

**South Berwick  
Town Council Meeting  
December 13, 2022**

Chair Mallory Cook called the meeting to order at 6:35pm. Councilors present included John James, Jeff Minihan, Jessica Cyr, and Melissa Costella. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance.

**Approval of Minutes**

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

**Treasurer's Warrant**

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated December 8, 2022 in the amount of \$938,062.52. Note was made that this warrant includes the monthly school payment of over \$728,000.

**Reports & Presentations – Tax Increment Financing**

Denise Clavette, Economic Development, and Shana Cook Mueller, TIF Attorney, presented the Council with both, the amendment to the Punkin Town TIF and the new Transit Oriented TIF. Ms. Mueller explained the basics of TIF's and how they can work as an economic development tool. TIF's are also a great way to 'shelter' tax dollars for specific projects. Calculations show that South Berwick is currently only capturing about \$.31 per dollar. (Remaining \$.69 is taken by school, state, and county.) Mrs. Clavette made note that projects that would have been paid for out of the general fund may, in part, be paid for from the TIF funds. This would save taxpayers significant tax dollars on projects that would be funded anyway.

The Council also discussed changing the name of the Punkin Town Road and CMP Corridor TIF. Punkin Town (or Punkintown) makes a historical reference to the area and was considered important, and should not change.

On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to change the name to the Punkintown (specifically one word) Business Park Omnibus Municipal Development and Tax Increment Financing District Development Program.

The goal is to get the TIF's approved by the state in time to aid in our budgeting process for the upcoming year.

**Public Comment**

1. None.

**New Business**

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted, with regret, to accept Hilda Howell's resignation from the Library Advisory Board.

2. Manager Pellerin gave the Council an update on services with York Ambulance. Ambulance services across the state are facing significant funding and staff issues. Due to staffing costs and the loss of revenue for non-transport, York Ambulance is looking at triple digit rate increases. They only want to deal with a five-year contract, which would see our costs (now at \$111,000/yr) rise to over \$272,000 in year one to over \$315,000 in year five.

Mr. Pellerin noted that we will have to make some hard decisions about how we will proceed. He stressed the need for the proposed state funding, which would only be a short-term stop gap. He went on to say that he and the Fire Chief are in the process of reviewing the feasibility and potential costs of bringing an ambulance service in house.

**Councilor Comments**

1. Mr. James:

- Kudos to the Home for the Holidays Committee; they did a great job.
- Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

2. Mrs. Costella:

- Gave a shout out to the PWD for the nice job done during our first snowfall.
- Wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

3. Ms. Cyr:

- Made note of the flu shot clinic at Marshwood.
- Asked the other Councilors if there was any interest in making any nominations for the Spirit of America Award.
- Asked for the status of the town hall project. Mr. Pellerin stated that he was working on the RFP for the building assessment.

4. Mr. Minihan:

- Asked if we were fully staffed at the PD. We are down one officer.
- Asked if we were ready to proceed with transfer station stickers. Mr. Pellerin stated that there is a chance that we may not need them, but we will be prepared to start issuing them after the first of the year if necessary.
- Asked if there had been any progress made with the Paul Street parking issue. No.
- Asked for the status of the ordinance language for cannabis and solar farms. Consensus of the Council is to hold a joint workshop with the Planning Board on Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at the Police Station.
- Made note of the nice job done on Home for the Holidays.

**Town Manager's Report**

- Highway: Roadside mowing continues. Have hauled 240 loads of leaves from the Transfer Station. The crew was out at 1:30am handling the first snowfall.
- Police: 2 arrests, 6 accidents, and 61 traffic stops. Officers have completed Narcan training and will now have it in each cruiser. Several officers attended training from Unitil. Unitil has grants available for first responders.
- Fire: 22 calls; bringing the years total thus far to 395 calls. The Department was honored to participate in a Make-A-Wish presentation to a young boy in town that wanted to go to Disney. A group of firefighters and Mrs. Claus delivered the news to the family. Capt. Chute is updating the driver training logs. The Department is ready to go live with its new tracking software. Many reports and records had been being kept manually; this new software will create an up-to-date electron system to track incident reporting and track the maintenance and inspection of equipment.
- Code Enforcement: Issued 5 building permits, 2 plumbing permits, and conducted 10 inspections. Letters were mailed out for 71 permits that expired in 2021.
- Planning: Working with Berwick on Samville Estates regarding the shared road. Several planning board members have taken their required MMA training. Jeni and Amy attending training with Southern Maine Planning and Development.
- Library: The door count during Home for the Holidays was 267. There was a jazz band that played for several hours. Working on a preservation and archival project. Working with the book vendor to do a take back of old books for credit on new books. The native plant sign has been installed.
- Recreation: Breakfast with Santa went well; about 70 people attended each session. Powderhouse training for staff has begun. Working with Asst Fire Chief Ray Delcourt for safety inspections at Powderhouse and the Community Center. Ski programs are filling up.
- Assessing: Work continues on the 334 applications received for the Tax Stabilization Program. Well over 300 hours have been spent on processing the applications. GIS mapping is almost complete.
- Town Clerk: Still working on election wrap-up. Auto registrations have slowed down a bit. Seeing a lot more online activity for autos, dog and hunting licenses.
- Transfer Station: Had to turn away 10 non-residents. People are concerned that a compost bin will bring unwanted pests. The poll on Facebook shows that residents are mixed in regard to composting at the transfer station.

-Economic Development: TIF's are nearing completion. Working with a company to bring a high-end woodworking building (7200sft) to the Punkintown Business Park.

-Finance: The draft audit is here for review. Have been meeting with different employees to discuss operations and concerns in their departments. Worked with the Clerk to update the process of receipting parking ticket monies for PD. Our employee Christmas Party will be on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Working on employee evaluations. Great news from the bank; our interest rate has increased from .5% to 1.75%.

-Administration: Just starting on the next budget; concerned with the cost of fuel, electricity, and propane. Sebago Technics Traffic Study is progressing and we should have something in mid-January. Have met with several department heads regarding operations and procedures.

### **Executive Session**

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to enter executive session at 8:08pm, pursuant to 1MRSA §405.6A, to discuss a personnel issue.

The Chair reported the following to the Clerk:

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to end the executive session at 9:01pm.

### **Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:01pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM