WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN,

BOARD OF ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR

September 16, 2014

Present: Bill Barnes, Chair Pam Dunning, Vice Chair Ben Rines, Jr., Tim Merry and Jeff Slack and Town Manager Marian Anderson

1. Call to order

Chairman Pam Dunning called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

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

3. Approval of Treasurer’s Warrant: September 5, September 9 and September 16, 2014

**Tim Merry moved to approve the Treasurer’s Warrants. Vote 5-0-0.**

4. Approval of Minutes: September 2, 2014

**Tim Merry moved to approve the minutes. Vote 5-0-0.**

5. Special Presentations or Awards – none

6. Appointments

A. **Tim Merry moved to appoint Jason Putnam to the Cemetery Committee for a term to expire December 31, 2015. Vote 5-0-0.**

**Jeff Slack moved to add F. Vote on Growth Rate and G. Naming of Heritage Lane to New Business and to take Item 10 before Item 7. Vote 5-0-0.**

10. New Business

F. Growth Rate: Assessors’ Agent Sue Varney reported that as of April 1, 2014, the loss in value from abatements was $1,164,340; loss from Maine Yankee was $2,149,000, gain from CMP $9,163,593; building permit gain from field work $1,752,700 for a total growth factor gain of $7,602,953**. Jeff Slack moved to approve the growth factor total of $7,602,953. Vote 5-0-0.**

G. Naming of Hermitage Lane: The owners of the driveway at 182 Gibbs Road requested that it be named Hermitage Lane. **Tim Merry moved to approve the naming of Hermitage Lane. Vote 5-0-0.**

E. Fiscal year 2014/2015 tax commitment: Town Manager Marian Anderson provided a chart demonstrating the percentage of tax increase with varying amounts taken from the fund balance. Using $300,000 from the fund balance would result in a tax rate increase of 4.6% and a mill rate of 17; with $250,000 from the fund balance, the tax rate increase would be 5.2%, the mill rate $17.10; and with $200,000 from the fund balance, the increase would be 5.9%, the mill rate $17.20. The chart also demonstrated the difference in taxes for a $100,000 house and a $200,000 house using the three examples of withdrawals from the fund balance. **Jeff Slack moved to take $300,000 from the fund balance.** The fund balance currently is approximately $900,000 and the year-end surplus will be approximately $190,000. Bill Barnes noted that a 4.6% increase in taxes after a tax increase last year would place a burden on taxpayers. Bob Blagden recommended that the board take as much as possible from the fund balance; he would rather pay 1% on a tax anticipation note than the tax increase. Pam Dunning said the auditor had recommended that the board keep a $1,600,000 surplus. Anderson said the fund balance policy that the board had established called for maintaining two months’ expenditures in the fund balance which would be $1,800,000 and reminded the board that it is also paying the school costs. Tim Merry cautioned the board against taking more from the fund balance because the cost of the schools next year is unknown. **Vote 4-1-0** (Barnes opposed).

**Ben Rines moved to set the mill rate at 17. Vote 5-0-0.**

7. Public Comment

Steve Mehrl commended the school board for recognizing the importance of getting a handle on the budget because it is not anticipated that the town will contribute again.

8. Department Head or Committee Chair Reports

Individual department reports were included in the selectmen’s packets.

9. Unfinished Business

A. Volunteer policy update: Section No. 22 in the policy was amended to change the word “shall” to “may”. **Tim Merry moved to accept the policy as amended. Vote 5-0-0.**

10. New Business

A. Opening of airport striping bids: The only bid received was $9,840 from Zebra Striping. The striping is in the airport budget. **Tim Merry moved to authorize the Town Manager to award the bid if appropriate. Vote 5-0-0.**

B. Opening of winter sand bids: The following bids were received:

Company Town Pick-up Delivered by bidder

K&K Excavation $4.50/cu.yd. $11.00/cu.yd.

