

WISCASSET SELECT BOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
AUGUST 3, 2021

Present: Kim Andersson, Terry Heller, Vice Chair Dusty Jones, Chair Sarah Whitfield and Town Manager Dennis Simmons

Absent: Pam Dunning

Chair Sarah Whitfield called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants

- a. **Terry Heller moved to approve the payroll warrants of July 23 and July 30. Vote 4-0-0.**
- b. **Terry Heller moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of July 27 and August 3, 2021. Vote 4-0-0.**

3. Approval of Minutes

Terry Heller moved to approve the minutes of July 20, 2021, as amended. Vote 4-0-0.

4. Special Presentations or Awards – none

5. Committee Appointments

a. Discussion as to the procedure for appointing future members to the School Study Committee: The deadline for applications is August 16 and there was a consensus to wait until the deadline before reviewing the applications or making appointments. The board discussed possibly interviewing the candidates, a suggestion that the superintendent nominate a teacher and whether to require residency for teachers. The board will develop criteria by which to consider applicants.

6. Public Hearings - none

7. Public Comment

Referring to abstentions made at previous meetings on votes involving Schoonerfest, Chris Reed cited sections from the State statutes (Chapter 123, Section 6) which stated that where there was no monetary consideration even the appearance of conflict of interest should be avoided by municipal officials. He said it was up to the board to establish a code of ethics.

8. Department Head or Committee Chair:

Comment [JL1]:

Comment [JL2]:

Comment [JL3]:

Comment [JL4]:

a. Rick Tetrev, Airport fuel tanks maintenance issue: Tetrev reported that a recent inspection by Lakes Region Environmental had uncovered maintenance issues on the fuel tanks which need attention. In order to work on the fuel tanks, it will be necessary to download and store the aviation and jet fuel separately. He recommended doing the work as soon as possible and suggested doing it when the airport is closed down in September for installation of the solar array. Tetrev said there is \$5,000 in CARES funds left over from last year and he expects to receive \$13,000 this year. Dennis Simmons said there is \$20,002 left over from last year's airport budget and its use will be a part of the discussion on carryover funds. There is \$9,000 in this year's budget for the repair. Steve Williams, chair of the Airport Committee reinforced Tetrev's report saying the sale of fuel is the foundation for utilization of the airport, and unlike other area airports, it offers cheapest fuel and 24-hour self-service. Tetrev will send his report to the board members. Discussion on the need for the airport will be the subject of a future workshop.

9. Unfinished Business

a. Set date for special town meeting: **Terry Heller moved to set August 31, 2021, as the date for the special town meeting. Vote 4-0-0.**

b. Cemetery fence recommendation: **Kim Andersson moved to approve the fence for the Ancient Cemetery as recommended by the Cemetery Committee and authorize the the Town Manager to seek bids. Vote 4-0-0.** In response to Simmons' question, Peter Wells said the actual cost of the gate may be more than was originally planned and asked that the amount authorized be increased. Terry Heller recommended increasing the amount to no more than \$50,000. Kim Dolce commented that the board had seemed more concerned with spending \$37,000 on fuel tanks at the airport than on increasing the cost of a highly inappropriate arch to \$50,000. **Kim Andersson moved to approve the improvements to the Ancient Cemetery as recommended by the Cemetery Committee and place an article on the special town meeting warrant seeking voter approval of funding from the Lot Sales reserve account recommended amount not to exceed \$50,000.** Chris Reed said the public doesn't know enough about the proposed fence and gate to vote on the article and suggested that the fence like that at the Greenlawn Cemetery would be more appropriate and historically correct and would last longer than the aluminum fence proposed **Vote 4-0-0.**

c. Art Gallery lease discussion: Simmons said the article on the warrant would not be to approve the lease, but to give the board the authority to negotiate and execute the lease. The article will be on the August 31st special town meeting warrant.

