

TOWN OF TOPSHAM  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
OCTOBER 2, 2014 - 7:00 P.M.

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald Russell  
Marie Brilliant  
David Douglass  
Ronald Riendeau  
William Thompson

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: All present

STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager, Richard Roedner

A meeting of the Topsham Board of Selectmen was held on Thursday, October 2, 2014 at the Municipal Building at 100 Main Street, Topsham, Maine.

**CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL**

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

**INTERVIEW COMMITTEE FOR TOWN PLANNER POSITION**

The Board was in agreement to have Chairman Russell represent the Board of Selectmen on the Interview Committee for the Town Planner position. The Chairman of the Planning Board and a representative from that group will also be included.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

"As you know, we have an election coming up. Residents of Topsham may register to vote during regular business hours on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Wednesday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or make changes to current voting information such as a change of name, address or party affiliation. Address changes should be made by October 30th in order for your name to be printed on the updated Voter List. We will have a Registrar available on Election Day as well.

For your convenience, the Registrar's Office will be open from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on October 28 for voter registration.

On November 4, the polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Exhibition Building at the Topsham Fair Grounds for the State General and Referendum Election and Municipal Election.

Absentee Ballots will be available at the Town Clerk's Office, beginning Monday, October 6th. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is Thursday, October 30th at 4:30 p.m.

If you need to request an absentee ballot, please call the Clerk's Office at 725-1719, stop by, or check the Clerk's web site at topshammaine.com.

I understand that the League of Women Voters is sponsoring a Candidate's Forum for those running for the Board of Selectmen on October 27 at 7:00 p.m. here at Town Hall.

Next weekend, starting Friday the 10th, there are a series of events celebrating Topsham's 250th Anniversary.

- \* Friday at 6:30 p.m. is an Old-Fashioned Barn Dance at the Fairgrounds, with George Krassner calling the square dance.
- \* Prior to the dance from 4:30 to 6:30, and then again on Saturday morning from 8-10, the ReMax Hot Air Balloon will be at the Foreside Road Recreation facility offering up and down balloon rides for a small fee.
- \* The Inaugural Topsham 250 5K fun run will be held Saturday morning at 9:00 a.m., starting and ending at the Foreside Road Recreation fields.
- \* Then on Sunday, there will be Music in the Mansion. Starting at 1:30 the Frost Mansion, next door to the former Town Hall, will be hosting two local musicians over the course of the afternoon. Tickets can be obtained at the Parks and Recreation Office, and there is a limit of 70.

Lastly, I want to say a few words about campaign signs. The voters of Topsham have adopted an ordinance that limits the placement of campaign signs within the public right of way, more than 30 days before an election. Earlier this week, we endeavored to enforce our local ordinance, by removing signs from the right of way. With that perfect goal in mind, I would remind everyone that we are all human, and as humans, we are not perfect and mistakes do get made. Were mistakes made by removing signs from private property? I can't say. I can say that many people I have talked to were unclear as to where their front property line is with respect to the road. I will also say that if we inadvertently removed any sign from private property, it was certainly a mistake, and for that I do apologize.

I am sure many of you have heard that the ACLU has contacted the Town regarding this issue. That is correct. However, the concern raised by the ACLU dealt with removing signs from private property, not from public property. I believe this stemmed from an incomplete reading of our Town Code. In my conversation with the Legal Director at ACLU Maine, I explained our ordinance, and our enforcement of the ordinance, and it is my understanding that he is no longer concerned about this specific issue.

Did we enforce our ordinance perfectly? Perhaps not. Will we do it differently in the future? Very likely. Earlier clarification of our code will help, as will earlier contact with campaigns."

A discussion ensued between the Board regarding the importance of adhering to and enforcing the Town Ordinance. It was noted that the Public Works Director was given instructions to remove all political signs placed in the right-of-way where there were utility poles and hydrants. Comments in the newspaper reflected that some signs were taken outside of that directive in error. It was agreed to further discuss the issue before next year and, in September of 2015, to consider sending letters to political headquarters to make sure procedures are correctly followed regarding sign placement.

## **BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES**

**TDI/ECD** - John Shattuck, Topsham Economic and Development, Inc. Director, reported on TDI/ECD activities, including:

- The Oktoberfest held on September 20th at the fairgrounds was very successful; there were over 300 ticket holders. Chamber of Commerce and the Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust benefited from the event. Sponsors from Topsham included ReMax Riverside, Sea Dogs, Topsham Fair Mall, Topsham Development, Inc., The Highlands Green and the Town of Topsham.
- TDI held its annual Strategic Planning Meeting with Amanda Bunker as facilitator. Focus was on what the Board wants and can do for the Town in the future.
- The designer of People Focus/People Friendly Downtowns, Dan Burden, spent two days conducting an audit followed by a public forum discussing tools and ideas for Topsham regarding lower village development. A video of the presentation can be found on the Town's website.
- Draft contract between the Town and Wicked Joe, LLC has been completed and was presented to the Board for review, and will come back before the Board for approval.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comments were received from the following:

**Denise Tepler**, 13 Homeplace - ...sign issue frustrating as a candidate...what was intent at Town Meeting when ordinance was approved and can the ordinance be changed....

**Cathy Lyon**, 34 Prospect Street - ...Upset over how sign removal was handled...wrong individuals blamed...should have received a note that signs would be taken...

**Kathleen Ouellette**, 45 Mallett Drive - ...first negative experience in Town...thought someone stole the sign...Brunswick did not pursue...you are chilling public speech...

Following receipt of comments, Chairman Russell said the ordinance will be revisited to make it more user friendly. Selectman Thompson said he would support a restriction of placing signs 30 days prior to election.

**CORRESPONDENCE** - None noted.

**ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA** - None noted.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SELECTMENS MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2014**
2. **APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT FOR THE NOVEMBER 4, 2014 ELECTION**

3. **APPROVAL TO SET THE OFFICE HOURS FOR THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE NOVEMBER 4, 2014 ELECTION**
4. **APPROVAL TO OPEN POLLS AT 7:00 A.M. ON NOVEMBER 4, 2014**
5. **APPROVAL TO OPEN AND PROCESS ABSENTEE BALLOTS AND THE TIME SCHEDULE**
6. **APPROVAL OF THE ELECTION WORKERS TO WORK AT THE POLLS ON NOVEMBER 4, 2014 AND APPOINTMENT OF WARDEN AND DEPUTY WARDENS**

Motion was made by Selectman Riendeau, seconded by Selectman Douglass, and it was unanimously

**VOTED**

To approve the Consent Calendar, items 1 through 6, including the addendum of additional poll workers.

**PUBLIC HEARING** - None noted.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None noted.

**OLD BUSINESS** - None noted.

**NEW BUSINESS** - None noted.

**DEP WORKSHOP**

Chairman Russell announced that the Maine Department of Transportation is holding a Public Hearing following the adjournment of tonight's meeting to discuss the preliminary plans to upgrade and interconnect seven existing signalized intersections along Route 196. He said all were invited to attend.

**ADJOURN** - Motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Patty Williams, Recording Secretary