

WISCASSET SELECT BOARD,  
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR  
MARCH 20, 2018

Present: Bob Blagden, Chair Judy Colby, Kathy Martin-Savage, Vice Chair Ben Rines, Jr., Jeff Slack and Town Manager Marian Anderson

Chair Judy Colby called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants

- a. Kathy Martin-Savage moved to approve the payroll warrants of March 9 and 16, 2018. Vote 5-0-0.
- b. Kathy Martin-Savage moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of March 13 and 20, 2018. Vote 5-0-0.

3. Approval of Minutes

Ben Rines, Jr., moved to approve the minutes of March 6, 2018 as amended. Vote 5-0-0.

4. Special Presentations or Awards – none

5. Committee Appointments – none

6. Public Hearings

- a. Liquor License Renewals: Kathy Martin-Savage moved to open the public hearing. Vote 5-0-0. Town Manager Marian Anderson noted that the three applications for renewals had been submitted prior to the change in policy which would not require a public hearing for licenses in effect five or more years. Ben Rines, Jr., moved to come out of the public hearing. Vote 5-0-0, Jeff Slack moved to approve the liquor license renewals for Sarah Heald, DBA Sarah's Café and Twin Schooner Pub; Tony Bickford, DBA Little Village Bistro; and Cecilio H. Juntura, DBA Taste of Orient. Vote 5-0-0.

7. Public Comment

Chief of Police Jeffrey Lange read the statement attached to these minutes in response to a suggestion from a selectman to eliminate the Police Department.

Kim Dolce reviewed the original purpose of MDOT's plan to reduce traffic in Wiscasset, the options presented to the town, the description of changes in Option 2 since the first vote on the options, the feasibility study not given to the Town which indicates little improvement in traffic and the adverse

effect on businesses projected with Option 2, the possible removal of 54 parking spaces, not 25 as planned and the remaining not "within reasonable walking distance" as described by the DOT.

Bill Maloney said that because Wiscasset was named as a party of interest to the Wawenock, LLC lawsuit against MDOT, Wawenock should pay Wiscasset's legal bills related to that suit. He added that pursuing the lawsuit against MDOT was foolish and irresponsible.

Ann Scanlon spoke on mistakes made in the name of progress. She said 80% of the businesses see the proposed MDOT changes as harmful and asked the reason for destroying the character of the Town which brings visitors to Wiscasset. She said it was irresponsible to spend time and money on a project with no assured outcome.

Will Truesdale criticized the leadership of the board and recommended not continuing the lawsuit but finding creative collaborative solutions with MDOT.

Seaver Leslie took issue with the criticism of the leadership of the board which he described as outstanding. He said the State has no interest in Wiscasset's economy and Option 2 will not increase traffic flow, but compromise was possible with Option 1 which would include amenities and bump outs while compromising on parking. He commended those individuals who had offered to contribute to the legal expenses of the Town,

Lonnie Kennedy said the lawsuit brought by the Town was to force MDOT to abide by the Town's ordinances; it was not about Option 1. The select board turned down the compromise offered by MDOT.

Pam Logan said the lawsuit would set a precedent in Maine about the state being able to steamroll over a little town. She said there was not a clear sidewalk from the high school to downtown in the last two or three weeks and asked how the town would maintain wide sidewalks when it can't maintain existing sidewalks. As for those who felt that private citizens offering to help with legal expenses might have an ulterior motive, she pointed out the free speed sign that the Police Department had just accepted from the MDOT.

Dick Vigue thanked the board for the wording of the vote. He said people were confused about the vote and recommended thinking of the long-term consequences, the possibility that the town experience a net loss in parking. He urged the board to think through process logically and decide not to continue law suit. MDOT will not stand down.

Leslie Roberts said she appreciated the idea of compromise. She said 25 businesses were in favor of Option 1, a compromise with the idea of improving traffic flow but keeping parking spaces. Three businesses favored Option 2 and five businesses were neutral.