10. New Business

a. Kurt Penney, Revision Energy Presentation of the Maine Net Energy Billing Program: Penney said that in 2019 a solar bill was signed by the governor to allow for larger solar projects and to allow a net energy billing credit. He said two things are necessary – a solar farm to produce the net energy billing credit energy and an associated electric bill to monetize solar production. He said he anticipated annual savings for Wiscasset of \$25,000. His company is proposing a 20-year agreement at a discount of 20%

for the net energy billing credit. The cost to build the system is \$1.5 million, the cost of which will be paid for by investors and partners. The program will always provide a 20% savings. There will be no equipment changes, no upgrades, just a credit. A formal presentation will be made at a later time. Terry Heller asked for written information before the presentation.

b. Bid Openings – Cleanup of Lowelltown Road property: One bid was received to clean up the property whose owner refused to do so. The bid received from Blagden was \$8,800. Simmons said the anticipated cost was \$7,500. **Terry Heller moved to authorize the Town Manager to award the bid to the lowest qualified bidder. Vote 4-0-0.**

c. Correspondence

- Letter from MMA Worker’s Compensation fund: Dennis Simmons said a check for \$16,537 was received from the Maine Municipal Association for good performance and loss prevention programs.
- Letter from Don Davis: The Wiscasset Ambulance Fund had received a check for \$500 in gratitude for assistance Mr. Davis had recently received.

d. Acceptance of a donation to the EMS Department: **Kim Andersson moved to accept the \$500 donation from Don Davis for the EMS Department and to authorize the EMS Director and Town Manager to use the funds as they deem necessary. Vote 4-0-0.**

e. Acceptance of FAA Runway Reconstruction Grant: Simmons said that although the grant originally was for 90% of the \$3,010,704 cost of runway construction, the FAA will now be picking up the total cost. **Kim Andersson moved to instruct, delegate, and authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement for the Wiscasset Municipal Airport with the Federal Aviation Administration identified as 3-23-0049-926-2021 with a Federal Award date of July 23, 2021. Vote 3-1-0.** (Jones opposed.) In response to requests for more information on the airport, Sarah Whitfield said the airport will be discussed at a future workshop. A workshop on August 31st was proposed.

f. Certify to the Town Clerk a true copy of the Solar Energy Conversion Systems Ordinance to be presented to the voters on the next town meeting warrant. Simmons explained the motion was only to put the ordinance on the ballot, not to approve it. **Kim Anderson moved to certify to the Town Clerk a true copy of the Solar Conversion Systems Ordinance. Vote 4-0-0.**

g. Maine Municipal Association Election Ballot: **Kim Andersson moved to approve the ballot for the election of the Vice President and Executive Committee members of the Maine Municipal Association: Vote 4-0-0.**

h. Discussion regarding the formation of a town Broadband Committee: Carla Dickstein had made a presentation to the Comprehensive Plan Committee (which will be put on the website), and she advised that a committee be formed. **Dusty Jones moved to form a broadband committee. Vote 4-0-0.** Five members were suggested.

11. Town Manager’s Report

Dennis Simmons said there had been only one bid on the brownfield cleanup at Mason Station which was \$300,000 more than the Town had to spend. The work will be broken up into 10 tasks and be bid on separately.

With regard to the coronavirus, Simmons said that Lincoln County was in the substantial transmission stage where masks are recommended for indoor meetings. He said he was not planning on making changes unless the trend continued. In the meantime, he will be looking at the school and the community center or other options for the meetings.

Simmons announced that office hours on Thursday, August 12 will be from 8:30 to 12:30 and 1:30 to 5:00 due to staff shortage.

12. Other Board Business

Ed Polewarczyk asked if the Town had decided not to buy energy from MSD Wiscasset. Simmons said no decision had been made.

Sarah Whitfield announced that the Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting on Education will be held on September 20 via zoom and she encouraged member to watch.

Dusty Jones distributed a copy of a letter to the editor from Karen Wilson regarding the ballot questions on the police cruiser and school resource officer which had failed in June. She said she was shocked at the board's decision to allow a second chance to vote on the cruiser and SRO. She said over 400 residents had voted by ballot in June and an in-person meeting was unlikely to attract more than 50 voters. She urged voters to attend the special town meeting to send a message to the selectmen that they should respect the election results. Dusty Jones said he regretted his vote to put the two items on the ballot and asked they not be put on the ballot.

Terry Heller said that changes had been made since the June vote and she recommended responding to the letters to the editor so that readers get corrected information. Sarah Whitfield said the situation with the SRO had changed as the school would be contributing money; and the cruiser will be replacing a current vehicle and will not be an addition. In person town meetings will allow explanations to be made.

Dusty Jones recommended a new committee be formed to deal with some of the communication problems. The importance of Informing the public was discussed even though monthly reports were on the website. The matter will be on the next agenda for a workshop.

13. Adjournment

Dusty Jones moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. Vote 4-0-0.