

MINUTES
TOWN OF TOPSHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
DONALD A. RUSSELL MEETING ROOM
SEPTEMBER 19, 2019 – 7:00 P.M

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marie Brilliant
William Thompson
Roland Tufts

MEMBER(S) ABSENT: David Douglass, Ruth Lyons

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant Town Manager Derek Scrapchansky

A meeting of the Topsham Board of Selectmen was held on Thursday September 19, 2019 in the Donald A. Russell Meeting Room, at the Municipal Building, 100 Main Street, Topsham, Maine.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman William Thompson 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 Mr. Douglass and Ms. Lyons had been excused.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Our Assistant Town Planner, Carol Eyeran, has recently departed her position with the Town. We wish her the best, both professionally and personally, as she moves into her new position with the Town of Gorham. While we will miss the day-to-day interaction and her outstanding work, we know she will continue to do well and achieve success. Thank you Carol for your outstanding service.

The Topsham Public Library is offering its patrons more value with the rolling out of a state-wide pilot program which allows our patrons in good standing to check out items from participating libraries. The Maine Reciprocal Borrowing Program allows anyone with a valid library card from one of 68 participating libraries to visit any of the other participating libraries and check out materials in person. It is referred to as “walk-in” borrowing because it essentially turns your local library card into a “statewide” library card! Please visit the library for more information.

The Fire and Rescue Department will be hosting its annual Open House on October 6 from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. They will have a bounce house, a smoke trailer and a CPR demonstration.

The public may call the fire station at 725-7581 if they have questions. The Fire Department will also send notification flyers to the schools.

Household Hazardous Waste Day is scheduled for October 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Brunswick. This is available to Topsham residents. Registration is required and may be done on the Town of Brunswick's website (www.brunswickme.org). Registration will be located on the public works page under "Household Hazardous Waste." It should be up and available for registration by tomorrow morning. You may call 725-6654 if you have any issues or questions.

Lastly, this year's tax bills are in the mail. Everyone should be receiving them soon.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

Update from John Shattuck, Topsham Economic and Community Development, Inc. Director

Mr. Shattuck began his report in a playful manner, saying he was surprised to get a message from Chairman Douglass saying this would be a good evening (in his absence) to give a detailed, in depth report of all activity in the Town for the past year...so said he will begin to read his 45-page report!

Topsham Annex Park Water System Problem – This past Tuesday Steve Levesque hosted a meeting at the Town Office with all stakeholders, property owners, Town Staff, Highland Green representatives and the Water District to look at alternative approaches that could be developed for funding for the infrastructure. He is looking at making the system itself eligible for grant funding for USDA, Rural Water and the like by taking it from a private water system to being an established water utility. That should take approximately three to six months and should make the MRRRA water system eligible for direct funding.

Affordable Housing – Looking at a number of tools for affordable housing that could be supported with grant work for infrastructure. This dovetails nicely with our last two Comprehensive Plans in trying to get more work force housing into the Town. It has great site work, has good highway connection, it is quiet and close to schools.

Highland Green, Phase 4 – Last Tuesday, Highland Green, Phase 4 came before the Planning Board and is very close to being completed. It was tabled for a more detailed plan of access and egress from the site. The applicant will be working with the Planning Staff.

Lawsuit - A lawsuit has been filed to appeal or revoke the permit for the replacement of the Topsham/Brunswick Frank J. Wood Bridge. This Board, together with the Brunswick Council, overwhelmingly supported this project. At least 90% of both communities have voted to support this project. Hopefully, this will be resolved quickly. The project has already been delayed from an RFP date of January 1st and next summer due to permitting issues with Hydro and regulatory commission. We are hopeful that construction will go forward in the spring of 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None noted

CORRESPONDENCE – None noted

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Thompson, seconded by Selectman Brilliant, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To add Item **19-72 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON AUTHORIZING A POLE EASEMENT TO CMP**

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of the minutes of the Regular Selectmen’s Meeting of September 5, 2019.

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

VOTED

To approve the minutes of the regular Selectmen’s Meeting of September 5, 2019, as written.

PUBLIC HEARING – None Noted

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None noted

OLD BUSINESS – None noted

NEW BUSINESS

19-71 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON AUTHORIZING TOPSHAM SOLAR ALTERNATIVES TO PREPARE A DRAFT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR A MUNICIPAL SOLAR PROJECT ON THE TOWN’S BEHALF

Nick Whatley represented the Topsham Solar Advocates (TSA) and presented an update to the Board of what they have accomplished to date. A written report dated September 10, 2019 was given to the Board and is filed with these minutes. Accomplishments to date include:

- Investigated several forms of municipal solar projects
- Researched 24 municipal solar contracts
- Reviewed potential for developing a solar project on Town-owned land and determined that proximity to three-phase power and land development costs are not currently conducive to a cost-effective project
- Learned through research that there are a number of solar power contractors in a position to build large-scale, cost-effective projects on private land, either in Topsham or in a neighboring town
- Found the most cost-effective systems have been in the form of power purchase agreements which include non-binding system purchase option after seven years

Topsham Solar Advocate members include: Alice Elliott, Bob Garver, Victor Langelo, Yvette Meunier, Matt Nixon, Steve Pelletier, Dan Tompkins, Laura Whatley, Nick Whatley and John Berry.

Following Mr. Whatley's presentation, motion was made by Vice Chairman Thompson, seconded by Selectman Brilliant, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To authorize the Topsham Solar Advocates to prepare a draft report for a proposal for a Municipal Solar Project on the Town's behalf.

19-72 CONSIDERATION AND ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION ON AUTHORIZING A POLE EASEMENT TO CMP

Memo is in file from the Town Manager dated September 17, 2019 explaining that CMP is proceeding with a pole replacement/upgrade project that runs through Topsham. The location is along the power lines by Home Depot at the Topsham Fair Mall with total easement area being approximately 3,200 s.f. for a guy wire. It was noted that the easement will not affect any natural resource areas.

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

VOTED

To authorize the Town Manager to sign the easement to CMP and to proceed with closing.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None noted

ADJOURN

Motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously

VOTED

To adjourn the meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Williams, Recording Secretary