

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
November 28, 2023**

Vice-Chair John James called the meeting to order at 6:25pm. Councilors present included Jeff Minihan, Jessica Cyr, and Melissa Costella. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance. Chair Mallory Cook was not present.

Executive Session

1. On a motion by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to enter executive session at 6:26 pm, pursuant to 1MRSA §405.6A to conduct an interview with a potential board member.

On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to end the executive session at 6:38pm.

Approval of Minutes

1. Town Council 11-14-23: On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes after correcting the word quest to quest on the 3rd page.

Treasurer's Warrant

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated November 21, 2023, in the amount of \$140,327.37.

On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to move NB #2 up to help accommodate the Police Chief's schedule. See below.

Public Comment

1. None.

Unfinished Business

1. The Council discussed the Request for Qualifications/Proposals for Architectural and Engineering Services for the Town Hall Renovation as presented by the Manager at the last meeting.

On a motion by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to approve the RFQP as presented.

New Business

1. On a motion by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to close Main Street for the Christmas Parade on December 2nd. [The parade will start at 3:00pm at the American Legion in Rollinsford and end at the Federated Church on Academy Street.]

2. The Town Manager suggested that the Council review the Vehicle & Traffic Ordinance. Staff has reviewed the ordinance and did not find that there are set fines or penalties for parking violations. At the Police Chief's request, it has been proposed to clarify the language and include a section for fines.

On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to add new section 130-28 integrating the Chief's suggested language for fines.

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was unanimously voted to hold a public hearing on Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 6:00pm to receive comment on the proposed language changes to Chapter 130 Vehicles and Traffic.

[Clerk's note: Chapter 130 does have fines and penalties listed in section 130-33. And section 130-28 already exists. The Manager has received clarification from the attorney as to the proper procedure going forward.]

3. The Council and Manager discussed the Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee. Staff has requested that the two Councilors included in the committee be appointed the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Mr. Minihan expressed his concerns with the Council making those appointments. He added that it should be the committee members that makes them. Mr. James, Mrs. Costella, and Ms. Cyr all commented on the knowledge of procedures and continuity of the membership that would come from Councilors taking the lead.

On a nomination by Mrs. Costella, seconded by Mr. James, it was voted 3-1 (Mr. Minihan opposed) to appoint Jessica Cyr as the Chair of the Committee.

On a nomination by Mr. James, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was voted 3-1 (Mr. Minihan opposed) to appoint Mrs. Costella as the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

4. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to hold a public hearing on December 12, 2023, 6:30pm to receive comments on the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance regarding accessory dwelling units (resulting from required changes made by the state).

Town Manager's Report

-Highway: Working on patching potholes. The grader lost a head gasket, looking for a used engine. Cleaning up in the square to prepare for Home for the Holidays.

-Police: 3 arrests, 4 accidents, and 55 traffic stops. A new computer aided dispatch system will soon be installed, matching Sanford.

-Fire: 9 calls; 428 YTD. Working on new hires. All apparatus is ready for service except Tank 3.

-Code/Planning: Issued 0 building permits and conducted 21 inspections. Working on updating our system with new E-911 information. Samville Estates' final plan will be in front of the Planning Board on December 6th. The Board has two new applications to handle.

-Library: Saturday 12/2 will be Letters to Santa and ornament making. The winners of the October reading challenge have received gift certificates from local businesses as prizes.

-Recreation: December 2nd is Breakfast with Santa. Finalizing winter programming. About 90 people attended the Thanksgiving meal provided by Rotary. The seniors have a giving tree set up for the residents of Berwick Estates.

-Assessing: The 3-yr revaluation process will start in a couple of weeks. Have received 6 applications for the tech/admin assistant position.

-Town Clerk: Have received 3 applications for the customer service position. Will be posting the Town Clerk position the end of the week in preparation for Barbara's retirement.

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Ms. Cyr, it was voted 3-1 (Mr. James opposed) to accept Barbara Bennett's retirement notice (effective January 31, 2024).

-Transfer Station: Will be replacing the 25-year-old cardboard baler.

-Economic Development: The next Downtown Revitalization Plan meeting is Monday, December 4th. Beginning to work on the state compliance requirements for the Comp Plan. In the last 18 months 8 businesses have opened, 1 business is under construction in Punkintown and 1 is renovating a Main Street location and will open soon.

-Finance/HR: Still working on 5 foreclosures. Looking to finalize the audit for presentation to the Council. Will begin budget discussions with staff in mid-December. Currently conducting interviews for open positions. Jen will be on vacation from Dec 1st to Dec 8th.

-Admin: Working on the Police Union Contract. MDOT will be sending out the RFP for the new traffic lights for next spring. The new lights at Rts 91 & 236 will go live soon. Accepted that Town Clerk's retirement notice, effective January 31st.

Councilor Comments

1. Mr. Minihan:

-Thanked the Clerk for her service and wished her well.

Each of the other Councilors reiterated Mr. Minihan's remarks and thanked the Clerk for her years of service and wished her well.

2. Ms. Cyr:

-The SB Reporter kick-off party will be held on Friday.

-Reminded everyone of the Parade on Saturday.

-The Comp Plan Committee is working on procedures for other governmental bodies, i.e., the Conservation Committee etc., to be included. Will be discussing land use with the Planning Board.

3. Mrs. Costella:

-Stated that while councilors are here working on their door for the decorating contest, they will not be discussing any town business.

4. Mr. James:

-Stated that the SB Reporter is doing great. It is helping to squelch rumors.

-Stated that he is looking forward to harassing Barbara on her last day in the office.

Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Cyr, seconded by Mrs. Costella, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:30pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM