

MINUTES
TOWN OF TOPSHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
DONALD A. RUSSELL MEETING ROOM
FEBRUARY 7, 2019 – 7:00 P.M

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Douglass
Marie Brillant
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, February 7, 2019, in the Donald A. Russell Meeting Room, at the Municipal Building, 100 Main Street, Topsham, Maine.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Douglass called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. (The Board actually met informally prior to the meeting to conduct a Workshop with the Medical Marijuana Working Group on proposed licensing standards.) It was noted that all members were present.

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

Tonight I have presented to the Board a draft budget for Fiscal Year 20, the first step in our annual budget process. Starting next week, there will be three joint Selectboard/Finance Committee workshops, where each department will present their individual budgets, answer questions, etc. Those meetings will be on Monday, February 11; Wednesday, February 13; and Wednesday, February 27. All three meetings will be held here at 6:00 p.m. The public is welcome, and is given an opportunity to provide comments. There is a link on the front page of our website, www.topshammaine.com for FY 20 Budget Information. Right now, the only document there is the budget schedule. But, starting tomorrow, you will find budget information and departmental information. Check out the schedule so that you can see when the specific department you are interested in is scheduled. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me at Town Hall, by phone or email, or call for an appointment.

Linda Dumont, our Town Clerk, is seeking nominations for the Boston Post Cane honor. The Boston Post Cane is a recognition program started in the early 1900's by the Boston Post newspaper, to honor the oldest resident of each town in New England. Topsham still has its original Boston Post Cane, and has revived this recognition program over the past several years. So if you feel that you or a friend or family member is the oldest resident in Topsham, Linda would like to hear from you. Nomination information is available on the Clerk's web page.

Our annual Valentine's Day dance is this coming Sunday, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The dance is open to all young ladies and their escorts. Tickets are on sale until tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. and are not available at the door. So check in with the Recreation Department before 3:00 p.m. tomorrow for your tickets.

March 16 is our annual son/escort bowling event. Again, contact the Parks and Recreation Department for details.

March 28, the Parks and Recreation Department is sponsoring a train trip to the Maine Flower show. Details and registration are available on the Department's web page.

Finally, the Recreation Department's train trip to Boston still has tickets left, but the deadline is tomorrow at 3:00 p.m.

Following the Town Manager's Report, Selectman Lyons noted that in order to apply for the Boston Post Cane, one has to have lived in Topsham for 10 consecutive years. Applications must be returned to the Town Office before 5:00 p.m. on February 15th.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES – None noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None noted

CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Douglass noted correspondence dated January 10, 2019 from Raija Suomela to Selectman Tufts and said the item will be discussed later during the meeting as an agenda item.

The e-mail read as follows: *"Roland, I would like to petition the Town of Topsham to officially change the name "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board."*

Could you provide feedback, if a change such as this would be well received among the Board and municipal leadership and if there would be costs or other issues to consider in the name change.

Please let me know if we could talk on the topic.

*Thank you much,
Best,
Raija Suomela
605 Middlesex Road"*

Selectman Tufts forwarded the e-mail to Chairman Douglass who forwarded it to the Town Manager. Mr. Roedner responded to Ms. Suomela on January 16 as follows:

"Raija

Just to keep you in the loop, your e-mail ended up with Dave Douglass, Chairman of the Board and we are putting this item on the agenda for our February 7 meeting for discussion.

In your initial e-mail you asked about the process, costs, etc.: The process is a change to our Town Code, which specifies Board of Selectmen or Selectman in multiple locations and is based on Stat4 Statutes (MRSA 30-A §2635). So the edition of the code would take some time to make sure the references are all covered. The changes would then be subject to Town Meeting approval. Following that, there would be an actual cost of updating our Town Code, which is difficult to estimate since the cost of updating our code depends on how many pages are edited, how much is edited, etc.

I hope to see you at the February 7 meeting when this item is brought up for discussion.

Rich

*Richard Roedner
Town Manager
(207)725-5821, Ext. 2110"*

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA – None noted.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Selectmen's Meeting of January 17, 2019.

Motion was made by Selectman Tufts, seconded by Selectman Lyons, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To accept the Consent Calendar, approving the minutes of the regular Selectmen's Meeting of January 17, 2019 as written.

PUBLIC HEARING – None noted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None noted.

OLD BUSINESS – None noted.

NEW BUSINESS

19-03 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON CHANGING THE TITLE "BOARD OF SELECTMEN" TO "SELECT BOARD"

The Town Manager explained how the process would work to change "Board of Selectmen" to "Select Board." Ms. Suomela was present and spoke to the Board of her reasons for changing the title to not be gender specific. Board members commented, including Selectman Lyons and Selectman Brilliant, saying they were comfortable with the title of Board of Selectman, but had no objection to it being changed if that was what the majority wanted.

Mr. Roedner said if the Board decides to make a change, there are two ways to do it. One is by Board policy, that the Board will be referred to as Selectboard, and each member will be referred to as Selectperson. This would demonstrate the Board's intent, but would be subject to future Board's having a different intent.

The other way is by code amendment, which would entail amending Chapter 6 specifically, and any other portion of the Town Code that refers to the Board of Selectmen or Selectmen. There would be additional time and cost with this approach, both in reviewing the code, drafting amendments, and preparing for Town Meeting votes. Lastly, there would be a cost to codify those changes.

Following discussion, the Board was in unanimous agreement to table the item to allow the Town Manager time to check the Maine Municipal Association's list of towns and to come up with a policy for consideration for the Board's review.

19-04 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON INCREASING EMS BILLING RATES

Fire Chief Chris McLaughlin and Mike Labbe were present to discuss this item. Mr. McLaughlin spoke saying to remain current and up to date on our revenues, he is seeking to increase the EMS billing rates. He said it has been a long time that the ambulance billing rates have been compared to other towns and the industry norm. Topsham Rescue has always charged the Medicare rate which has resulted in the loss of potential revenues from other insurances that will pay more.

Mr. McLaughlin included a comparison to charges from surrounding towns in the Board package showing Topsham to have the lowest billing rates out of all the services offered. A \$30,000 increase in revenue is anticipated with the proposed increase.

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

VOTED

To go with Chief McLaughlin's proposal to increase rates effective January 17, 2019.

(The vote was 4 in favor with one voting against (Selectman Brilliant).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:30 p.m. motion was made by Selectman Tufts, seconded by Selectman Lyons, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To enter executive session at 7:30 p.m. for consideration and any appropriate action to deliberate over an abatement pursuant to 36 MRSA §841, and Title 1 405 6 (F) with all members present, along with the Town Manager.

**19-05 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION TO DELIBERATE
OVER AN ABATEMENT PURSUANT TO 36 M.R.S.A. §841 AND TITLE 1 405-6
(F)**

Following discussion, motion was made, seconded and unanimously

VOTED

To come out of Executive Session.

Motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To grant the abatement.

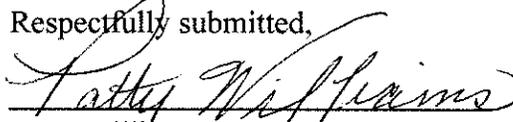
ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Selectman Tufts, seconded by Selectman Lyons, and it was unanimously,

VOTED

To adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Patty Williams, Recording Secretary