

Town of Stow

Selectmen Meeting Minutes DATE 10-22-2024

Opening: The Board of Selectmen meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm in Stow, Maine by Jim Wilfong.

Present

Selectmen: Ray Ryan, Jim Wilfong, Carl Lindblade

Town Clerk: Christine Carone **Deputy Clerk:** Kathleen Panno **Treasurer:** Nancy Boros

Residents/Guests: Robert Flint, Budget Committee, Broadband Liaison

Bell Stafford, Road Task Force

Gabrielle Chiddy, Chiddy Designs (websites)

Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved

Approval of Minutes: Minutes Approved from 10-08-2024 meeting **Approved 3-0** (*with updated comment regarding telephone poles in town*)

Treasures Report:

Cash Balance \$211,216

Warrant #70 \$72,787.45 Approved 3-0

We have a rough estimate from FEMA that our projected funding will be around \$198,000. This number may be adjusted downwards as the review progresses. N.Boros drew \$125k, the balance of the tax anticipation note last week.

The Town has received the audit engagement letter for FYE 2024. It must be signed and returned by November 4th. The fee for this year is \$7,200 for the audit, a 20% increase from last year plus an additional fee of \$650 for the preparation of our fixed asset schedules. Please approve audit engagement. **Select Board approves 3-0**

Our excess broadband funds from the state are \$2,336.13. The funds will be transferred to the general fund at year end. **Select Board approves 3-0**

Snow account – before T. Morse’s new contract we had \$42,563 left to spend. The 2024/2025 contract is much higher, and the first three payments in 2024 will cost \$46,973. Therefore the town will be overbudget in snow at FYE 12.31.2024 by \$4,410.

Fire Hydrants – The Town is over budget by \$975

Town Hall Deferred Maintenance – The Town is over budget by \$6,606 due to the unexpected septic problem.

We received \$30,252.15 from the State for Tree Growth.

We received the Lovell Transfer Station invoice, it is \$49,361, a 3.5% increase, it is due Dec 11th.

The Select Board approved \$400 from the Conservation Committee's funding to pay the Tree Lighting expenses. **Select Board approves 3-0**

Clerks Business:

Tax Commitment – Selectboard motion to approve \$15.85 per mil, an increase of 5.67% (PY rate was \$15.00). Every dollar increase per mil raises \$70,000 for the town. The Homestead exemption has been reduced to 75% from 100% by the State of Maine. C.Carone will notify O'Donnell to commit the taxes by the end of the week. The Selectboard will sign the tax commitment and then tax bills will be sent in the first week of November. **Select Board approves 3-0**

Deputy Clerk's Business:

The Town received a \$1,100 grant that K. Panno applied for through MMA. The funds will be used to pay for improved outside lighting. K. Panno will schedule the work and determine the best solution for the parking lot and emergency door lighting. **Select Board approves 3-0**

K. Panno attended the Planning Board meeting to discuss presenting the Food Sovereignty Act at a town forum for approval to be added to the 2025 town warrant.

Policy Contracts and Insurance (Ray Ryan)

Troy Morse orders the salt for the roads. R. Ryan submitted the WC application. R. Ryan will forward the WC invoice to N.Boros for payment, it will be sent December.

Maintenance and Broadband: (Carl Lindblade) –

C. Lindblade is going to secure a realtor to sell a foreclosed land lot. The lot is not developed.

C. Lindblade will Maine's Community Resilience Partnership to enroll Stow in their program. The program has grants of up to \$75,000. The deadline for the upcoming cohort is November 6th.

No maintenance report – see K. Panno's report

Road Report: (Jim Wilfong)

Selectboard signed an Infrastructure Adaptation Fund grant for \$76,000 with the State of Maine DOT. The town's obligation is \$4,000. Jim Siragusa and J. Wilfong submitted this grant. **Select Board approves 3-0**

J.Wilfong is in touch with F. Wilson to start a road project on So. Chatham Rd. A culvert will be replaced, and ditches will be dug.

The final bridge inspection report for the Ezra Heald and Stone House Bridges were inspected and will be forwarded to the town shortly. As soon as all invoices are received J. Wilfong and N. Boros will complete the final progress report to secure the USFS grant funding.

A.Eastman filled potholes and Bill Briggs has been grading the roads. Potholes are repaired in the spring and fall each year.

Jim Wilfong has asked Rolfe Inc. to screen more sand for the salt shed. The cost will be a little over \$15,000. This will produce a 3 year supply of sand. Spectrum is storing items at the sand

pit. They will have the sand shed area plowed at their cost. Spectrum will start working in Stow shortly.

Open Issues:

New Business :

Road Task Force (Belle Stafford)

The Road Task Force is interested in creating a Road Committee. B. Stafford inquired about how a warrant article is added to the 2025 warrant for such a request. The Selectboard responded that the first action is to ask the Selectboard. Any requests should be presented by year end. (In the event a Selectboard declines a request, a petition can be started. The requirement is that the number of signers on the petition must be equal to or exceed 15% of the number of voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election.)

Website Vendor - (Gabrielle Chiddy of Chiddy Designs)

G. Chiddy was invited to discuss updating the Town's Website. A discussion ensued regarding upgrades to the searchability of the website as well as adding more content, photos, adding an ability to send email notifications, and creating a town calendar and bulletin board for notifications. G. Chiddy presented an estimate of \$5,415 to build a new website and a retainer fee of \$50/month for 2 hours of support. The support hours roll over from month to month. Any additional time charged is between \$55 - \$80 per hour.

Support is \$50/month, hours roll over

Budget Committee – (R. Flint)

R. Flint stated the budget committee would like to investigate the possibility of collecting RE taxes semi-annually or quarterly. This would provide the town with a cashflow throughout the year and mitigate the need for a tax anticipation note.

Public Comment: NA

Meeting adjourned 7:50 pm Next meeting will be Tuesday 11-12-2024 at 6:00 pm

Minutes submitted by Nancy Boros

Open Items

Policy Contracts and Insurance (Ray Ryan)

Security cameras for salt shed – in progress

Obtaining cost to soundproof the town hall – in progress

Monitoring receipt of WC invoice from MMA

Maintenance and Broadband: (Carl Lindblade)

Ordinance regarding lots with trailers on them and no septic system – planning board is overseeing this

Sale of foreclosed properties – in progress

Editing committee policy

Researching cost of shed at TH for 2025 budget

Researching upgrade of website for 2025 budget, contacting local web designer

Researching condemning properties not in suitable living conditions – on hold

Working with Community Resilience Partnership, deadline Nov 8, 2025

Road Report: (Jim Wilfong)

Ezra Heald Bridge/Stone House Bridge – in progress

J. Wilfong to set up meeting with Select board, CEO and Planning Board regarding road and building issues

J. Wilfong will contact P. Coughlin re traffic counters

J. Wilfong will contact Union Hill residents regarding culvert replacement

Work with Planning Board to ascertain excavation activity at a property passed to JW

Town Office

N.Boros continue w FEMA, submit Me DOT grant

N.Boros to monitor bridge payments and bridge grant progress reports w USFS

N.Boros to start uploading audit docs

C.Carone – sale of foreclosed properties – in progress

C. Carone – committing taxes

K. Panno – scheduling outdoor lighting, coordinate handing tree lights

Tally timesheets submitted by JW RR CL CC KP NB to determine how time is allocated to different areas and tasks
– no timesheets submitted; project dropped.