

WISCASSET SELECT BOARD,  
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR  
DECEMBER 5, 2017

Present: Bob Blagden, Chair Judy Colby, Kathy Martin-Savage, Vice Chair Ben Rines, Jr., Jeff Slack and Town Manager Marian Anderson

Chair Judy Colby called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants

**a. Kathy Martin-Savage moved to approve the payroll warrants of November 24 and December 1, 2017. Vote 5-0-0.**

**b. Ben Rines, Jr., moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of November 28 and December 5, 2017. Vote 5-0-0.**

3. Approval of Minutes

**Ben Rines, Jr., moved to approve the minutes of November 21 and 28, 2017. Vote 5-0-0.**

4. Special Presentations or Awards

a. Wendy Williams, EMS Service Recognition Award: Toby Martin, EMS Director, recognized the following three providers: Anita, Tanya and Megan who had passed the National Advanced Level course. Martin also recognized Wendy Williams for her service and commitment. Williams has been Deputy Chief for 12 years and is stepping down from that position, although she will remain a paramedic provider.

5. Committee Appointments – none

6. Public Hearings – none

7. Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

Susan Blagden expressed her distress at this year's town Christmas lighting which does not follow the customary pattern of white lights on all trees except for the town Christmas tree. She said the white lights represented purity and the colored lights on the town Christmas tree, glory.

Pam Dunning, Director of Wiscasset Public Library, referred to her letter to the select board members regarding the deletion of the library funding from the draft budget. She said she could not understand cutting an entire budget line the voters pass every year and before a request had been made. She said WPL is the oldest continuous circulation library in the country (218 years) and provides a valuable service to the community. She asked the board to consider the consequences and let the voters decide.

Steve Christiansen said the agenda limits the speakers under the Public Comment section to residents, taxpayers, or in the case of an organization an authorized representative of a resident or taxpayer of the Town of Wiscasset and he asked that this rule be followed in the case of the shop owners or others who were not residents. He asked the board to stop wasting money on MDOT lawsuits. He also described the condition of town sidewalks where shrubbery and other objects block sidewalks and asked that the obstructions be removed by the owners.

Colleen Zillow commented on the petition deleting the SRO position. She said the SRO was an important position and was a line of communication that would be lost if the position was eliminated.

Ben Rines, Jr., moved to suspend the rules and allow Nick Dalton, a resident of Jefferson, to speak. Vote 4-0-1 (Blagden abstained). Dalton said he came to the board about the prompt removal and destruction of his HESPER sculpture. Colby said Dalton had requested approval to display the sculpture from May 1 to October 1, 2017, which the board granted. On October 3, 2017 when the sculpture had not been removed, word was left with Mr. Dalton's employer that he should remove the sculpture. Mr. Dalton said he had sent an email to Town Planner Ben Averill which was not returned although Averill had not worked for the town since July 1. On October 23, the sculpture was removed by the Public Works Department. Dalton said he would be moving to reclaim the value of the structure.

Keith Oehmig, Wiscasset Bay Gallery, said the Doering family has invited Wiscasset residents to hear a presentation by T and D Engineering on a traffic study relative to the MDOT traffic improvement project at 7 p.m. on December 12 at the Community Center.

Ann Leslie thanked the board for taking action against the MDOT and standing up for the local ordinances and Maine law. She said what happens in Wiscasset will become a model for other Maine towns.

Ben Rines, Jr., responding to Pam Dunning's comments, said the draft budget presented at the previous meeting was a working document and did not reflect final numbers.

#### 8. Department Head or Committee Chair – none

#### 9. Unfinished Business

a. Update on Budget Cuts: Marian Anderson said she had looked at the fixed costs that the Town has no control over (wages, health insurance, projected Wiscasset Water District Increase, TRIO software increase) which totaled \$108,612.85. Including the fixed costs in the budget calculation would result in less than a 1% increase in the tax rate. If nothing is taken from surplus or the fund balance, Anderson said the mil rate would be \$20/\$1000. Anderson also presented a comparison of mil rates of surrounding towns. In response to Toby Martin's question regarding the EMS budget, Ben Rines, Jr., said it was up to the Manager and Department Heads to set the budget for next year.

b. Discussion regarding location for future voting (first discussed June 27, 2017): A memo from Town Clerk Linda Perry outlined the compliance requirements the Town would have to meet to change the voting place to the Municipal Building. Perry said an assessment of the Municipal Building Hearing Room and its surroundings could be done if the board wished to pursue it. After discussion, including the possibility of voters having to wait to vote outside the building in bad weather, there was a consensus to not change the voting place.

c. Town Clock Update – Evaluation of clock tower damage: A letter from Lincoln/Haney Engineering Associates, Inc. outlined their findings and recommendations for the damage at the clock tower on Fort Hill Street. The report indicated that water damage is evident throughout the tower, pigeon carcasses were found in the cupola, steel plates have rusted and wood members have rotted. The built-up beams that support the cupola are badly decayed and this condition should be addressed as soon as possible to prevent further damage. Jason Putnam who had previously offered to work on the tower said he would inspect the damage.