Jacobs Excavation 7.50/cu.yd. NA

Harry C. Crooker 6.50/cu.yd. 11.00/cu.yd.

Northrup Forest Products 4.00/cu.yd. 12.95/cu.yd.

**Tim Merry moved to authorize the Town Manager to award the bid to the lowest qualified bidder. Vote 5-0-0.**

C. Home occupation fee $20: CEO Stan Waltz requested that the board approve a fee of $20 to cover administrative costs for issuing the home occupation permits. The request was postponed until the next meeting.

D. School Committee Update: School Committee chair Steve Smith said the committee had voted to close the primary school at a cost savings of $129,000 over the cost of closing the middle school. If approved, the amount from the budget for closing the primary school would be $755,524. The committee’s decision can be overturned if within 30 days a petition signed by the requisite number of voters is submitted calling for a referendum in January to determine which school should be closed. Smith said teachers, administrators and sports officials are working with the committee to come up with a budget. He added that the committee is working with other towns, looking for solutions and examining the option of closing the high school and tuitioning out the students. The closure would save $2.8 million but the committee opposes that option.

Glen Craig explained his reason for opposing the motion taken at the School Committee meeting; he said that without a referendum for a binding vote by the town, the next school committee could change the decision to close the primary school.

Lyford Beverage, Interim Superintendent, said the plan to educate the students including the decision to close the primary school will be sent to the state, and after that it would be difficult to change the plan. He said the committee had made a wise decision and he reassured selectmen and residents that he is cautious about money; he will determine what’s needed and will plug that into the budget.

H. New Hope for Women request: New Hope for Women has requested approval to again display a tree in October on the Town Common in front of the courthouse to represent the courage, survival, honor and dedication to ending domestic violence in our country. The tree will be decorated with purple lights**. Jeff Slack moved to approve the request. Vote 5-0-0.**

I. Returnable bottle containers program: Marian Anderson distributed photos of the non-profit organizations’ bottle bins at the transfer station. She said non-profits must have insurance, which is not expensive, but is needed to indemnify the volunteer workers on site. She added that the containers must be moved from the work space. Her research showed that many communities do not allow non-profit organizations to have bottle bins. Other towns receive a certain percentage of the money collected. She distributed a sample policy and asked the board for guidance.

Bill Barnes said the money from returnables should be used to reduce the Transfer Station budget. He had no problem with non-profit organization bins at other locations, but did not want them at the transfer station. It was suggested that one bin be allowed with profits going each month to one of the organizations or profits going to the town to reduce the budget.

Ron Lear, Transfer Station Manager, said the bins could be moved from the workspace and located in an empty open area; however, they would have to be moved in winter when the area is used to pile up snow. There were suggestions for other solutions and several representatives of non-profit organizations expressed their organization’s need for the donations.

The bins will be moved outside, organizations informed of the insurance requirement, and no more bins will be allowed on town property until the board has a policy in place. A draft of the policy will be available at the next meeting.

J. MMA Voting credentials Annual Meeting: No board members will be attending. **Tim Merry moved to allow the Town Manager to accept voting credentials for the MMa annual business meeting. Vote 5-0-0.**

K. Sewer status list: The list was distributed; the Town Manager said the collection process was moving forward on accounts more than 90 days overdue.

11. Town Manager’s Report

Marian Anderson said she had been reviewing the draft Transfer Station Operations Manual and invited the board members to review it also.

The History Channel was in town that day filming for the Downeast Dickering series. The Town Manager expressed her gratitude to the merchants in town for their cooperation.

Anderson said the Assessor’s Agent would begin looking at sales compared to assessed values in the downtown area.

The board signed the Certificate of Commitment.

Anderson reminded the board of the conference call at 11 a.m. on Friday, September 19, with the mediator for the Ferry Road mediation.

Ben Rines reported he will be serving a one-year term on the County Budget Committee.

12. Adjournment

Tim Merry moved to adjourn the meeting. Vote 5-0-0.