

Town of Stow

Selectmen Meeting Minutes DATE 11.14.2023

Opening: The Board of Selectmen meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm in Stow, Maine by Jim Wilfong.

Present

Selectmen: Ray Ryan, Jim Wilfong Selectman Carl Lindblade is absent as he is attending Oxford County budget meeting.

Town Clerk: Christine Carone **Treasurer:** Nancy Boros **Deputy Clerk:** Kathleen Panno

Road Agent: NA

Residents/Guests: Rob Flint, Broadband Liaison and Budget Committee member

Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved (2-0)

Approval of Minutes: Minutes Approved from 10.24.2023 and 11.06.2023 meetings
Selectman approve 2-0

Treasures Report: (Nancy Boros)

Cash Balance \$ 181,937

Warrant # 76 \$158,376.88 Approved as **amended 2-0 (3 MSAD 72 payments were approved)**

We have begun to receive tax revenue, last week's deposit was \$95k. We owe 3 months, or \$127,722 to MSAD 72, (*which has been approved for payment tonight*). We will pay \$47,647 to Lovell for rubbish charges at the next meeting. We are going to reclass about \$29,084 of road expenses and record it as prepaid inventory as we have several culverts in storage at the salt shed that were not used in 2023 and will be saved for 2024 projects. The Fadden gravel of \$6,750 will be reclassified as well.

On 11/3 J.Wilfong and N Boros had a in person conference with FEMA mitigation contact, Chris Cardozzo and Program Delivery Manager, Bill Doyle. Mitigation projects were discussed, and the damage assessment was finalized. We have successfully uploaded the damage assessment to the FEMA portal. We have a road project that is not yet complete, a conference call will be arranged with FEMA to review that project.

The second modem has been delivered, R. Flint will configure it with a simple password that can be used by visitors and residents at the town hall.

I have requested the Christmas tree power to be turned on after Nov 15th. The Tree Lighting is set for Sunday, December 3rd at 4 pm, same as last year.

The Budget Committee is meeting on Monday, 11-20 at 6 pm.

The Selectmen approved (2-0) the following payrates for the 2023 election workers:

C. Carone, Election Warden and Registrar \$350 stipend

Election Officials - \$20 per hour

Ballot Counters - \$20 per hour

Clerks Business: (Christine Carone)

Mr. Michael Cocci requested an abatement on his RE taxes, and the assessor granted the abatement for \$938.04.

Deputy Clerk: (Kathleen Panno)

Kathleen Panno stated that her contact was not interested in shoveling the town hall entrance and access to the propane tank. K. Panno priced a snow blower and cover for under \$1,000. Discussion ensued regarding finding someone to operate the snowblower, as well as the possibility of covering the generator and tank to prevent snow from the roof piling up and blocking access. J. Wilfong and R. Ryan will meet to discuss options for having the entrance, emergency exit and area by tank and generator cleared of snow during the winter.

Judie Noll, state representative for the general assistance program came to inspect the town's records. The records were outdated from 2013. K. Panno and C. Carone have printed the updated records. All 3 selectman need to read the reports and all approve them. K. Panno will instruct C. Lindblade, GA Officer, on whom to contact and where to locate updated forms in the future.

Freedom of Access Act project is completed. A policy has been approved and everyone has submitted documentation regarding understanding of FOAA.

Selectman's Reports:

Policy Contracts and Insurance (Ray Ryan)

Fee Policy (related to FOAA) – R. Ryan finalized the policy.

WC Insurance – R. Ryan submitted the required information to MMA.

Volunteer Insurance- will address in January 2024

Snow Contract – will be put out for bid in May 2024.

Harris Computer (Trio) – R. Ryan spoke with Harris Computer (Trio) regarding an offer to upgrade to a web-based product, the cost stated in the letter from Trio was \$7,300 plus \$3,000 per year maintenance. The Harris representative stated that since the town does not use the entire software package (Stow uses the real estate tax module), that the cost would be approximately \$4,500 for a web version. The consensus from C. Carone, the Selectmen and Rob Flint, computer consultant, is to increase the amount saved in the computer budget to \$3,000 per year (for the Harris software costs) in preparation for migrating to the web based product.

There are advantages to using a web based product, however the quality of the internet connection is an important factor. The town will delay switching to the web based product for now. Harris Computer confirmed the town will be able to use the product as is through 2024, however at some point we will be required to switch to the online product.

Increase computer budget by \$3,000 per year for Harris software costs. Approved 2-0

Maintenance Report: (Carl Lindblade)

C. Lindblade completed NIMS training (see his memo, attached)

Open items:

Deferred Maintenance schedule for Salt Shed and Town Hall will be completed January and will be used for the 2024 budget. CL to include estimate for sound proofing.

Sealcoating of parking lot – tabled until spring 2024

Sale of foreclosed property –Articles in the town report will be updated and the property will be placed for sale in spring 2024

MMA grants –will be reviewed in January to determine if the town can apply for any funding

Road Report: (Jim Wilfong)

Jeff Blake completed the fall project of replacing timbers on the Ezra Heald Bridge. In spring 2024 he will remove and replace more timbers. The town is not working on the Shell Pond Bridge currently. J.Wilfong will reach out to the Forest Service regarding a possible grant for this project.

The board is contracting with an engineering firm, Calderwood, for the Ezra Heald Bridge repair. Before the contract is finalized J.Wilfong will confirm when the engineering report will be completed. The engineers will recommend weight ratings in their report.

J. Wilfong will contact F. Wilson to install a septic cover and to move some rocks to top the culvert.

New Business:

Town Hall – Selectmen approved investigating costs to add sound proofing to the room. C. Lindblade to include this in his maintenance schedule for 2024 budget. (**Approved 2-0**)

Broadband – Rob Flint, Broadband Liaison

Spectrum has a subcontractor who is surveying all the telephone poles in the area. Spectrum will start to apply for pole permits from Consolidated and CMP to run their fiber optic lines.

Fryeburg has created a franchise ordinance; Stow will consider doing the same. Spectrum will bear the costs of bringing the fiber cables into the town, they will be seeking an exclusive franchise agreement for video services. All residents who are already connected to a telephone pole for other services will be able to receive the fiber service. Consolidated is working in NH and will most likely be running their service from the No. Fryeburg switch station. It is possible

they may offer broadband to residents within their range. Consolidated provides broadband only, no video services.

Next meeting will be Tuesday 11/21/ 2023 at 6:00 pm. Please note this meeting is in one week from tonight, the 11/28/2023 meeting has been cancelled

Adjourned 7:30 pm