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WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN,  
BOARD OF ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR  
JANUARY 7, 2014

Preliminary Minutes

tape recorded meeting

Present: Vice Chair Judy Colby, Pam Dunning, Tim Merry, Chair Ed Polewarczyk, Jeff Slack and Town Manager Laurie Smith

1. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 5 p.m.

Executive Session regarding Town Manager search

**Judy Colby moved that the Board of Selectmen go into executive session pursuant to MRSA Title 1, §405(6)(A) for the purpose of discussing the town manager search. Vote 5-0-0.** The board entered executive session at 5 p.m. and exited at 5:58 p.m. **Judy Colby moved to come out of executive session. Vote 5-0-0.**

2. Executive session regarding poverty abatement requests

**Judy Colby moved that the Board of Selectmen go into executive session pursuant to MRSA Title 36, §841(2) to consider requests for abatement of taxes for reasons of poverty. Vote 5-0-0.** The board entered executive session at 6 p.m. and exited at 6:35 p.m. **Pam Dunning moved to come out of executive session. Vote 5-0-0.**

3. Discussion of 2013 property tax abatements

**Judy Colby moved to deny Application 13-05. Vote 5-0-0.** **Pam Dunning moved to approve Application 14-01 in the amount of \$1,680.32. Vote 5-0-0.** **Judy Colby moved to approve Application 14-02 in the amount of \$979.11. Vote 5-0-0.**

Assessor's Agent Sue Varney reported that she had inspected the property at 75 Hemlock Road owned by William T. and Karen Valentine (R09-008E, Acct. #1122) and found sliding glass doors in poor condition with seals leaking in most of them, the garage door no longer works, the furnace, pool operation equipment/machinery, and kitchen appliances need replacing and bathroom tile and siding are in poor condition. She recommended changing the base from B110 to B105 as the house is in below average condition. Because the land is partly in the marsh area and partly in tidal area, Varney recommended using a 105% factor reducing the base from \$200,000 to \$183,750. A reduction in value of \$77,250 would result in an abatement of \$1,251.45. **Jeff Slack moved to approve the abatement as presented. Vote 5-0-0.**

The board recessed until 7 p.m.

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

Chair Ed Polewarczyk reported that the Board of Selectmen has hired Don Gerrish as interim town manager and employed Eaton Peabody to conduct a candidate search for town manager. Gerrish and

an associate will hold a public session in the meeting room on January 16 at 7 p.m. to receive input from the community relative to the characteristics and experience needed in a town manager.

#### 5. Public Hearing

A. Public Hearing for new liquor license and Special Amusement Permit for Twisted Iron Customs: Mike Benner, owner of Twisted Iron Customs, said he would like to hold special events once a month, probably on a Wednesday from 5 to 7 or on a weekend during daylight hours with possible entertainment; and he was seeking liquor and entertainment licenses. He said Ames Hardware had agreed to allow additional parking if needed. **Judy Colby moved to approve the Special Amusement Permit and Liquor License with the parameters addressed in a memorandum covering the items discussed. Vote 5-0-0.**

#### 6. Approval of Treasurer's Warrant: December 24 and December 31, 2013 and January 7, 2014

**Judy Colby moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of December 24, 2013 pending review. Vote 5-0-0. Judy Colby moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of December 31, 2013 pending review. Vote 5-0-0. Judy Colby moved to approve the Treasurer's Warrant of January 7, 2014 pending review. Vote 5-0-0.**

#### 7. Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2013

**Pam Dunning moved to approve the minutes of December 17, 2013. Vote 5-0-0.**

**Tim Merry moved to amend the agenda to allow the American Legion to discuss their flag project. Vote 5-0-0.**

#### 12. New Business

A. William Cossette, Jr., Commander, American Legion Post 54 to discuss flag project: Cossette said the American Legion would like to place flags on utility poles from Memorial Day to Veterans' Day on Routes 1 and 27. He said an agreement would be necessary among the Town of Wiscasset, CMP and Fairpoint after which the legion would raise funds to pay for the purchase of flags (made in the U.S.A.) with donations from local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, the legion, the Town of Wiscasset and individuals. He asked for support of the Town. In response to questions, Cossette said a minimum of 100 flags would be needed and they did not expect all would be installed the first year. Laurie Smith said the liability issue would be investigated. **Judy Colby moved to support the American Legion in their project to install U. S. flags along Routes 27 and 1. Vote 5-0-0.**

#### 8. Appointments

A. Appearance of the Town Committee: **Judy Colby moved to appoint Norma Gordon, Vickie Hersom, Richelle Pontau and Donald Jones to the Appearance of the Town Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2014. Vote 5-0-0.**

B. Community Center Scholarship Committee: **Judy Colby moved to appoint Robert Bickford, Sr., Vickie Hersom, Katharine Martin-Savage, Louann Pontau, Sheila Sawyer and Brian Viele to the Community Center Scholarship Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2014. Vote 5-0-0.**

**C. Comprehensive Plan Committee:** Judy Colby moved to appoint Larry Lomison, Anne Leslie, John Reinhardt, H. Karl Olson and David Cherry to the Comprehensive Plan Committee for a term to expire June 30, 2014. Vote 5-0-0.

#### 9. Public Comment

Norman Guidoboni thanked Laurie Smith for her service and wished her well in her new position. He also commented on extending a walkway from the Recreational Pier to the Creamery Pier, the cost of which would be \$900,000 and the options for paying for it.

In response to Steve Mehrl's question if the goals for this year would be discussed before the new or interim town manager begins, Laurie Smith said the goals are usually formulated in January and will be on the agenda for January 21.

A member of the American Legion announced that the legion would support the Town and Wings over Wiscasset this year.

