

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
July 25, 2023**

Councilor John James called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Councilors present included Jessica Cyr and Melissa Costella. Councilors Mallory Cook and Jeffrey Minihan participated by Zoom. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance.

Mr. James explained that because the Chair & Vice-Chair are not physically present all votes will be by roll call and the physically present members must vote for a temporary chair to run the meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted (3-0 in person members) that Councilor James would Chair the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

1. Public Hearing 07-11-23: On a motion by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.

2. Town Council 07-11-23: On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.

Treasurer's Warrant

1. On a motion by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated July 20, 2023, in the amount of \$85,800.88.

On a motion by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated July 20, 2023, in the amount of \$160,565.45.

Public Comment

1. Abigail Sherwood, Tamarack Dr., stated that it was very easy to get her transfer station sticker. She also noted that the staff at the transfer station are very helpful. Ms. Sherwood asked about the status of the sign at Punkintown. Mr. James explained that the ordinance was changed to allow the signage. He added that he would check the state with the developer.

Unfinished Business

1. Mr. James read the proposed Purple Heart Town Proclamation. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to sign the Purple Heart Town Proclamation, as presented. Note was made that the Proclamation would be signed by all 5 councilors and 1 original would be kept at the Town and the other sent to the VFW Post.

New Business

1. Mr. Pellerin explained that Happy Valley LLC (aka 406 Main St) had received its approvals from the Planning Board. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to approve the liquor license and special amusement permit for Happy Valley LLC, to expire August 15, 2024.

Ms. Cyr did make note that the special amusement permit states that Council 'shall' hold a public hearing. The Clerk responded that a hearing is not required for the liquor license, but our ordinance does state that Council 'shall' hold a public hearing for the special amusement permit. The Clerk added that the Council has approved other special amusement permits without holding public hearings. Councilor James stated that "the precedent has been set".

2. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to grant a Cannabis Establishment License to Ron Fousek for Easy Going Maine, LLC.

3. The Council, Town Manager and Economic Development Director explained the need for the Downtown Revitalization Plan. The Plan will work in conjunction with the Market Analysis and coincide with the Traffic Study. The money to cover the cost is included in the budget. The Downtown Revitalization Plan is also required for the creation of a downtown TIF. It will also provide for more public & private grant opportunities.

Discussion regarding the public input part of the process ensued. Mr. Minihan moved the question.

On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was voted 3-2 (Mrs. Costella & Mr. James opposed) to authorize the Town Manager to issue an RFP (Request for Proposal) for a Downtown Revitalization Plan, per the budget for FY24.

4. On a motion by Mrs. Cook, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to accept James Mundy's resignation from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Town Manager's Report

-Highway: Paving on Winding Brooke Ln. Working on Black Swan to widen and fix drains. Park Street is ready for topcoat paving. Working well with FEMA.

-Transfer Station: Has slowed down a bit; stickers are working. Ordering more bags. Trying to get bags that are thicker and will better fit trash cans.

-Police: New cruisers should be in on Wednesday. The Chief & Lt have finished the FBI trilogy training. Arrests and calls are higher than usual. Will be conducting CSI training at Berwick Academy.

-Fire: Quieter 2 weeks; had 12 calls. Vehicle accidents are on the rise. Have been training with the new boat. Will be conducting more training at the Red Barn on August 12 & 13. Using the York Dept ISO to make sure we are up to date for our 'inspection', probably next year. [This affects the Dept's rating and homeowner fire insurance rates.]

Code/Planning: Introduced Maddy the new admin. Issued 6 building permits and conducted 13 inspections. Attended Health Inspector training. Need a private space for confidential meetings.

-Town Clerk: -Been working on owl/zoom issues. Held several test meetings to make sure everything is working properly. From Jan-June processed 2464 motor vehicle transactions in the office & downloaded & converted 1483 online transactions. Issued almost 900 transfer station permits. From Jan-June processed 269 IF&W transactions. Includes hunt/fish licenses and ATV, boat, and snowmobile registrations. Have begun prepping for the November election.

Nomination papers are available Friday, July 28th. Suggested cleaning up area where the soda machine was and setting up a 'welcome to town' KIOSK.

-Assessing: Working on update of values and quality checking all data changes. Have been receiving a lot of inquiries from taxpayers.

-Library: About 60 people attended the wildlife workshop. Held a kayak safety training. Summer reading program is coming to an end.

-Recreation: Senior trips have been well attended. Summer camp has been going well and will be wrapping up soon.

-HR: Working with TRIO to make sure proper calculations are made for the Tax Stabilization Program. Starting to get Tax Club booklets ready.

-Admin: Continue to work on year end. Working on various scenarios for the mill rate. Still working on getting windows repaired/replaced. [Since the current windows cannot be opened, there is a fire safety issue.] Safety meetings will resume in September. Provided Employee recognition forms. The Employee Appreciation Dinner will now be held in April on a Saturday evening. Met with a civil engineer to discuss safety issues at the town hall and community center. Have met with a project engineer to discuss downtown revitalization.

-Informed the Council that our insurance rep. at Maine Municipal told us to close off the front entry. It was deemed unsafe and must be inspected by a structural engineer. Mr. Pellerin also made note that we posted signs informing visitors that the elevator is not functioning properly and may not stop level with the floor. The part to fix it is from China and has proven difficult to get. He added that he is not sure what will happen, especially regarding ADA requirements, if the elevator breaks.

Councilor Comments

1. Ms. Cyr:

-The Comp Plan Update committee met last night. Hoping to add discussion regarding the Implementation Plan on the next Council agenda.

-Made note of how busy the library is. They offer some great programs and have a great staff.

-Thanked the PWD crew for their efforts with maintaining the ball fields; they are very busy.

2. Mrs. Costella:

-Commented that she had received an inquiry regarding safety and the Town's liability at the transfer station. The Town Manager explained that the use of any municipal facility is at 'your own risk'. The Town does have a \$1,000,000 liability policy. He also explained there is a cap that the Town would be required to pay. And, the Town would have to be proven to be negligent. Unfortunately, the current solution has been signage and painted lines. We cannot control how people drive in and out.

-Expressed her concerns with the safety of some of the downtown buildings. She stated that her concern is not with esthetics but the safety of people using the sidewalks. She asked if the Manager could direct the CEO to conduct inspections of the front of the buildings. It was agreed to discuss the issue at the next meeting.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:38pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM