

MINUTES
TOWN OF TOPSHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING – NOVEMBER 5, 2020
6:00 P.M. INTERVIEWS FOR BOARDS/COMMITTEES
6:30 P.M. SELECTMEN’S MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM FROM INDIVIDUAL RESIDENCES

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Douglass
Marie Brilliant
Ruth Lyons
Matt Nixon
Roland Tufts

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: All present

STAFF PRESENT: Derek Scrapchansky, Town Manager; Mark Waltz, Assistant Town Manager; John Shattuck, Economic and Community Development Director; Andrew Deci, Assistant Town Planner; Pam LeDuc, Parks and Recreation Director; Marc Hagan, Police Chief

A meeting of the Topsham Board of Selectmen was held on Thursday, November 5, 2020, with individuals joining the meeting from their residences via Zoom. Chairman Douglass called the regular meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. (The Board actually met at 6:00 p.m. to conduct interviews for boards and committees.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/ROLL CALL

Everyone was 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

Good Evening,

The Town of Topsham successfully held its 2020 General Election on November 3rd at the new Mt. Ararat High School. A special thanks to MSAD No. 75 for allowing the town to use their newest facility. Many residents expressed excitement to be able to see the new Mt. Ararat High School. By close of polls, 6,619 ballots were cast from Topsham’s 8,391 registered voters (equates to a 78.8% voter turnout). This election had the most votes cast in the Town’s history and resulted in a record number of absentee ballots, doubling the previous record in 2016 (requested 5,034/returned 4,950). This work could not have been accomplished without the help of our team

of approximately 50 volunteers, election workers, and town staff. On behalf of the Town and Board of Selectmen, I thank you for making this election successful. I would also like to thank Dunkin Donuts, Wicked Joes, and Dominoes for their donations of food and drink to both voters and staff.

Regarding local election results, David Douglass and Ruth Lyons were re-elected to the Board of Selectmen. Nancy Chandler, Douglas Dumont, and Mary Hobson were elected to their first term on the School Board and Sarah Ward was re-elected as well. Congratulations and thanks to all of you for serving Topsham! I am pleased to report the Town will be receiving approximately \$250,000 from DHHS for reimbursable expenses approved through the Keep Maine Healthy 2020 Municipal COVID19 Awareness Grant. The State has extended the grant from Oct 31 to Dec. 11th which has allowed us to revise the grant to fund a \$21,000 website redesign with improved content management and communication upgrades. The new website should be up and running prior to spring.

The Parks and Recreation Department would like to express a huge thank you to the Topsham Fair Association and the American Legion Post 202 for their Community Partnership in providing a very successful Trunk or Treat. Everyone did their part to make it a safe and enjoyable experience for those that participated. I would like to thank our Director, Pam LeDuc, and Kelly LaFountain for their creative efforts that continue to bring some normalcy to our youth and families in the wake of the COVID19 pandemic. I would also like to thank the many local organizations and businesses for making the Trunk or Treat event possible and successful. They are all recognized on the Parks and Recreation webpage. Parks and Recreation has informed me that 'Learn to Ski' at Lost Valley is now available for registration, as well as Wednesday Day Passes at Shawnee Peak Ski Area. Please visit our Parks and Recreation webpage for more information.

The Topsham Public Library will change their operating hours to a new winter schedule beginning November 1, 2020 through March 1, 2021. The new schedule is as follows: Monday, Friday, and Saturday: 9am-5pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 9am-6pm. Parking lot pickup is still available and there are a variety of grab and go craft/STEM kits and other surprises for kids, teens, and adults. Please call 725-1727 for more information.

There are several smaller projects currently underway in Town - The Cathance Water Tower will have damaged wood replaced and will also be receiving a fresh coat of paint. - The Town of Topsham sign at the Municipal Complex is being refurbished and the sign at the corner of Elm/Main St. is being replaced. - Storm drains throughout town are being cleaned. Please be careful when driving in the vicinity of Public Works vehicles. - The Swinging Bridge is scheduled for structural improvements November 16th through December 15th . The bridge will be closed, and access will not be permitted during this period.

Thank you and have a good evening.

Derek Scrapchansky

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES – None noted.

UPDATE TDI/ECD – None noted.

CORRESPONDENCE: (The meeting agenda included the following) If you have any comments/questions on an agenda topic, email them to info@topshammaine.com by Tuesday, the week of the meeting. Please include your full name and address in the email. Emails will be reviewed and addressed during the meeting which will be televised on Channel 3.

Chairman Douglass set aside a few minutes to allow receipt of comments. Since no one responded, the meeting continued.

COMMENT FROM CHAIRMAN – Chairman Douglass expressed concern about the number of blanks not filled in on the ballots. He suggested that individuals talk to their neighbors and friends to encourage them to fill in the ballots on the local races. He challenged everybody, prior to elections to learn about the candidates and improve the number of blank ballots.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA – None noted.

CONSENT CALENDAR

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SELECTMEN’S MEETING OF OCTOBER 15, 2020

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

VOTED

To approve the minutes of the regular Selectmen’s Meeting of October 15, 2020, as amended. (Amendment: Page 3. strike out the third paragraph.)

PUBLIC HEARING – None noted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None noted.

OLD BUSINESS – None noted.

NEW BUSINESS

20-80 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDED BID FOR A NEW POLICE CRUISER APPROVED IN THE 2021 BUDGET

Police Chief Marc Hagan reviewed the bids received for a new 2021 Ford Police Interceptor which was approved in the FY 2021 Police Department Budget. He said he also included a 2020 Ford Police Interceptor in the event that any dealership had a 2020 leftover remaining on their lot. The

bid request included a trade-in estimate for the black 2017 Ford Interceptor which the new cruiser will replace.

Bids received included:

Casco Bay Ford	\$26,609
Yankee Ford	\$27,499
Rowe Ford Auburn	\$27,500
Quirk Ford	\$27,623

During discussion it was noted that Casco Bay Ford's quote of \$26,609 was the lowest. However, it usually takes between 7 to 8 months to received the vehicle. Quirk Ford was the only dealer that has a 2020 leftover remaining on their lot ready for pickup. The unit has a siren installed and is pre-wired from front to rear for emergency lighting which would cost roughly \$500.

Chairman Douglass read aloud a letter received from Nancy Chandler, 11 Western Avenue, summarizing the benefits of purchasing a hybrid vehicle. During discussion, it was noted that the hybrid vehicle would cost approximately \$3,200 more. Chief Hagan said he has talked with other towns moving to the hybrid models and suggested it might be something for Topsham to consider during next years budget sessions.

The discussion moved back to making a decision whether to accept the lowest bid from Casco Bay Ford and wait 7 to 8 months of receipt of the vehicle or to purchase the cruiser that Quirk Ford has on lot for the additional \$500 cost. When asked where the Police Department would come up with the additional \$500, Chief Hagan said the department would find the money from other items in its budget. Comments were also made by Board members of the importance of the police cruisers to be properly marked and seen by members of the public, assuring them that the force is available and there to assure their safety.

Motion was made by Chairman Douglass, seconded by Selectman Lyons, to approve the Quirk Ford Bid for the 2020 on-the-lot vehicle for this year's purchase.

Vote was called, and the motion unanimously passed.

20-81 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION TO CHANGES IN THE PERSONNEL POLICY

Assistant Town Manager Waltz spoke to this item. The proposed changes were "red-lined" and included in the Board package for review. A memo to the Town Manager dated October 27, 2020 from Mr. Waltz explains the changes and is filed with these minutes. Basically, the changes allow probationary employees to use sick time, vacation time and a personal day and to receive holiday pay and allows the Town Manager to offer up to 5 weeks' vacation for senior level employees. Mr. Waltz said the proposed changes remove a potential deterrent when recruiting prospective non-union employees to work for the Town and adds a more competitive offer when recruiting senior level employees.

Motion was made by Chairman Douglass, seconded by Selectman Lyons, to approve the changes in the Personnel Policy as written in the memo from the Assistant Town Manager to the Town Manager dated October 27, 2020.

Vote was called and the motion unanimously passed.

20-82 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE PLANNING BOARD DESIGNATED SEAT ON THE TDI BOARD

A memo from the Assistant Town Manager regarding the Planning Board Seat on the Topsham Development Incorporated (TDI) Board, dated October 7, 2020, is filed with these minutes. As discussed at prior meetings, concerns have been expressed that this dedicated Planning Board seat on TDI's Board might create a structural incompatibility or a conflict of interest which could pose a potential avenue to challenge a Planning Board decision on high profile projects.

It was noted that the Town Attorney has reviewed the concerns and said no changes are necessary as long as the member from TDI on the Planning Board recuses themselves when considering any item that might pose a possible conflict of interest.

Chairman Douglass said it appears two choices exist: 1) Just leave as is and instruct the TDI Board that we want this change, or 2) Ask them to review it and respond.

Following further discussion, motion was made by Chairman Douglass, seconded by Selectman Lyons, to request TDI's Board to review whether there are benefits to have a member of the Planning Board on the TDI Board having to recuse themselves in TDI discussions, and to inform the Select Board what the drawbacks are.

Vote was called and the motion unanimously passed.

20-83 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE APPOINTMENTS TO THE PLANNING BOARD

Chairman Douglass said there is one opening for a seat on the Planning Board, for approximately a two and three quarter year term. Interviews were held with two candidates applying – Dan Flaig and Steven Mathieu. Both candidates were interviewed and the Board said they were both well qualified.

Motion was made by Selectman Nixon, seconded by Selectman Tufts to appoint Dan Flaig to the open seat on the Planning Board.

Vote was called and the motion passed with a vote of 3 in favor and 2 opposed. (Opposing were Selectman Brilliant and Selectman Lyons.)

20-84 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Selectman Tufts nominated David Douglass to serve as Chairman of the Board of Selectman for the coming year. Motion was seconded by Selectman Lyons. Selectman Brilliant nominated Ruth Lyons to serve as Chairman of the Board of Selectman for the coming year. The nomination was not seconded.

Vote was called and David Douglass was elected to serve as Chairman of the Board of Selectman for the coming year.

20-85 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Selectman Nixon nominated Roland Tufts to serve as Vice Chairman for the Board of Selectman for the coming year. Selectman Brilliant seconded the motion.

Vote was called and Roland Tufts was unanimously elected to serve as Vice Chairman for the Board of Selectman for the coming year.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None noted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Williams, Recording Secretary