

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
July 12, 2022**

Chair Mallory Cook called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Councilors present included John James, John C. Kareckas, Jeff Minihan, and Jessica Cyr. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

1. Town Council 6-28-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, 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 Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$209,353.69.

2. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated July 6, 2022 in the amount of \$138,367.10.

3. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated July 6, 2022 in the amount of \$888,573.99. Note was made that this includes the monthly school payment of \$728,737.86.

Reports & Presentations

Paul Schumacher of Southern Maine Regional Planning & Development Commission gave the Council an overview of State LD 2003. There are three key components to the new legislation: affordable housing, increased density, and accessory dwelling units. Not quite as restrictive as first believed, the towns do have some flexibility. The law is in effect now, but municipalities have until July 1, 2023 to comply. However, the State has not completed its rule making and changes are inevitable.

Mr. Pellerin noted that our new Planner, Tammy Bellman, is already working on the ordinances.

Public Comment

None

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to suspend the rules and take action on New Business #2 before the Manager's report. See below.

Town Manager's Report

-Highway: The speed tables have been installed on Liberty Street; residents are happy. Still finishing on Brattle St. Road side mowing continues.

-Police Dept: 1 arrest, 8 accidents, and 151 traffic stops. Chief Ruger is working diligently on the Maine Law Enforcement Accreditation Program. Officer Scott Stephens has been appointed and sworn as South Berwick's first Detective Sergeant.

-Fire Dept: Had 8 calls; fairly slow, nice break.

-EMA: Working on check sheets. Trainings are planned for September & October.

-Code Enforcement: The transition from Joe to Jeni is going smoothly. Jeni will be in South Berwick on Mondays and Wednesdays.

-Planning: Several projects are moving along – Stevens St, Meadow Pond Estates Phase III, and Great Hill Rd. The Board approved the Patten 6-lot subdivision on Punkintown Road.

-Library: 200 people have signed up for the summer reading program. Later this month will host a Maine Marine Animals event. Tammy will be in South Berwick on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

-Recreation & Seniors: Summer camp is going well. The 4th of July luncheon was well attended.

-Assessing: Continue to work toward finalizing the sales analysis. Tyanne is now working in Assessing two days a week, making her full-time.

-Town Clerk: Continue to be busy with new registrations. Tyanne will be in Augusta on Wednesday for Municipal Law (for Clerks).

-Transfer Station: Dan is painting all the bins to make them look more presentable. We have received compliments on how the facility looks nicer and is being run better.

-Finance: Working on year end and watching budgets closely. Letters are being sent out to all that have not yet paid their personal property taxes. We are looking into an online enrollment program for our health insurance.

-Administration: The staff picnic is Thursday. We have received an offer to purchase two Town-owned lots. We are looking into the back taxes and other pertinent issues.

-The staff held a retirement luncheon for Joe Rousselle; he is sad to leave, but happy to retire. We have received 3 applications for the Economic Development Director position. Unexpectedly and unsolicited, we received a proposal from Dave Bateman of Phoenix Management to buy or lease the Town Hall building. There are federal programs to help with the development of historical buildings, but the funds are going quickly, and may affect the viability of the proposal. The proposal has been forwarded to the Attorney.

School Tax Assessment: We just received updated budget information from the school and it is very disappointing. Due to changes in enrollment and changes in the funding formula our portion has increased by 3.72%, not the 1.7% initially proposed. Unfortunately, we have little to no input on the school's budget other than to vote at the open meeting. Mr. James questioned the affect income from Rollinsford students have on the formula. We had hoped to maintain or lower our rate, but the school increase may force an increase in the overall tax rate.

Unfinished Business

1. & 2. A workshop has been scheduled for August 2nd at 6:30pm.

3. Mr. Kareckas made note that the intent of the Comp Plan Update Committee was to "drop" the resident survey on July 15th; it will not be ready. The Committee is deciding what list to use to reach the most residents. This will in turn effect the cost.

New Business

1. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to affirm the current slate of officials for the 2023 FY. See attached.

2. The Council briefly discussed the issue on Highland Ave. Due to an error when water & sewer lines were installed, it is necessary to reopen the street to install the stubs for connection. However, the Town paved the street last year and our policy requires a 5-year wait before opening the road again.

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to waive the road opening policy and allow the street to be opened for the installation of stubs, provided that the condition of the road is returned and maintained to its condition prior to this opening. The use of infrared laser blending of the pavement will be necessary to eliminate a hard pavement edge, and preserve the integrity of the road. The Water & Sewer Districts will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the road area for the remaining period of the moratorium.

3. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to approve the renewal of Engrain's liquor license.

4. The Council discussed the current fees charged at the Transfer Station and whether there should be increases. Mr. Pellerin explained that we need to review both the Transfer Station fees and our permitting fees.

Councilor Comments

1. Mr. Kareckas:

-Attended both the retirement luncheon for Joe and the Pinning Ceremony for the new Fire Chief and Assistant Chief. He thanked both Joe and Mark Leach for their dedication and service to South Berwick.

2. Mr. Minihan:

-Reminded everyone of the Hot Summer Nights Concerts starting Wednesday.

3. Mrs. Cook:

-Made note of the Tuskegee community picnic on Sunday at 4:30pm at Central School. Monday night at Town Hall they will hold a dialogue/discussion.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:07pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM