

WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JULY 21, 2009

(tape recorded meeting)

Present: Chairman Bob Blagden, Bill Curtis, Vice Chairman Phil DiVece, Pam Dunning
and Bob Fairfield

Absent: Town Manager Arthur Faucher

1. Call to Order

The chairman called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

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

3. Approve minutes of July 14, 2009

With the change of Foye Street to Foye Road, **Phil DiVece moved to accept the minutes of July 14, 2009 as written. Vote 5-0-0.**

4. Citizen Comment

Regarding the RSU vote on Tuesday, July 28, Steve Mehrl said the local school budget had increased from \$4,485,745 last year to \$5,278,106. He encouraged voters to examine the budget numbers being proposed.

Greg Curtis said he had examined the electrical service at the pier and recommended adding five receptacles at the pier and eliminating the rest. The conduit would be eliminated, and wiring would be below the pier. Depending on the weather, the work could be completed by Thursday, July 23rd. He said this would be approved by the state, although an upgrade should be considered in the future. The pier currently has 90 amp service which could be upgraded to 200 amp service without a lot of expense.

Bob Blagden noted that two of the vendors provide their own wiring and recommended that the three issues the electrical inspector had pointed out with Java Joe's wiring should be brought to the vendor's attention and that he be given two weeks to comply. Bob Fairfield and Bob Blagden will meet with the vendor.

Long-range planning for the pier was discussed and recommendations included selectmen's involvement with the Waterfront Committee in the planning process. The boat launch, bathrooms, electrical work and lighting were pointed out as needing work. Steve Mehrl said the pier had no historical value and suggested removing it.

Steve Mehrl said he and Arthur Faucher had met with John Eldridge, Finance Director of Brunswick on the concept of gross budgeting. Eldridge had recommended special revenue accounts and will be sending further information.

Don Jones said there had been problems with access to the building where the town clock is located, making it difficult to adjust the clock. He said the deed to the building gives the town access "at all reasonable times" and the owners should be contacted for access or for a key so that the clock can be maintained. In the past, the owners had refused to supply a key to the town as it would be difficult to allow access with their alarm system.

In response to Ed Polewarczyk's question, Bob Blagden said the effect of the increase in Wiscasset's share of the RSU budget would probably result in an increase of 2 mills in the tax rate.

Joe Piccarillo recommended getting the audio-video system fixed as it is difficult to understand speakers when selectmen's meetings are broadcast on TV. Bob Blagden asked that the problem be addressed and that the town not spend a lot of money on it.

Phil DiVece asked why the web page was not up and running and said he had received complaints. Steve Mehrl said that when Lisa Garman was given information, it was put on the page, but it was necessary for department heads and others to provide updates.

5. Jim George: Year-end Expense and Summary Reports

The treasurer distributed two reports, the Expense Summary Report and the Expense/Revenue Summary Report that listed the enterprise accounts. He explained that the deficit in the Contractual Services account had been covered by contingent funds; the deficit in the General Assistance account had been covered from the fund balance. Two other accounts, Impact and Senior Center, showed deficits but those were covered by a surplus of revenues. There is an overdraft in the Airport account and the vote to appropriate funds to cover this will be on the September 8 ballot.

Bob Blagden asked if a selectmen's vote was necessary to move funds to cover overdrafts. Jim George said that it would have been necessary with the former form of town government but he thought it was now the responsibility of the town manager; however, he would check with MMA.

Phil DiVece moved to add Jim George to the Edward Jones steering committee. Vote 4-1-0. (Curtis opposed). Jim George said it was his understanding that the committee would look at quarterly reports and how Edward Jones was handling town reserves. Bob Blagden said that if the committee was uncomfortable with Edward Jones, it could make recommendations, but any decision on changes would be made by the selectmen.

The difficulty in understanding the financial reports using the current accounting software was discussed. Jim George said that it was not the fault of the software; the difficulty was in using two methods of accounting.

6. Christine Wolfe: Special town meeting warrant for September 8, 2009

The town clerk distributed copies of the warrant to which a third question had been added to cover the shortfall in the airport budget. She asked for approval to add the question to the ballot and for recommendations from the selectmen and Budget Committee. **Pam Dunning moved to approve Question 3 adding "revenue" before shortfall.** The question would read, "Shall the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$12,040 (the entire amount to come from surplus) for the purpose of addressing the revenue shortfall in the Municipal Airport 2008-2009 operation budget?" Phil DiVece said he would like to have the Budget Committee's recommendation and also to meet with the Town Manager and Airport Manager before voting on the motion. **Vote 4-1-0.** Further action on the ballot was postponed until the Budget Committee reported its recommendation.

In response to a suggestion that airport excise tax bills be sent out twice a year so that some of the revenue would be received earlier in the year, Jim George said the airport excise tax bills are sent out by the state.

Christine Wolfe asked for approval of the ballot clerks, Patty Bridgham and Katharine Martin-Savage, for the August 28 election. Polls will be open from noon to 8 p.m. **Phil DiVece moved to appoint Katharine Martin-Savage and Patricia Bridgham as ballot clerks for the upcoming (RSU) election. Vote 5-0-0.**

Bob Blagden moved to sign the September 8 special election warrant. Vote 5-0-0.

In response to questions on the legality or advisability of putting Question 3 on the ballot, Bob Blagden said that although the overdraft should have been addressed previously, because the airport exceeded the authority given it by the town, further authorization is now needed.

Phil DiVece moved to appoint Jon Hentz as Shellfish Warden. Vote 5-0-0.

7. Roland Abbott, Director of Ambulance Service

- Weekend Coverage Compensation: Abbott said the ambulance service has been losing employees because of the difficulty competing with the compensation being paid by other towns. Wiscasset currently pays \$3 per hour for standby and at the hourly rate for calls. Other towns are paying \$12-\$13 per hour on duty. He said the Ambulance Service executive board recommended increasing the standby rate from \$3 to \$5. He said the funds are in the budget for this increase. **Phil DiVece moved to increase the weekend Ambulance Service compensation coverage from \$3/hr. to \$5/hr. for standby personnel. Vote 5-0-0.**
- Use of the former Superintendent's Office: Abbott said the number of calls to the ambulance Service has increased in the past year and the service needs to expand. He asked about the possibility of using the former superintendent's office and adding a garage as an alternative to building a new facility. He said the service is losing money because it has to turn down 25 to 30 transfer calls per month. A third ambulance will be needed in the near future and more space will be needed. The board discussed the possibility of the ambulance service being its own entity and the possibility of 501(C)(3) status. The future of the superintendent's office in the event the RSU is rescinded in November was brought up as well as the need to either heat or winterize the building if it is not being used. Bob Blagden said the town manager has already been approached about the building. He added that the possibility of a stand-alone ambulance service should be researched. **Pam Dunning moved to table a decision until the future of the Ambulance Department is looked into.** Abbott requested that a selectman be appointed to the 501 Committee. He said basic research on the matter of an independent ambulance service has been done. Bill Curtis volunteered to serve on the committee. **Vote 5-0-0.**

6. Continued

The Budget Committee returned from its deliberation and reported its 4-0 recommendation on Question 3 of the September 8 ballot. Steve Mehrl said the committee reluctantly voted to recommend and asked that the committee receive reports more frequently so that the condition of accounts can be monitored more closely. Bill Curtis reminded the board that 18 months ago the decision was made to invite department heads on a regular basis to report to the board and suggested that this be reinstated. **Pam Dunning moved to recommend the amount of \$12,040. Vote 3-2 (Blagden and DiVece opposed).**

8. Other Business

The Treasurer requested two quitclaim deeds be signed by the selectmen. **Bob Blagden moved to sign a quitclaim deeds to Edward R. Mank, Jr. Vote 5-0-0.**

Pam Dunning asked if anyone had looked into her request of June 30 regarding a typo in one of the ordinances. Don Jones said it had been referred to the ORC.

Bob Blagden said the RSU had asked about using the Adult Education building and the town manager had indicated Greg Potter, RSU Superintendent, would attend the July 21 meeting.

Faucher had advised the superintendent that the building may not be vacant until the first week in August. Blagden said he was hoping the superintendent would have been present at this meeting and would like to know who gave away two of the school buses to someone out of town.

Bob Blagden recommended that the request for proposals for cleanup of the Foye Road property be put on the agenda for the next meeting when the town manager would be present. He said he had been contacted by two contractors to assist in crushing tires and would ask the vice chairman to act on his behalf during discussions..

Phil DiVece asked that the assessing agent be present at the next meeting to discuss several property issues.

Bob Blagden said he had asked the town manager to look into the fact that a new employee was hired to mow at the airport at an hourly wage more than that being paid to employee who has been mowing the cemeteries for the past five years. He had not heard any more on the issue and thought an adjustment was in order. **Blagden moved to adjust Spencer Bailey's pay at the Highway Department to \$10 per hour.** This is the same rate of pay being paid at the airport. **Vote 5-0-0.**

9. Adjourn

At 8:45 p.m. **Phil DiVece moved to adjourn the meeting. Vote 5-0-0**