

WISCASSET SELECTBOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
JANUARY 18, 2022

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

Chair Sarah Whitfield called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants

a. **Pam Dunning moved to approve the payroll warrants of January 1 and January 14, 2022. Vote 5-0-0.**

b. **Terry Heller moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of January 11 and January 18, 2022. Vote 5-0-0.**

2. Approval of Minutes

a. **Pam Dunning moved to approve the minutes of January 4, 2022 as amended. Vote 5-0-0.**

3. Special Presentations or Awards

Town Manager Dennis Simmons thanked the Police Chief, and Ted Snowden and Earl Babcock of the Public Works Department who assisted a homeless individual with two dogs find a place to stay in the subzero weather over the weekend.

4. Committee Appointments – none

5. Public Hearings – none

6. Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

Lucia Droby updated the board on the James Weldon Johnson marker proposal. She and Terry Heller had met with task force members Rep. Rachel Talbott Ross, Tony Hill from Jacksonville, FL and historian Meadow Dibble and it was recommended that the Town work with the task force in developing plans for the marker. Rep. Ross will speak at the February 1 meeting about devising a collaborative approach between town and task force to memorialize James Weldon Johnson in Wiscasset. Terry Heller said the delay in order for the task force to get on board should not delay the celebration on June 17.

7. Department Head or Committee Chair

In response to Kim Andersson's question about the violation at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Dennis Simmons said there was no fee for the violation.

8. Unfinished Business

a. Adoption of updated Personnel Policy: **Terry Heller moved to adopt the updated Personnel Policy. Vote 5-0-0.**

9. New Business

a. Personal Property tax collection: Dennis Simmons described the three methods by which the Town could attempt to collect overdue personal property taxes: Small Claims court (which is costly and time-consuming), distraint (actual taking and detention of personal property) or filing of a tax lien. Tax Collector Sue Anderson recommended that letters be sent to the overdue account holders advising them that unless the full amount is paid within 30 days, the account will be given to a collection agency. Simmons asked for permission to enter into an agreement with the Thomas Agency if necessary. **Pam Dunning moved to authorize the town manager to execute a Collection Agency Agreement with the Thomas Agency for the purpose of collecting delinquent personal property tax accounts. Vote 5-0-0.**

b. Tax Acquired Properties – 47 and 51 Old Ferry Road: The town owns these two tax-acquired properties. The bank holding the mortgage on 47 Old Ferry Road has informed the Town that it does not want the property. There are older mobile homes on both properties and Simmons recommended disposing of the properties. The occupant of 51 Old Ferry Road has offered to purchase both properties for the amounts due which currently total \$19,720.32. **Pam Dunning moved to authorize the town manager to enter a sale agreement on this property with the current resident providing the current resident pays within in 30 days. Vote 5-0-0.**

c. Request for Proposal – Auditing Services: Simmons said the current auditor's contract is expiring. It was the consensus of the board to request bid proposals for auditing services.

d. Monthly Financials

e. School Resource Officer grant discussion: Sarah Whitfield clarified for the record that it was the voters not the selectmen who voted against the School Resource Officer. Simmons reported he had met with School Superintendent Terry Wood and Police Chief Larry Hesseltine on the funds she received for an SRO. In addition to the school funds, town funds would be required; however, the voters had voted the budget down. Simmons said one officer would be going to the academy until the end of the school year and the force is short one officer, resulting in a staffing shortage. Chief Hesseltine said he is in the schools frequently and sees the need for an SRO. He recommended that the SRO start next September at the beginning of the new school year because of the current staff shortage. Kim Andersson said she would be in favor of putting the budget on the next town warrant in June but not changing the results of the last vote. She said the vote should be on the SRO, not on the money. Pam Dunning favored

putting the SRO on the warrant and including the cost of an SRO in the next police budget with income from the school funds (for an SRO) as revenue. Dusty Jones asked for clarification on the monitoring of traffic near the schools and whether it would be done regardless of whether or not there was an SRO. He illustrated by graphs that a greater percentage of voters had voted against the SRO than had opposed other articles on the ballot. He said he would like to see a citizens' petition to put the SRO on the ballot. Hesseltine said in the absence of an SRO, he covers the school zone traffic when possible. In response to Terry Heller's question, he said typically an SRO would spend the entire day in the schools unless called away in an emergency.

Mike Maney had sent an email to the board pointing out good stories about the SRO in the schools and his bonding with the community. However, he said bad situations had been avoided by the presence of an SRO. He said he was dumbfounded that the SRO had been discontinued and was in favor of it being restored.

Dusty Jones encouraged townspeople to take advantage of the public comment section during the meeting to tell the board how they feel about matters. Dennis Simmons said the board can always hold public hearings on controversial topics in order to get feedback from voters. The board will revisit the SRO matter in the upcoming budget cycle.

10. Town Manager's Report

Items in the report were discussed during the meeting.

11. Other Board Business

a. Assessors' Abatements: **Pam Dunning moved to approve the abatement in the amount of \$104.42 for Richard F. Moore, Map R03, Lot 33-4 as recommended by the Assessors' Agent Ellery G Bane. Vote 5-0-0.**

b. Assessors' Supplemental: **Pam Dunning moved to approve the Supplemental in the amount of \$899.59 for Nikolai A. and Marie Golubow, Map R03, Lot 33-2 as recommended by the Assessors' Agent Ellery G Bane. Vote 5-0-0.**

12. Adjournment

Pam Dunning moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.