

WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN,
BOARD OF ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
March 6, 2012

(tape recorded meeting)

Present: Chair Judy Colby, Bill Curtis, Pam Dunning, Vice Chair David Nichols, Ed Polewarczyk and Town Manager Laurie Smith

1. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

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

3. Approval of Treasurer's Warrant: February 28, 2012 and March 6, 2012

Ed Polewarczyk moved to approve the Treasurer's warrant of February 28, 2012. Vote 5-0-0.

Pam Dunning moved to approve the Treasurer's warrant of March 6, 2012. Vote 4-1-0.

4. Approval of Minutes: February 21, 2012

Ed Polewarczyk moved to approve the minutes of February 21, 2012. Vote 4-0-1.

5. Special Presentations or Awards

A. Business Recognition Award: Red's Eats

Town Manager Laurie Smith gave a brief history of Red's Eats since its founding in 1938. It was purchased by Al Gagnon in 1977 and was a true family-run business with children and grandchildren working for Red's Eats. She also recognized the 150-year old beautiful Siberian Elm tree that has served as a living umbrella for the restaurant. Chair Judy Colby presented a plaque to Red's Eats and the Gagnon family in recognition of 35 years of business within the town of Wiscasset as an important member of the community and an economic contributor to the Town of Wiscasset.

B. Shawn Smith regarding MDOT and paving maintenance project on Route 1 for spring 2012 and 10A. MDOT agreement to issue a permit for transportation of construction equipment over municipal roads

Shawn Smith said as a second phase to the drainage and water main work done in 2011, the MDOT would do a mill and fill on Route 1 beginning 75 feet south of Lee Street and extending to the bridge. The work consists of removing two inches of existing surface, placing a shim course on top of it and redoing the surface paving. It will also include replacing some of the curbing. A right turning lane on Route 1 at Route 27 will be included in the contract. Work will be done from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. Sunday nights to Friday morning. Work will begin April 23 and conclude June 23 excluding May 24 to May 29. The contract has been advertised. Public progress meetings will be held.

Smith asked the selectmen to permit construction equipment to exceed the weight limits on municipal roads and to sign a bond agreement to guarantee suitable repair or payment of damages by the contractor. **Judy Colby moved to review and sign the agreement to issue a permit to MDOT for the transportation of construction equipment that exceeds legal weight limits for the time period of April 23 to June 23. Vote 5-0-0.**

In response to Lois Kwantz's question on the purpose of the right turn lane, Shawn Smith said that if vehicles use the dedicated right turn lane, oncoming traffic intending to turn left would not have to wait until it is evident which way southbound vehicles will be going. Kwantz asked why a roundabout could not be installed at that intersection. Bob Faunce, Lincoln County Planner, said he had spoken to MDOT about the possibility of a roundabout and was informed that until the traffic problem on Route 1 was solved, it was not feasible to construct a roundabout at that intersection because if traffic backed up at the roundabout, it would affect traffic in all directions.

Pam Dunning moved to go to 9A while Mr. Faunce is setting up for his presentation. Vote 5-0-0.

9. Unfinished Business

A. Adopt resolutions and execute an Amendment terminating the Money Purchase Pension Plan as of March 31, 2012

Laurie Smith said that this was the last step in the changeover of the retirement systems. Most employees have transferred their funds to the Maine State Retirement System. The change will not cost the Town additional funds but the Town will see a savings from the current costs. **Pam Dunning moved to adopt the proposed resolutions and execute an Amendment terminating the Money Purchase Pension Plan as of March 31, 2012. Vote 5-0-0.**

5C. Bob Faunce regarding Lincoln County Coastal Hazard Project

Faunce said the Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission is working with the Maine Geological Survey and Maine Coastal Program to evaluate the potential impacts of increases in sea level in coastal Lincoln County. They received a grant of \$35,040 from the Maine Coastal Program. The project will focus on the impacts of sea level rise on public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and key public facilities. He demonstrated by way of a power point presentation how changes in the highest annual tide would affect the various coastal areas. A committee consisting of a representative of the county Commission, several members of the LCRPC Board, a representative of Lincoln County EMA and a representative from each coastal community will oversee the project. There will be no cost to the town. In response to Mike Ferucci's question on the purpose of the study, Faunce said the 18-month study would provide information for towns to use in developing ordinances and planning of roads, bridges, and buildings that may have to be replaced in the next 100 years taking into account the estimated rise in sea level. **David Nichols nominated Pam Dunning to the committee. Vote 5-0-0.** Mike Ferucci volunteered for the committee.

