

WISCASSET SELECTBOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
AUGUST 6, 2024
IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM

Present: James Andretta, Vice Chair Pam Dunning, Terry Heller, Bill Maloney, Chair Sarah Whitfield and Town Manager Dennis Simmons

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants

a. Payroll Warrants: July 19, 2024, July 26, 2024, and August 2, 2024. **Terry Heller moved to approve the Payroll Warrants of July 19, 2024, July 26, 2024, and August 2, 2024. Vote 5-0-0.**

b. Accounts Payable Warrants: July 23, 2024, July 30, 2024, and August 6, 2024. **Terry Heller moved to approve the Accounts Payable Warrants of July 23, 2024, July 30, 2024, and August 6, 2024. Vote 5-0-0.**

3. Approval of Minutes

Pam Dunning moved to approve the minutes of July 16, 2024, as amended. Vote 5-0-0.

4. Special Presentations or Awards – none

5. Committee Appointments – none

6. Public Hearings

a. To hear comments on a proposed sewer rate increase

Pam Dunning moved to open the public hearing for comments on a proposed sewer rate increase. Vote 5-0-0. The public hearing opened at 6:04 p.m. Ann Schneider asked how the proposed sewer rate increase is related to the new wastewater treatment plant. Sarah Whitfield explained that the process to build a new wastewater treatment plant has only just begun and will not affect the current sewer rates. Rob Lalli, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent, explained that the WWTP is an enterprise account, and all expenses are paid for by the rate payers. He said the rate increase is based on the proposed budget considering all expenses, as the cost of all operations of the plant comes out of sewer fees. **Terry Heller moved to close the public hearing at 6:12 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.**

7. Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

In response to Ann Schneider's question regarding the discussion at the previous meeting on a proposed firearms discharge ordinance, Sarah Whitfield explained that residents of the area around Pottle Cove, where duck hunting has taken place, had asked that firearm discharge be prohibited in that area. The Ordinance Review Committee researched the matter, and it was

determined that a municipality cannot regulate intercoastal hunting, and the selectboard decided not to pursue the matter.

8. Department Head or Committee Chair

9. Unfinished Business

a. Wawenock Block Update: The masonry work on the front elevation is completed and scaffolding has been removed. Work will continue on the interior and exterior of the building including installation of windows and improvements to the ground floor entryway.

b. Johnson Controls Municipal Facilities Energy Proposal: Additional changes will be made to the email received that day, and Johnson Controls was advised that changes, tables and the schedule must be completed by August 29 for the board to vote at the September 3rd meeting to place the article on the November ballot. In response to a question about the escrow account by Ed Polewarczyk, Whitfield said that was one of the charts that will be updated.

10. New Business

a. Set FY 25 Sewer Rates: A 10.25% increase was recommended by Maine Rural Water. Dennis

Simmons suggested an amount between 3% and 6.7%, as the 10.25% increase is not necessary and would be a hardship on businesses and residents. **Pam Dunning moved that the board move forward with a 4% sewer rate increase. Vote 5-0-0.**

b. Maine Municipal Association Election Ballot: **Pam Dunning moved to designate the Town Manager to cast the Maine Municipal Association Election Ballot on behalf of the Board. Vote 5-0-0.**

c. Employee Paid Dependent Life Insurance availability: **Terry Heller moved to allow eligible employees to enroll in dependent life insurance coverage through the Maine Municipal Employees' Health Trust at their own expense. Vote 5-0-0.**

d. Acceptance and delegation of the \$150 donation from the J. Rosamond Johnson Foundation, Inc. **Terry Heller moved to accept the \$150 donation from the Rosamond Johnson Foundation, Inc., and place the donation into the Cooper-DiPerri Scholarship account. Vote 5-0-0.**

e. November Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

- MainePers Plan change for Wiscasset Police Department: **Pam Dunning moved to place the question regarding the MainePers Plan change for the Wiscasset Police Department on the November 5th warrant. Vote 5-0-0,**
- Relocation of Wastewater Treatment Plant and Public Works Garage. **Pam Dunning moved to place the question regarding the relocation of the wastewater treatment facility and the public works garage on the November ballot. Vote 5-0-0.**

f. Boat Ramp Grant: **Pam Dunning moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Boat Ramp Grant application. Vote 5-0-0.**

g. FAA grant for Phase I – Design and Permitting reconstruct Main Apron pavement: **Pam Dunning moved to instruct, delegate and authorize the Town Manager to enter into a grant agreement on behalf of the Town of Wiscasset Municipal Airport with the Federal Aviation**

Administration identified as IWI-NEG-3-23-0049-029-2024. Vote 5-0-0.

11. Assessors Business

12. Town Manager's report

The Bucksport solar project, connected to the town's Net Energy Billing agreement, is online and producing electricity. We are now seeing a 22% credit on our major electricity accounts. The decision to purchase the streetlights and convert them to LED reduced the town's cost by 79% (\$33,500) over the previous year.

Another request for Congressional Directed Spending was sent to Senators Collins and King and Representative Pingree. Senator King agreed to submit our request to the Senate Appropriation Committee. Unfortunately, the Appropriations Committee did not approve moving forward with this request. We will try again next year.

Work on Old Ferry Road is nearly complete. Traffic has been moved from the temporary bridge onto the new culvert, and the temporary bridge has been removed. That area will now be excavated back to the original grade, and riprap will be put in place. Guard rails are expected to arrive on the 14th and when they are installed, final grading will take place, and then paving will be done.

An audit has been completed of our law enforcement safety grants; no issues were identified.

We have received an initial draft of the FY'23 audit; however, we have found some entries that do not match our books, so it may be a couple more weeks before we receive a final draft. Initial work on the FY '24 audit has begun.

Dennis Simmons will be out of the office August 14 – 16 attending the Maine Town, City, and County Management Association annual educational conference.

13. Other Board Business

Sarah Whitfield reminded the board and others of the Comp Plan meeting on August 14.

14. Adjournment

James Andretta moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.