

TOWN OF CUSHING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, March 8, 2021
via ZOOM Video Conference due to COVID-19

Selectmen Present: Chair Alton Grover; Selectmen Craig Currie, Corey Jones, Daniel Staples, and Martha Marchut

Selectmen Absent: none

Staff Present: Town Clerk Lisa Young

Public Present: Mark Hutchinson, Kendra Hubbard, William Cochran, John Spence, and Ryan Minikis

1. Call to Order: Chair Alton Grover called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and a quorum was determined.

2. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Approve and Sign the Warrant:

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to approve 2021 Warrants 10 and 11

Discussion: Dan said he noticed that putting the two pieces of property out to bid cost close to \$500. He also said he noticed that the Fire Department had to put an alternator in one of the trucks, as well as three batteries and stuff that totaled \$1600 in labor. Alton said they come from Brunswick. Dan said he thought it seemed high, but they probably charge for travel. Dan also asked about \$232.48 for Rockland Ford and asked what that was for. Lisa said it was the ambulance, she assumed an oil change.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

4. Review and approve the minutes of the February 22, 2021 meeting

ACTION: Selectwoman Martha Marchut made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2021 meeting as written

Discussion: none

Motion Carried 5-0-0

5. Additions and Changes to the Agenda:

5a. Grub Issue at Pleasant View Cemetery

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to ask the company to come between the 15th – 20th of July to treat the grub problem

Discussion: Dan introduced Mark Hutchinson, an Extension Professor from the University of Maine who deals with sustainable agriculture and compost. He said he asked him to join the meeting because if he had passed out the information he had, it would be open to interpretation, and he felt having an expert explained it would be better. Dan said he had spoke a little bit with Mark about it already, and he agreed the first of April would be way too early. Mark said Dan asked him there to talk about grub control and about treating the cemetery. He said there are about four different variations, all of which spend the winter in the ground as larvae, they hatch in May-June, but the problem with a spring application isn't very efficient. He said the most efficient time to control is a mid to late summer application. He said using a nicotine synthetic type of pesticide makes application and timing very important. Mark explained the process a bit more and why it's the most effective time of the year when understanding the life cycle of the insect. Dan said the likelihood of it being one or two types of grubs, the most effective would be mid-July to early August. Mark agreed and said the most effective part is to have the pesticide in the ground when the larvae hatch and are small and actively feeding. Craig said we are doing it to try to get rid of the grubs, so the turkeys don't go through and destroy the look of the soil. Mark said turkeys are one, he also noted skunks are notorious feeders on grubs, too, as well as crows and seagulls. He said the variety of things in the area that could all chew up the area and make it look awful. He said over half of the major infestations require re-seeding of the lawns, which is why it should be controlled early. Dan said it got worse for a few weeks when they first noticed, he added they saw lots of feathers which is what led them to believe it was turkeys. Mark said turkeys get them when they're fairly young, and stay more to the top layer, than skunks get deeper. He said it doesn't matter what it is though, the key is to control the white grub, which can be difficult. He said it can take yearly applications to keep control of the issue, too. Mark also offered to come down and dig up a square foot to identify what type of grub and when would be the most efficient application time, as well. He said the best time to do that would be in June. The Board agreed it was a good idea.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

6. Unfinished Business

6a. Open Bids for tax-acquired property Map-015 Lot-019 and Map-007 Lot-012

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Craig Currie, to accept the bid from John Barbour for Map-007 Lot-012 for \$2,500.00

Motion Carried 5-0-0

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to accept the bid from Maine Real Estate Property Services, LLC for Map-015 Lot-019 for \$1,750.00

Motion Carried 5-0-0

Discussion: Alton opened and read the following four bids:

Map-015 Lot-019: Maine Real Estate Property Services in Brunswick for \$1,750.00, William Smith for \$750.00, Meklin & Sons Excavation for \$1,600

Map-007 Lot-012: John Barbour for \$2,500

Dan asked if the funds go into the general fund. Lisa said they go into sales, a revenue account, and then to the general fund the following year after the audit

6b. Earned Paid Leave

ACTION: Selectwoman Martha Marchut made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, to go with what Kristen has put together except add to it the Earned Paid Leave, not used within the year, can be carried forward to the following year but not to exceed fourteen days

Discussion: Martha said everyone has seen the thing put together by Kristen and said there was a question if anything was required by them as far as carrying hours forward from one year to the next. Martha said Kristen answered there isn't anything required as far as that goes. She said she thought everyone was okay with stuff other than that. She noted that the current policies are being combined into this new one and with the previous policy sick time could be carried over up to 14 days and she feels it may be nice to continue to do that rather than take away from folks.

Motion Carried 4-0-1, Corey abstained

6c. Covid-19 Policy

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Martha said they had something put together by Kristen. She said they had sent her a short policy from another town in which she made a few modifications to but had re-sent one from Brunswick. Martha said they all felt that wasn't really relevant, but they had taken some things from that policy and added them to the smaller one. She said Lisa will look it over, but assuming it looks okay, we [Board members] can look it over to okay and then send to Kristen or send to Kristen first for approval and then to the other Board members. Corey felt it should be reviewed by Board members first, then if anything is changed, we don't need to pay Kristen to go over it several times. Martha agreed Corey's point made the most sense. Dan felt troubled that Kristen compared our little town of Cushing to Brunswick; he felt there could be another town more in line with ours. Martha said they had the same experience with her a few years ago with the Planning Board, they were looking for guidance and she came up with a couple policies from towns very different than Cushing. Martha said at that time they were contemplating no longer using her, noting it might be interesting to think about for future reference. Dan said he feels we just need to remind her that any comparison documents need to be more relevant to our town size and government. Craig asked if Kristen has experience with towns our size. Dan confirmed she does. Martha said by the end of the week it should be out to Board members for review.