## 10. New Business

a. New Business License Application-John and Tammy Chapman, The Cracked Egg: The new restaurant located at the former Hunters' Breakfast will open after the first of the year.

b. Special Town Meeting-Litigation Costs: Attorney Peter Murray had reported that litigation costs as of November 30 were \$16,021.80. Anderson said the hourly rate had been discounted by 10% by Murray. As of November 16, 2017, the amount paid to Bernstein Shur on the Wawenock lawsuit (because Wiscasset was a party of interest) was \$31,183, bringing the total legal costs to \$47,204.80. **Ben Rines, Jr., moved to pay the \$16,021.80 out of contingency funds.**

Jody Abelo asked if the board had a contingency plan in the event MDOT won and was awarded legal fees. He asked Bob Blagden, Kathy Martin-Savage and Ben Rines, Jr., how much tax-payers' money they were willing to pay and when was it enough. Blagden replied that it would be the taxpayers who decided; the suit involves the town ordinances and the town would have to decide whether and how much to spend.

Susan Blagden said the board could apply for historic preservation grants and the Historic Preservation Commission would be looking into that.

Seaver Leslie, member of the Citizens Advisory Committee, disagreed that it was a crisis and that the board was looking out for the well-being of businesses year-round, not just 10 weeks in the summer.

Sherry Dunbar cited the votes for the MDOT traffic plan, and Ben Rines, Jr., responded that the voters had voted for the Historic Preservation Ordinance which would be violated under the current plan, and the board was only asking the State to go through the town process. Kathy Martin-Savage said a crisis had been mentioned and it would be a crisis if business owners were talking about moving out of town. Todd Souza expressed concern about the lack of planning and not looking at the big picture. He said there was no governance; the board reacts to one group or another, hoping something will change, but not moving forward. He asked the board to come back with a plan and funding for a plan.

Bob Blagden said the board did not have a clear mandate to move forward despite the two votes on the subject although none were about money. If taxpayers don't want to fund it, they will vote no and that will be the end of it.

Kim Dolce said decisions about the MDOT plan are difficult but to say it isn't valid or an emergency is a mistake. She said she took offense and a Lincoln County planner who called Wiscasset a pass-thru town. She added that the voters should defend the businesses by supporting parking because if the stores close, no one will come and invest in Wiscasset and then it will be a pass-thru town. Colby said the board

would be meeting with the attorney, and will then have a better direction. **Vote 3-2-0** (Colby and Slack opposed)

c. Audit Update: The auditor will be working in the office next week and will be obtaining the audit report from the school. The audit report will be on the agenda for the first meeting in January.

11. Town Manager's Report: Anderson said the draft budget had been adjusted for some election rule changes and there are still two dates needed to complete the draft.

Anderson said she had received an email from Bob Faunce saying that he can't help revise and update the Historic Preservation ordinance under present funding. She asked if money should be put in the budget for this project. She also asked if the board wanted to fund recording secretaries. Bob Blagden mentioned that Wiscasset is carrying the majority of funding for the jail, court house, communications center, planning office, and recycling center and it was hard to see why they would pull the plug on helping us. There was a consensus to not fund the project. Susan said she would appreciate the selectmen and others telling her what needs changing - susan@wiscasst.net Bob Blagden said people voted to uphold the ordinance, not rewrite it.

2. Other Board Business: Bob Blagden said that after Jason looks at the clock tower, he would like the board to discuss a course of action before it becomes a last minute decision. He also said he did not like Saturday budget meetings and prefers addressing a couple budgets at a time in the evening.

### 13. Assessor's Business

a. **Jeff Slack moved to approve the abatements for Matthew Reed, Map U02, Lot 016, \$166.39 and for Ronald Woodside, Map 04, Lot 002-23, \$125.00. Vote 5-0-0.**

In response to Ben Rines, Jr.'s question, Anderson said money was being allocated for a revaluation over a period of four years. She said the downtown needs revaluating. Anderson will find out what the reval will cost.

### 14 Adjournment

**Kathy Martin Savage moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.**