Ed Polewarczyk reminded the public that the Wiscasset High School Spirit Challenge to support the Good Shepherd Food Bank will occur on January 31 at 5 a.m. at the high school and will be televised by WGME Channel 13.

Polewarczyk apologized to the Budget Committee for omitting to report that the cost to the taxpayers for the current RSU school budget was \$5,124,251. The candidates for the new school committee had asked for \$250,000, which would constitute a 5% increase in that cost.

#### 10. Department Head or Committee Chair Report

**A. FY 2012 Audit Presentation with Ron Smith:** Smith presented the highlights of the audit report: The town as of June 30, 2013 had \$2,280,160 in assets, \$313,346 in liabilities leaving a fund balance (surplus) of \$1,412,646. Of this amount, \$125,000 has been used to offset the 2013-2014 tax commitment and \$248,000 is for assigned fund balances, leaving a undesignated surplus of just over \$1 million. Smith said that in order to achieve the board's target goal (two months' operating expenses) set by the board, it should have \$1,672,425 in fund balance; it now has \$1 million toward that goal. In response to questions, Smith clarified various points in the audit document and indicated he would add the town's investment policy to the report. Smith said he would assist the town in any way he could during the RSU withdrawal process. **Ed Polewarczyk moved to approve the FY 2012 Audit as amended to include a statement on the investment policy. Vote 5-0-0.**

**B. Review of Accounts Receivable progress:** Treasurer Shari Fredette presented a graph showing the town's accounts receivable history from 2007 to June 30, 2013. The graph showed an increase in the liens over the seven-year period and influence of the economy on the taxes due. The total receivables decreased from \$1,864,141 in 2012 to \$1,771,335 in 2013. Fredette said one of the measures she was taking to increase collection was the review of accounts and subsequent entering into agreements with delinquent taxpayers for repayment. The 36 tax agreements currently bring in \$50,000 annually. She anticipates having 100 agreements in place by the end of 2014. In addition, taxpayers owing personal property taxes are being contacted and notices of delinquent taxes are being sent to mortgage holders who tend to pay rather than face foreclosure. A change in ambulance billing companies has resulted in

the town receiving payments electronically. Sewer accounts receivable have decreased 12%. Four tax-acquired properties were sold in the past year; three tax-acquired properties are currently for sale. Fredette said that even with the 45-day delay in billing (because the budget was not passed on time), tax payments of \$2.5 million were received before the extended tax due date; 47% of the 2013 taxes have been paid.

## 11. Unfinished Business

A. School Budget Questions: Laurie Smith reported that Attorney Geoffrey Hole, Bernstein Shur, had responded to questions regarding the new school committee as follows: 1) The school committee is not a legal entity and cannot hold its own election process to borrow or appropriate funds for the "start-up process"; the Town of Wiscasset is the legal entity. 2) The purpose of the bond proceeds was to fund "...the cost of withdrawal..." and Hole was not aware of any definition of expenses that would be allowed or not allowed but he wrote that expenses an objective person would believe related to the cost of withdrawal would be acceptable and offered to consider specific items as they arise. 3) The selectmen or school committee cannot spend money in advance of a budget appropriation, but monies can be spent from the bond issue or from a new source of funds if authorized.

Judy Colby recommended that the selectmen meet with the new school board, the RSU Withdrawal Committee, the Budget Committee, attorneys and consultants in order to gain a better understanding of how to proceed with the \$2,000,000. The use of the approved bond funds for the school committee, summer salaries, and RSU withdrawal costs was discussed. Budget Committee members present agreed that it would be a good idea to meet with all parties.

B. Bond Anticipation Note Awards for Wastewater Project and RSU Withdrawal: Smith said letters for two-year BANs which would be drawn down as needed had been sent to area banks. Responses were due on January 8 and Smith asked for authorization to award the BANs. **Judy Colby moved to authorize the Chair of the Board, the Treasurer, and the Town Manager to award the bond anticipation notes to the lowest qualified bidders. Vote 5-0-0.**

## 13. Town Manager's Report

A. Maine Eastern Railroad service to Wiscasset and proposed shuttle service to Boothbay Harbor: Smith said Wiscasset will be made part of the Midcoast Limited train service from Brunswick to Rockland. The Amtrack Downeaster from Boston will connect with the Midcoast Limited in Brunswick, providing service from Boston to Rockland. The service will run Friday, Saturday and Sunday from July to Columbus Day. The Wiscasset Flyer will provide trips on Saturdays from Wiscasset to Bath and from Wiscasset to Newcastle. The MERR will move its hub to Railroad Avenue and will sell tickets from a caboose in an effort to increase train passengers to the area. Smith has been involved in talks with the DOT, State Chamber of Commerce, County Commissioners and others about shuttle service from Wiscasset to Boothbay connecting to the trolley shuttle and an outer shuttle to Railway Village, the botanical gardens and the aquarium. The Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission has approached the DOT for funding for one year to determine interest with a 20% match by the towns and organizations involved. MERR has agreed to sell train tickets for the Boothbay Harbor shuttle and will collect a portion of the shuttle service fee.

**B. Open Town Meeting:** A special town meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on January 14, at the Wiscasset Community Center on the Molnlycke TIF. The selectmen will meet in executive session in the Community Center conference room at 5:30 p.m.

**14. Adjournment**

**Judy Colby moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.. Vote 5-0-0**

**Pam Dunning moved to reconvene the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.** Arrangements will be made for the Bath Road Master Plan Committee to meet with the Comprehensive Plan Committee to update the latter committee on the latest plans. Judy Colby was appointed to meet with the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

**Judy Colby moved to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.**