#### 8. Department Head or Committee Chair

a. Town Clerk Linda Perry – Appointment of Election Clerks: Ben Rines, Jr., moved to approve the list of Election Clerks presented by the Town Clerk. Vote 5-0-0.

b. Department Head Monthly Reports: Kathy Martin-Savage thanked the department heads for their reports.

#### 10. New Business

a. New Business Licenses (Information only)

- Freedom Christian Counseling, Owner Teresa Clark
- Red Flame Restaurant Group, DBA wHop, owner Zafiric Saldatos

b. Monthly Financials

- Department year to date expense report: Treasurer Vernice Boyce explained the decrease in health insurance expense which resulted in \$12,000 being added back.
- The investment Committee will meet in April.

#### 11. Town Manager's Report

Anderson announced that the new ambulance will arrive on Friday, March 23. She asked whether the board wanted to declare the old ambulance surplus. EMS Director Toby Martin said equipment will be removed from the old ambulance before it is sold. Jeff Slack moved to declare the old ambulance surplus. Vote 5-0-0.

After discussion, it was decided to hold the public hearing on April 3 at the Community Center gym. Anderson will explore possibilities of recording the hearing.

#### 12. Other Board Business

a. Abatement: Jeff Slack moved to approve the abatement for Philip L. Latella (Map R01, Lot 026B) for \$26.19 as recommended by Assessors' Agent Ellery G. Bane. Vote 5-0-0.

At 7 p.m. Chair Judy Colby declared a five-minute recess.

#### 9. Unfinished Business

a. 2018-2019 Budget

Transfer Station: Ron Lear said the budget calls for replacing the 1991 trailer and keeping the 2004 trailer, although repairs will be needed to the latter (replacing floor). The 1991 trailer will be traded in; the cost of a new trailer is estimated at \$65,000. the Transfer Station has a 2013 trailer and the purchase of a new trailer will provide a second roadworthy trailer. Lear described the continued need for a full-time employee, and the difficulty scheduling part-time workers to fill in. Judy Colby moved to

place the amount of \$590,697 on the Town Warrant for the Transfer Station budget. Vote 4-1-0 (Blagden opposed).

Parks and Recreation: Lisa Thompson explained changes to the budget: Anticipated expenses, \$815,669; Anticipated Revenue \$450,000; and Money Raised via Taxation, \$365,669. She explained the difficulty in anticipating revenue, particularly when the increase in revenue was not keeping up with the increase in expenditures. She will be looking for other revenue sources, grants, and the possibility of raising prices to offset the increase in expenses; however, that may lead to loss of memberships. She cited the rate of food insecurity in Wiscasset and the food the Recreation Department provides to children in various programs. In addition, she described the activities the department provides for after school programs. Judy Colby moved to place the amount of \$815,669 on the warrant for the Parks and Recreation budget. Vote 4-1-0 (Blagden opposed).

Capital Improvements: Anderson said the Capital Improvements budget has been revised to remove \$30,000 for radios; the total is now \$831,153.95. Regarding the amount to be withdrawn, she said a 3.5% draw would be \$382,522 and a 4.5% draw would be \$487,930. H.M.Payson had informed Anderson there was \$750,000 in cash currently in the Town's account and he could come up with \$1 million, if necessary. He said borrowing should not be a problem as the Town could borrow at 3% while earning 7% on its investments. A representative from H. M. Payson will be willing to meet with the board about the withdrawal and about development of a real plan for the board.

In response to Bob Blagden's question about the Parks and Recreation truck, Lisa Thompson said the truck is out of commission because of problems with the frame. Questions about the Public Works trucks were postponed until the Road Commissioner can meet with the board at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 27. At that meeting, the board will finish the budget and send it to the Budget Committee. A breakdown of the paving on the Public Works budget will be provided to Bob Blagden before the meeting. A short meeting will be held before the public hearing on April 3.

Peter Murray will be invited to the public hearing on April 3.

### 13. Adjournment

At 8:21 Kathy Martin-Savage moved to adjourn the meeting. Vote 5-0-0.

