Office and DPW is seeking approval from the Board of Selectmen to waive the bid policy to engage TY LIN to implement the Scope of Work.

Following discussion, motion was made by Chairman Douglass, seconded by Selectman Tufts, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To waive the Bidding Policy and to authorize the Town Manager to sign a Scope of Work Contract from Tom Errico from TY LIN Traffic Engineers for a Main Street Striping/Traffic Management Plan.

18-88 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON AMENDING TOPSHAM'S PERSONNEL POLICY REGARDING FULL-TIME FIRE FIGHTERS

Town Manager Roedner explained that as we are moving from 1 full-time fire fighter to 3 full-time fire fighters and the change to a double 12-hour shift schedule, we have to adapt our personnel policy to accommodate the new work schedule. Mr. Roedner reviewed his memo to the Board dated October 10, 2018 explaining the changes that would need to take place.

Chairman Douglass said the only part he has a concern about is that we would rather have people there, rather than them taking time off at a future date. We are hiring individuals because we need coverage. He said he would rather pay the fire fighters extra holiday pay then give them time off. We are hiring individuals because we need coverage - pay the benefit to them with no option for comp time, just straight money. Board members agreed with Chairman Douglass' comments.

Fire Chief McLaughlin and the Board discussed some adjustments to the wording in the new policy and suggested Mr. Roedner make the suggested changes and bring the policy back to the Board at the next meeting.

Motion was made by Chairman Douglass, seconded by Selectman Lyons, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To instruct the Town Manager to change the wording of the policy according to the discussion and bring back to the Board for acceptance.

18-89 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON PERSONNEL POLICY REGARDING MEPERS MATCH

The Town Manager said this item was included on the agenda as an informational item. He said, historically, we have given employees two options to consider when it comes to retirement. They can choose to join Maine State Retirement (MePERS), at which point they are required to pay in 6.5% and the Town matches 6.5%. They are also given the option to join ICMA 457 Deferred Compensation Plan on their own. Or, if they just want to join ICMA, we match that at 6% of their contribution.

Several years ago, when there was concern that some programs were no long funded, Maine State Retirement Program under took a gradual program of increasing employ and employer contribution. So today, when you join Maine State Retirement, the employee puts in 8.5% and the employer puts in 10.5%, but we still match at 6%. Mr. Roedner said this has not been as successful as they hoped it would. The law was changed that an individual can retire after putting in a certain number of years (rather than having to wait to a certain age, say 65). This allows a person to retire early, collect from Maine State

Retirement, work at another job and not be paying in. Consequently, MePERS loses money. To help remedy the situation, MePERS has instituted a new part of the plan that when a municipality hires an existing Maine State retiree, the municipality will be charged 5% of their gross income, not to the employee for put into the fund. This begins on October 15. We have just hired a new employee who will come under that program. In two years, they will extend the requirement to all employees. We have two additional employees who will be affected. This means higher costs for the town; probably \$2,000-\$3,000 a year.

This bids the question:

- Should we look at adjusting our contributions to ICMA to better reflect MePERS?
- Should we consider the 5% contributed on behalf of a retiree as part of the 6% that we may also be contributing to ICMA?
- How do we make our two retirement programs equitable, or do we have to?

Chairman Douglass suggested only offering ICMA to new employees. Maybe its time that we be strictly an ICMA. These are very high numbers and way above what the private sector offers. Selectman Thompson asked if Mr. Roedner has discussed this with other town managers. Suggestion was made to send a letter to MMA expressing our concerns. Selectman Lyons said she has a strong concern that the taxpayers get billed for the increase. The Town Manager was charged with writing a letter expressing the Board's concerns both to MePERES and MMA and bring same back to the Board for review.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Chairman Douglass, seconded by Selectman Tufts, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Williams, Recording Secretary