

WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN,
BOARD OF ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
MARCH 4, 2014

Tape recorded meeting

Present: Vice Chair Judy Colby, Pam Dunning, Tim Merry, Chair Ed Polewarczyk, Jeff Slack and
Interim Town Manager Don Gerrish

5 p.m.

Executive Session: Judy Colby moved to go into executive session to discuss personnel pursuant to Title 1. M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A). Vote 5-0-0. At 6:02 p.m. Judy Colby moved to come out of executive session. Vote 5-0-0.

6 p.m.

Airport Master Plan Workshop with Airport Director Erv Deck and Airport Committee

Erv Deck introduced representatives from the DOT and FAA and the Airport Committee members. Deck said the master plan is 99% complete and consists of seven chapters: Introduction, Inventory of Existing Conditions, Forecasts, Facility Requirements, Alternative Analysis, Airport Layout Plan and Implementation and Financial Plans. He illustrated by graphs the forecasted increase in use of the airport and the increased sales of fuel as well as the anticipated demand for increased hangar space. He explained the expansion of the airport: extending the runway, apron and taxiway and upgrading the lighting. The need for obstructions to be removed as required by the FAA was discussed. Securing easements and tree removal are planned for the 2015 budget year. Expansion of the runway will be a few years later. The master plan covers short, intermediate and long term needs and financing. Before board approval, the plan will be submitted to the FAA and the state and there will be a 30-day comment period. The Master Plan can be found on the town website at <http://www.wiscasset.org/departments/airport>.

Pam Brackett, part owner of the Chewonki Campground which was established by her parents in 1961, explained how devastating the removal of trees, as required by the FAA, would be to half of the camp sites. She cited the benefits of the camp and the business the campground brings to Wiscasset and asked that Chewonki be given serious consideration in implementing the plan. Ken Boudin, member of the Airport Committee, said that no one wanted to disrupt the campground, but if the airport is not maintained, the town would have to repay multi-million dollar grants awarded to the airport.

The workshop ended at 7:10 and a ten-minute recess was declared.

1. Call to Order

Chair Ed Polewarczyk called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

3. Approval of Treasurer's Warrant: February 11, February 18, February 25 and March 4

Pam Dunning moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of February 11, 2014. Vote 5-0-0. Judy Colby moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of February 18, 2014. Vote 5-0-0. Judy Colby moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of February 25, 2014. Vote 5-0-0. Pam Dunning moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of March 4, 2014 subject to review. Vote 5-0-0.

4. Approval of Minutes: February 4, 2014

Pam Dunning moved to approve the minutes of February 4, 2014. Vote 5-0-0.

5. Appointments

Judy Colby moved to appoint Donald Jones and David Sutter to the Cemetery Committee for a term to expire on December 31, 2014. Vote 5-0-0.

6. Public Comment

Tony True asked the board to consider a non-binding referendum to find out, after knowing the cost and effect on the tax rate, whether the town was in favor of closing school buildings. The board was not in favor of a non-binding referendum. Ed Polewarczyk said it would be difficult to calculate how much it would save to close a school or two considering the building(s) would still have to be maintained and one of the other buildings would require modifications to accommodate the students from the closed school. In addition, if the high school closes, a determination on where the students would go, plus transportation or a voucher system would have to be considered. Judy Colby said the town elected a school board and it is the school board's responsibility to have a budget by June and in the long run to make decisions about the schools. Jeff Slack said the school system would have to remain K-12 for the first year following its separation from RSU 12 and even though the school population is too small for three buildings, it would be up to the school board to decide what action to take.

Steven Mehrl said the town now had the opportunity to find out what attracts students to schools in surrounding communities as an alternative to a town high school that cannot offer a wide variety of courses. He added that the school board had decided not to build two budgets covering the possibility of closing a building.

Bill Barnes said the people had chosen to get out of the RSU and had elected a school board; it was unfortunate that the people did not realize that taxes would go up.

Richard Hanson said the Budget Committee had met with the School Board which is currently working on the school budget. He said that no school would be closed this year.

Valerie St. Pierre asked how she could get "School Bus" and "Blind Drive" signs installed. Don Gerrish will follow up and report to the board.

7. Department Head or Committee Report

A. Update on Sidewalk Project – Misty Parker, Town Planner: Parker said as a result of the recommendation of the Road Safety Audit, a traffic light at Route 27 and the Lee Street sidewalk project will be scheduled for 2015-2016. The state will hold a public meeting in May. She added that as part of

the Shore and Harbor Planning grant, a public meeting will be held on March 13 at 7 p.m. at the town office on the feasibility of a boardwalk to connect the Main Street and commercial piers.

B. Senior Center Trustees Committee Report – Carl Hewitt, Senior Center Trustee: Hewitt said that most of the members were in their 70s or older and the Senior Center’s Wednesday night meal was the highlight of their lives; the next biggest thing was wakes. He listed the activities, speakers and trips the center had sponsored. The center provides blood pressure checks and is active in the community providing scholarships to trade schools. Hewitt said attendance was down, partly because some members go south in the winter. With regard to the budget, Ed Polewarczyk said both revenues and expenses were down but the net was a gain over last year. In response to a question, Pam Dunning said the menu for Wednesday night meals was on the back of the Community Center flyer available at the library.

8. Unfinished Business

A. American Legion Flag Project: **Pam Dunning moved to postpone to the next meeting. Vote 5-0-0.**

B. Goal Setting Discussion: **Pam Dunning moved to adopt the goals as presented. Vote 5-0-0.**

C. Public Works Truck Bids - Doug Fowler, Public Works Director: Fowler said he had looked at four vehicles and test drove three. Three of the vehicles were unsatisfactory because of excess mileage, price or inability to meet specifications. He recommended awarding the bid to Greg’s Used Cars. **Jeff Slack moved to approve the purchase of the vehicle from Greg’s Used Cars.** Funds for the purchase will come from the Public Works budget. In response to Bill Barnes’ question, Fowler said the new vehicle will replace the 1999 truck that didn’t pass inspection and will be used for maintenance runs, to transfer personnel or parts, delivery of safety equipment and tools to various work zones and be utilized where dump trucks are not the solution. It is not intended to be a plow truck, but could have plow gear mounted on it if necessary. **Vote 5-0-0.**

9. New Business

Pam Dunning moved to amend the agenda to consider item 9 C first. Vote 5-0-0.

C. Open Town Meeting – history of voting and secret ballot: Several board members spoke in favor of an open town meeting over a secret ballot citing the ability to amend warrant articles from the floor. There were comments from Steve Mehrl , Robert Hanson, Bill Barnes and Tony True disagreeing with the board’s decision, citing intimidation, the need for privacy, small voter turnouts, lack of information and the need for a referendum to change the process. Don Gerrish said the deadline for warrants for a secret ballot would be April 25, or the end of May for an open town meeting; however, it would be difficult to meet the April deadline. Gerrish said a previous vote for a secret ballot was non-binding and the selectmen had the authority to change the method of voting. Election of the selectmen, school board, school budget committee and Sewer District trustees will still be done by secret ballot. Mary Ellen Crowley said that other towns have an open town meeting with an electronic secret ballot. **Pam Dunning moved to proceed with an open town meeting for the June election. Vote 5-0-0.**

A. Capital Improvement Projects – Review Process: Don Gerrish said it had been suggested that the CIP be decided on before drafting the budget in order to know which projects will be funded by the Capital Reserve Account and which will be recommended to be funded from the operating budget. He said he

had looked at the CIP and was concerned that the amount set aside for projects was insufficient. He said one solution would be to borrow to complete some of the larger projects and pay it back over 10 years, using the income from the reserve account for debt service.

B. Budget Timeline and Schedule: Don Gerrish said a timeline will be completed using the deadlines for the open town meeting.

10. Town Manager's Report

Thirty-two applications have been received for the town manager position. The board will interview six candidates in the next few weeks and the public will have the opportunity to meet with the two finalists.

11. Adjournment

At 9 p.m. **Pam Dunning moved to adjourn. Vote 5-0-0.**