Spoken at the Select board Meeting on 3/20/18

I would like to know, if the suggestion to ask the voters if they want a police department was initiated by citizens of this town, or was this by a particular Select board member going forward with this idea?

The voters overwhelmingly voted to keep the PD as recently as 2015, so the question remains why the continued efforts to disband the department against the will of the voters? This seems very much in line with the current select board going against recent voter decisions.

My job as the Chief of Police is to make sure people are safe from various crimes, enforce the law, provide services such as house checks, assist motorists, issue CCW permits, provide safety in our schools with an SRO, and generally be there at the a time in people's lives when bad things occur. I can guarantee you that if the County Sheriff's Office does take over these duties without a dedicated unit in town, some of these services will cease to exist.

The County Sheriff's Office does offer good services and has great law enforcement officials working for them. But they will not be invested in what occurs in this town. The Wiscasset Police Department is made up of extremely loyal and dedicated members that have direct involvement and interests in this town. You will not have an SRO- This is a PD position unless you contract with the Sheriff's Office, which will cost money. You will not have a Shellfish or Harbormaster position staffed by members of the PD, that too will be a contracted position that will cost money. You will lose house / property checks, you will lose the ability to have a personal interactions with police services. Those that want CCW permits will be forced to go to Augusta, the enforcement of OUI, speed, distracted driving, etc. will diminish. The ability to provide quick responding action will automatically cease to exist without a dedicated unit. The average time for specific calls for service are the following; Average response time for a burglar alarm in Wiscasset is 5 min, for the County So to respond to Alna is 22 min, 25 min in Dresden, and 29 min to

Westport Island (WPI). Domestic- Wiscasset-4 min, For the county Alana-5 min, Dresden 9 min and WPI is 10.

MVA- Wiscasset is 6 min., for the county to Alna is 16, Dresden is 17 and WPI is 17 min.

Wiscasset Calls for Service for 2017- was 7121 this is an increase of 20% over last years calls for service.

I came from a town in Western Maine that did the same thing that is being done here. Morale and police services went down the tubes. What some board members fail to understand is that the voters will most likely vote to maintain the PD but until that time, members will not and should not have to put up with blatant disrespect from Town leaders. I've heard it from a member of this board call other town employees "goons" or that when the board is told that departments heads are working extremely long hours in order to save the town money, "That's your choice". Yes it was our choice because we are dedicated to the town. Since Jan of this year I've given back \$3,399. I work an average of 50 hours a week, that's an average, some less and some more. 2 weeks ago I had a 75 hours work week to make sure the town was covered. That's 35 hours I didn't get paid for, and that is an unreasonable amount for a salaried employee to work without being compensated. Over a course of a year at only averaging 10 extra hours a week at my hourly wage equals \$16,068. That is 16K towards policing Wiscasset that I don't get paid for and gave back to the town because of dedication. But yet we hear the remarkable comments from a board member who doesn't appreciate the fact that all of the department heads do this week in and week out.

It will take all of my efforts to maintain morale within the department because of the rhetoric.

Recruiting is bad enough. I couldn't convince reserve officers to take full time job because they told me, "its too uncertain to be a cop in this town, I'll go elsewhere". Luckily we did get one candidate....from over 1100 miles away in Georgia.

When a Select board member states “we struck the fear of god into them” doesn’t play well with me. To me, that’s a bully mentality and has no place in leadership roles. The negative tones and remarks need to stop.

With that being said I would ask the board to reconsider soliciting votes to eliminating a Department especially if this was not started by a petition or a group of citizens in the Town of Wiscasset.

If money is the reason - The cost of having a PD is broken down as follows- of the 2296 tax cards (2294 last year) that go out-based on a budget of \$464,199.00, (This includes the SRO)- That Reflects 202.18 a year, 16.85 a month, 3.89 week and 55 cents a day. At 55 cents a day the PD is not the problem!



*Jeffrey E. Lange*

**CHIEF OF POLICE**

**Wiscasset Police Department**

**51 Bath Road**

**Wiscasset, Maine 04578**