

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
October 25, 2022**

Chair Mallory Cook called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Councilors present included John C. Kareckas, and Jeff Minihan. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance. Jack Kareckas and Jessica Cyr joined the meeting after the executive session. Ms. Cyr joined by zoom; all votes taken by roll call.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1 On a motion by Mr. Minihan, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to enter executive session at 6:01pm pursuant to MRSA §405.6A, to discuss a personnel issue.

On a motion by Mr. Minihan, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to end the executive session at 6:19pm.

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to recess the Council meeting at 6:19pm to accommodate a scheduled public hearing.

The Council reconvened at 7:00pm.

Presentation

Retiring Councilor John C. Kareckas was presented with a plaque and heritage rocking chair to commemorate his 37 years of service to the Town. Jack has served on the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Comprehensive Plan Committees, and the Town Council. Several department heads were present to thank Jack for his service and support. His knowledge and dedication to the community will be greatly missed.

Approval of Minutes

1. Town Council 10-11-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written

2. Public Hearing 10-11-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.

Treasurer's Warrant

1. On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated October 20, 2022 in the amount of \$361,041.56.

Public Comment

1. Pat Robinson, Brattle St, reminded everyone of the Keep South Berwick Warm Soup Supper on November 2nd. Volunteers are still needed.'

2. Brett Cropp, Liberty St, asked the Council if it would be possible to place a blow-up Menorah near the Home for the Holidays tree on the Town Hall front lawn. Ms. Cyr recommended that he contact or attend the Home for the Holidays committee meeting on Monday.

Unfinished Business

1. The Council, by consensus, agreed to discuss the Solar Farm ordinance at the same workshop already scheduled with the Planning Board on November 29th.

Melissa Costella, Boyd's Corner Rd, suggested that the language regarding buffering plants be revisited. She recommended that the Town use a landscape consultant so appropriate planting are used as buffers.

2. Jean Demetracopoulos, Oldfields Rd, addressed the Council regarding the sale of the property. She reminded everyone of the issues with various parcels on tax maps 2,3, 4, and 5; they may not actually exist and remain as 'holes' on our maps. It was clarified that the Town does have a warranty deed for the property.

There were no bids received by the deadline. However, an abutter from York, has offered to pay the minimum bid for the property.

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted pursuant to the Tax Acquired Policy, A158-2A(2), to issue a quitclaim deed for the sale of the lot on Bennett Road, Map 3 Lot37A, to John Watts of York Maine, for \$16,366.85. The sale is made with no guarantees of lot size, metes & bounds, and is based on the information on file with the Town at the time of conveyance.

3. Manager Pellerin stated that there were approximately 80 people present at the Sebago Technics traffic study meeting. A number of issues were raised, and now is the time that the Council can make changes to the requested data and the area the study will encompass.

It was agreed to add the following neighborhoods/areas to the study: Norton Street, Young/Parent/Sewall, Highland Ave/Berwick Academy, and Vine & Liberty Streets. Mr. Pellerin will submit the request to Sebago Technics so they can work up an estimate for the added cost.

Brett Cropp, Liberty St, asked if the State would cover any of the cost. No.

New Business

1. Mr. Pellerin made note that Berwick has had some changes and chose to break the contract we had with them for shared code enforcement and planning positions.

2. The Council and Manager discussed the Town Planner position and the change from shared with Berwick to a full-time South Berwick employee.

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to fund the full-time Town Planner position from the TIF account, in the amount of \$49,808 for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

3. No action on holding a straw poll at the polling place on Election Day.

Town Manager's Report

-Highway: Paving is complete, fall clean-up is underway, and winter equipment prep has begun. Hoping to have line striping done by weeks end.

-Police: Attended 9 accidents and made 50 traffic stops. Sgt. Moore and Officer Malatak were praised for their professionalism during a recent zoom motor vehicle court hearing. Chief Ruger has set up a COVID vaccine clinic at the Community Center on November 2nd. Lt. Upton has completed ICS400 training. Det. Sgt. Stephens and Officers Malatak & MacLeod have attended a 3-day class involving interview skills.

-Fire: 23 calls, 346 year-to-date. Fire Prevention week was a great success. Currently working on a financial plan for equipment.

-Code Enforcement: Have issued 5 building permits, 2 plumbing permits, and conducted 23 inspections. 1 home occupation permit has been revoked.

-Planning: Southern Maine Planning & Development has been chosen for the 3rd party review of 406 Main Street. It is expected that the 5-lot subdivision will get approved at the Wednesday Planning Board meeting.

-Library: The Friends of the Library book sale has raised \$1200. The Tri-Berwicks are holding a reading contest from January 1st to February 28th; the winner will receive gift cards to Barnes & Noble or Amazon. There will be a family Halloween party from 10a-2pm.

-Recreation: After school programs are filling fast. Adult yoga is going well. The new ice rink has been ordered. The Trick or Treat parade will be on Sunday at 5:30pm.

-Assessing: We continue to receive applications for the Tax Stabilization program. The final valuation report has been sent to the state.

-Town Clerk: Election preparations are ongoing. We have issued well over 1000 absentee ballots so far.

- Transfer Station: A new hire starts next week. Trash levels have decreased and evened out.
- Economic Development: Working on TIF zone maps. We have been receiving calls from people interested in bringing businesses to town.
- Finance/HR: Only 5 homes are in risk of foreclosure on December 1st. Working on enrollments for 2023 insurances. Training grants, up to \$1200/person are available to all staff. The Highway Department has received two grants, totaling \$5500, for cameras at the garage and dump locks. Starting to work on templates for next year's budget.
- Administration: Management & leadership training will begin for all department heads in November. Website upgrade is on step 5 of 8. Working on a training policy for Council, Planning Board, and ZBA. Working on the RFP for the town hall project.

Councilor Comments

1. Ms. Cyr:

- Reminded everyone of the Great Works School Veteran Day celebration.
- Asked about SoBo Arts placing a banner on the town hall front lawn.

2. Mr. James:

- Wished the candidates good luck at the upcoming election.
- Thanked Jack for his service, mentoring, and sharing his knowledge and insights. It has been an honor to serve with him. The Town has been lucky to have him.

3. Mr. Minihan:

- Commented that it was nice to see so many people enjoying the GWRLT hike in the Town Forest.
- Thanked Jack for his service and vast knowledge.

4. Mrs. Cook:

- Reminded everyone of the Election on November 8th and wished the candidates good luck.
- Stated that Jack has been a fabulous mentor and she has been lucky to serve with him.

5. Mr. Kareckas:

- Thanked everyone for their kind words.
- Commented that being on the Council is really a self-test under public scrutiny. The Council has always worked together to solve problems and conduct business in a genteel fashion; respectful and without personal attacks. He encouraged the Council to continue the practice of keeping it civil.
- Thanked the staff for all the support he has received.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM