

WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN,
BOARD OF ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
APRIL 12, 2011

Preliminary minutes

(tape-recorded meeting)

SPECIAL SELECTMEN'S MEETING

Present: Bob Blagden, Vice Chairman Judy Colby, Pam Dunning, Chairman David Nichols, Ed Polewarczyk and Town Manager Laurie Smith

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. Public Comment on non-agenda items

Constance Schumann thanked the Wiscasset Police for their help and thoughtfulness during a recent family emergency.

Ed Polewarczyk read a letter from a Wiscasset parent of four children in Wiscasset schools who had contacted him regarding the www.wiscassetschools.org website, a link to which is on the town website. The writer objected to the Wiscasset Educational Research Panel's website because she thought the information contained was misleading or erroneous and she objected to the town's link to the WERP website, as it was not an official website of Wiscasset schools as it appeared to be. She requested that the link to WERP's website be removed from the town's website.

Polewarczyk said he had attended the RSU Finance Committee meeting where efforts were being made to reduce costs, although those efforts were masked by lack of state subsidies. He said he has had complaints from parents that the RSU is not as responsive as the school board previously was. Although not everyone voted for the consolidation, Polewarczyk thought there was an obligation to try to make it work

With regard to the WERP website, Polewarczyk said the subject of having two members with ties to the Board of Selectmen on WERP had come up and there was concern that these two members should recuse themselves, with which he agreed. He said the board had heard only one side of the question from the WERP.

Ed Polewarczyk moved that the Town Manager is directed to remove the link to the WERP website, as well as any reference to WERP in the town website.

In response to Pam Dunning's question, Town Manager Laurie Smith will check whether there are links to other organizations on the town's website. Bob Blagden said it had been made clear that WERP was a citizens' committee that was not associated with the town and as long as there was not a quorum of selectmen on it, he had no problem with it. David Nichols said the reason WERP could use the wiscassetschools.org name was that there is no longer a Wiscasset school system. Steve Mehrl suggested that the writer of the letter and the members of WERP, who had put much effort into their work, get together to discuss the issues. **Vote 3-0-2.**

In response to Clark Jones' question, Ron Lear advised that the tractor truck at the Transfer Station was not for sale.

4. Unfinished Business: Budgets

The line items where the selectmen and Budget Committee disagreed were discussed:

Public Utilities: The board did not accept the Budget Committee's recommendation to reduce streetlights by \$2,000; however, a policy will be developed to determine the criteria for removing streetlights.

Capital Improvements: The improvements will be voted on separately

Community Organizations: Community organizations will be listed separately on the ballot.

Selectmen's wages: This item was removed from the budget.

The selectmen voted on the following articles to appear on the warrant:

Article 4 - Estimated Revenue to reduce the tax commitment: **Ed Polewarczyk moved to accept the \$2,255,586 number. Vote 5-0-0.**

Article 5 - TIF funds transfer: **Ed Polewarczyk moved Article 5. Vote 5-0-0.**

Article 6 - General Government: **Ed Polewarczyk moved to accept \$551,604. Vote 5-0-0.**

Article 9 - Municipal Planning/Code Enforcement: This article will be separated into two articles, Municipal Planning/Municipal Boards & Committees and Code Enforcement.

Article 29 - Road and Sidewalk Repair - **Pam Dunning moved to approve Article 29 for \$150,000. Vote 5-0-0.**

Article 30 - Roof Repair: **Judy Colby moved Article 30 for \$15,000. Vote 5-0-0** (wording was changed to Municipal Building Roof Repair.)

Article 31 - Pump Replacement: **Pam Dunning moved to approve \$7,000. Vote 5-0-0** (wording was changed to Wiscasset Community Center Swimming Pool Pump Replacement.)

Article 32 - Transfer Station Truck: **Pam Dunning moved the sum of \$12,000. Vote 4-1-0.**

Article 33 - Public Works Sidewalk Machine: **Judy Colby moved the sum of \$65,000. Vote 4-1-0.** (wording was changed to Public Works Sidewalk Snowblower.)

Article 34 - Commercial Pier Debt: **Judy Colby moved the sum of \$5,000. Vote 4-1-0.**

Article 35 - Ice Rink Liner: **Judy Colby moved to remove Article 35. Vote 5-0-0.**

Article 36 - Wastewater Treatment Plant Stairs: **Judy Colby moved \$15,000 for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Stairs. Vote 5-0-0.**

Pam Dunning moved to approve \$50,000 for the WWTP generator: Vote 5-0-0. (This will be added to the warrant.)

No board vote is required on Articles 44, 45, 47-51.

A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for May 10 at 7 p.m. at the Community Center. A hearing on the recycling and road commissioner ordinances will also be held on May 10. Bob Blagden objected to a proposed change from an elected to an appointed road commissioner and added that this had not been discussed, nor had anyone spoken at a selectmen's meeting requesting the change. Pam Dunning spoke in favor of an appointed position, which would

provide continuity and allow a road commissioner to budget and make plans for future years. There was a consensus that this be an appointed position.

Laurie Smith reported that the trust documents for the Wiscasset Community Center, Wiscasset Senior Center, and Wiscasset Parks and Recreation Department had been reviewed by an attorney and updated. Changes made included increasing the time for gifts to be accepted or rejected, including the town manager in the consultation, and adding that, if the organization ceases to exist, the Trustees shall have the authority, in consultation with the Town Manager, to use the funds for a similar organization within or outside the Town of Wiscasset. In response to questions, Smith said the Senior Center Trustees had asked that a trust be set up for donations, as the Senior Center wanted to avoid insuring against liabilities. After discussion including an explanation of the reason for the selectmen being trustees for the Senior Center trust, the town manager said she would confirm with the trustees of the Senior Center that the recently made changes were acceptable. **Pam Dunning moved to accept the Wiscasset Parks and Recreation Trust document as written. Vote 5-0-0. Judy Colby moved to accept the Wiscasset Senior Center Trust document as written. Vote 4-1-0. Pam Dunning moved to accept the Wiscasset Community Center Trust document as written. Vote 5-0-0.**

Steve Mehrl asked that the purpose of the outstanding bonds be added to the warrant.

Bob Blagden objected to Article 3, because, he said, if the voters turned down an article, it should not be brought up again for a second vote. He added that if an article were brought back several times, voter turnout decreased and an article opposed by the majority of people on the first ballot would eventually pass. Discussion included the necessity of 3/12 of the budget to close down a department if an article failed to pass, and the possibility that a negative vote may indicate that the voters wanted to approve more funds than in the article or decrease the hours of an employee. A motion by Bob Blagden to take out Article 3 failed for lack of a second.

David Nichols moved to reconsider the police budget. There was lengthy discussion on the budget, what it covered, and whether it would give 24/7 coverage. The chairman said he did not think the town needed four full-time officers. Lt John Allen said he would have difficulty giving 24-hour coverage with three full-time officers because the reserve officers, who included the part time officers, could not work more than 20 hours per week. The police budget would also cover a substitute while a full-time officer attends the police academy for 18 weeks. **Vote 5-0-0.**

Judy Colby moved to change Article 13, Police Department, to \$321,710. John Allen said this number would probably not provide 24-hour coverage. The Town Manager said that the budget would include \$32,400 for two permanent part-time officers, \$37,700 for four regular reserve officers, but although funding was available, the necessary manpower may not be available. Bob Blagden said the previous year had worked well and he would like to maintain the status quo. Adjustments should be made for the change from full- to part-time secretary, salary increases, and costs associated with sending an officer to the academy. **Ed Polewarczyk moved to amend the motion to \$331,710. Vote 5-0-0. Pam Dunning moved to approve Article 13 for the Police Department at the amount of \$331,710. Vote 5-0-0.**

Articles 54-59: Ed Polewarczyk said that after hearing comments made at the previous evening's public hearing on the ordinances, he was not sure they should be on the warrant. He said in his opinion the ordinances would require revisions. Smith noted that there had been workshops and public informational sessions on the ordinances over the past few months. She had asked Jeffrey Hinderliter, Town Planner, to consider what recommendations he would make when he brings the ordinances to the selectmen's public hearing on April 19. In response to Pam Dunning's suggestion that the ordinances could be removed from the warrant if too many changes were made, Smith briefly reviewed the need for the ordinances and said her concern was that the town would not necessarily be in a better position by not having any changes to the ordinances. She said the board should take into account the comments at the public hearing and determine what changes could be made.

12. Other Business

Smith announced that the selectmen and the public were invited to attend an RSU Future Search meeting to encourage public involvement in the schools. The meeting will be held at the Augusta Civic Center on Friday, April 15, from 4-8:30 p.m. and on Saturday, April 16, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

13. Adjournment

At 9:10 p.m., **Judy Colby moved to adjourn. Vote 5-0-0.**