6. None

7. Public Comment

George Green said he had read conflicting information about the RSU and asked if the public would be given information and a recommendation from the selectmen before the vote in June so that they would be better informed to make a decision. David Nichols and Judy Colby explained the process whereby the voters would decide in June whether to proceed with the withdrawal process and, if the vote were to proceed, an appointed committee would investigate the costs and advantages or disadvantages of leaving the RSU. In response to Mr. Green's persistent questions regarding the cost to leave the RSU-12, Selectman Curtis stated that it would be at least eighteen (18) months before we would know what the costs would be. Wiscasset residents must approve the article as stipulated in the MRS 20-1466.

Mike Ferucci said it may cost more to withdraw from the RSU but for the children's sake it would be better in the long run with parents having a say in their education.

Sharon Nichols, member of WERP, cited her 34 years with the school system and support of any action that was for the good of the students and the schools. She said she was disillusioned by the negative comments about WERP and could not understand why the town would not want to vote for withdrawal in June. The cost to proceed is minimal and the benefits are many such as getting control of the school expenses.

Gene Stover, a retiree from the school system, said he also was bothered by the intimidation and questioning of Doug Smith's integrity and honesty. He said Smith had served the town well, spending hours, providing transportation and financial support for WERP.

Doug Smith, Chair of WERP, said false statements made by Kim Andersson at the last selectmen's meeting disturbed him. He defended his financial data and statistics as being current and easily verifiable. The engineers' study on the closing of the middle school was done five years ago, so the savings would be greater based on inflation and increased operational costs. He said Andersson's statement that the RSU has taken care of all the deficiencies at the middle school was not credible given the very limited amount of money the RSU has spent in Wiscasset and in the RSU as a whole. The cost estimated by the 2008 engineer's study to fix the deficiencies in the middle school were \$1.3 million and \$2 million over ten years. He challenged other statements made by Ms. Andersson. He said the RSU was responsible for inflammatory comments, the only purpose of which was to interfere in Wiscasset's business and to disrupt the town's efforts to find another school system. He asked voters not to analyze the RSU numbers, but wait until a state-approved forensic school accountant is able to provide a third party review of finances. He also asked that future dialog be more respectful and that research be accurate and backed by verifiable facts. He said WERP would make presentations at any time.

A coordinator from the Meals on Wheels program asked the board for reconsideration of its request for funding for the service it provides to Lincoln County residents.

10. New Business

B. Koehling Property: Review purchase offer from Michael and Beth Smith

Pam Dunning said the board had previously decided to sell the property if it received an offer of \$30,000. A letter from the Smiths offering to buy the property for \$30,000 listed contingencies on the bid. The town attorney had recommended that the sale be by quitclaim deed. **Pam Dunning moved that the town move forward in selling the Koehling property for the amount of \$30,000 to Michael and Beth Smith and authorize the town manager to sign the purchase and sale agreement.** Laurie Smith said if there were issues with the contingencies, the matter would be reconsidered. **Vote 5-0-0.**

C. Determination of Harbormaster position whether this is a stipend or hourly position

Laurie Smith said there had been confusion among employees and selectmen whether the harbormaster position was a stipend or hourly position and asked for clarification from the board. Smith said Peter Dalton, current harbormaster, has resigned and since the town will be seeking a new employee, this would be an opportunity to review obligations of the harbormaster and examine the pay as well. Dalton has been paid by the hour. Pam Dunning asked that the board determine the duties of the harbormaster before the method and amount of pay was determined, as there is some duplication of labor when the highway crew and the harbormaster perform labor on the pier and floats.

David Sutter, Harbormaster 2006-2008, said the responsibilities of the harbormaster are spelled out in the ordinance, which states the selectmen are required to appoint the harbormaster. He said the harbormaster's salary, which included collecting launch fees, was not adjusted downward after it was decided that he would no longer collect the fees. Pay was based on 32 hours per week in the summer and 8 hours in the winter.

Richard Hanson listed salaries of harbor masters in the nearby towns and said he thought \$4500 with the harbor master supplying his own boat would be fair.

The selectmen asked the town manager to see what other towns with the same approximate number of moorings pay their harbor masters. David Nichols volunteered to assist her.

Bob Blagden said the position had been a stipend position since the early 90's. It started at \$4300 per year, was increased with the increase in gas prices in 2004 to \$4900 because the harbor master used his own boat. The stipend was paid once a year. It was later increased to \$15,000 with the same duties, which included collecting fees, doing minor repair on docks, keeping an eye on moorings, sending out mooring notices and cleaning the bathrooms, mowing the grass and sweeping out the parking lot.

D. Quitclaim deed for Map R-3, Lot 69-11, Jenny Spaulding property

Smith said back taxes of approximately \$7,000 had been paid on this property. **Judy Colby moved to sign the quitclaim deed for full payment of back taxes. Vote 5-0-0.**

11. Town Manager's Report

A. Budget Schedule

Smith distributed a draft budget schedule of meetings leading to the warrant signing on April 24. She said the budget would be given to the selectmen and Budget Committee on March 20. A budget meeting will be held on April 7 at 8 a.m., the public hearing will be held on April 10 and the budget will be voted on by the selectmen on April 17. Smith recommended keeping April 24 open for signing the warrant if necessary.

B. Michael Carlton (Property request to waive interest)

Smith said First Federal Savings has asked that the interest be waived on the taxes due on this property. The town did not have the bank identified as a mortgage holder and as a result, it did not receive a lien notice. The records have recently been corrected and the bank did get a notice in December. Annual taxes are \$2,000, outstanding taxes are \$16,000, interest \$4,600. With costs, the total owed is \$21,600. First Federal will clear up the taxes, but because they only received notice recently, they have asked that the town waive some interest on the outstanding balance. Bob Blagden said that every year the townspeople vote on the day taxes will be due and the amount of interest to be charged after that. He questioned whether the board had the right to overturn that vote and simply waive the interest. Pam Dunning suggested that the board waive interest only since the lien process began. Ed Polewarczyk said that the board should find out if it had the authority to waive interest. **He moved to ask the town manager to determine the board's legal authority to waive interest on this. Vote 5-0-0.**

C General Update

Smith said the Mary Bailey Endowment is seeking \$7,000 for various student assistance programs at Wiscasset High School. David Nichols asked to see the paper work on the request to insure it is being used for only Wiscasset students.

D. Selectmen Goals

One of the goals approved by the selectmen was a review of committees. She suggested two selectmen be appointed to evaluate the need for a committee, get a list of committees, determine purpose statement, obtain a list of members, and give direction to the committees. Pam Dunning and Ed Polewarczyk volunteered to review the committees.

E. Smith said the annual report is being prepared and she asked for the selectmen's dedication recommendation by early April. Pam Dunning said two names would be presented to the board for its decision.

F. A workshop on zoning ordinances will be held on Monday, March 19, at 6 p.m. The planning board public hearing on the ordinances will be held on April 9 at 7 p.m.

12. Other Board Business

A. Executive Session - Economic Development

At 9:35, Judy Colby moved that the Board of Selectmen go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A., § 405(6)(C) to discuss economic development at Mason Station. Vote 5-0-0.

Pam Dunning moved to go past 10 p.m. if the executive session should exceed that time. Vote 5-0-0.

13. Adjournment

The board exited executive session at 10:40 p.m. and adjourned the meeting.