6d. Reopening of office and library plans

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Martha Marchut, to go back to our regular schedule starting Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Discussion: Dan said he has checked with three or four other towns and about all of them have opened back up and are fully staffed. He said they're all wearing masks and limiting numbers per time. Corey asked if he was thinking starting Monday, or when. Dan asked Lisa if she had talked to the girls. Lisa said yes everyone felt comfortable with it. Martha said as long as everyone is comfortable with it, she is okay with it. She added that everyone should be aware there is the remote possibility that if someone catches it [Covid-19] it could spread to others and there could be a situation where there is nobody to work; she added that is a risk we can take. Dan said that's a risk every open office is taking, all over the State. Dan asked Lisa when she wanted to start, Wednesday or next week. Lisa said she could start Wednesday. Lisa asked if Scott was okay to see people. Dan felt it should be okay, as long as it's one person per time. Martha asked about the library plans. Craig said they are allowing two people in at a time, socially distancing, and are okay with how it is right now.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

6e. Midcoast Regional Broadband Coalition

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said he has been speaking with Debra Hall and Craig has been invited as a guest to the next meeting of this group on Wednesday. He said it includes Thomaston, South Thomaston, Rockland, Rockport, Camden, Northport, Lincolnville, and a couple others. He said at the next meeting he will know more. He said the idea is that none of the towns want to pay or get in the business of providing internet to their citizens but there is a lot of talk about forming some type of internet utility. He said he wasn't sure exactly what that means as there is a lot of discussion that needs to happen, but there seems to be a lot of interest. He said he has identified himself as a member of the Select Board of Cushing, but he is joining only as a guest. He said he's interested to see where the next step of this could go.

6f. Discuss scheduling in person Town Meeting

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Dan said he talked with a town who did their warrant as a secret ballot referendum. Lisa said that is a nightmare. Dan said the Governor is opening the State up a little more in a month or so; he asked about guidance from MMA. Lisa said they did send guidance and will keep it updated as things open up more. Martha said as of March 26, the Governor allows indoor gatherings up to 50% capacity of the area and May 24th would be 75% capacity. Dan noted outside, it can be 100% starting May 24th. Corey asked about the Fire Station with doors open, would that be considered outdoor with all of the ventilation. No one knew that answer. Dan said it would be nice to have before August. Craig felt it would likely be able to happen before August but noted if Article #3 doesn't pass at the election it will have to be revisited quickly. Martha thought finding the capacity of the gym to know how many people 50-75% is would be helpful to start.

6g. Inquiry into using the Good Neighbor Park for a wedding

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa said it will need to wait as more information is still needed. She said she is going to get copies of the deed to the Board members for review on what's allowed. Lisa said she still needs to speak to the person wanting to host the wedding, too.

7. New Business

7a. Rachel Shields is inquiring about having the end of Killeran Lane paved

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Martha Marchut, to put ¾" stone from the end of the pavement to the Town line. Dan added to the motion to have Alton check with Meklin to get the work done

Discussion: Alton said he wouldn't recommend paving the end of Killeran Lane because the road doesn't have a good base under it to hold hot top. He said he would recommend taking ¾" stone from end of pavement to Albert's driveway. He added there has already been some trouble up there this year.

He said truck traffic would then just roll it into the softness. Dan said something needs to be done as when the frost starts coming out again, it'll be a problem. Corey said he got a call the other day about the trucks coming in and out. He said he told them if it's below 32 degrees they are allowed to, but if it's above, just call the Sheriff's Dept. as they would be the ones to deal with it and ticket them. Alton said he had got some calls this weekend, too. Alton said the trucks hauling out of there are trying to get ahead of the warm weather coming. Alton said in the past he would have had this already done, he would have had the stone in there last week, but as they all know, now we have to wait and discuss at a Selectman's meeting so it had to wait a couple weeks. He said he really wishes they'd allow stone being put up there and it will take care of the problem. Corey said in all fairness those logging trucks should be held accountable, they're the ones that stove the road all up; they never should have been on the road that day and they know that. Corey said it's not really the town's fault, it's the trucks; he added anyone who owns a truck knows that when its warm and the frost is coming out of the ground, the road is going to be like a sponge and they should use some common sense and be held accountable. Alton said he was up there immediately the day it happened, he talked to Albert Hutchinson and the owners of the trucks, so everybody was aware. He said so far, they have been cooperative, and this week it was froze again, anyway.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

7b. Winter salt bid with the State

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Alton said the State sent a notice that they want to know if we want to get in on their salt bid process. Alton said he had called the County the other day and they didn't have date it was going out to bid yet. Alton said the only problem you get into, and we got into it big one year, is we take the lowest bidder and had an awful time to get salt. He said it was an outfit out of Chicago and you'd call and get an answering machine and we didn't know if we were going to get salt or not, so we need to be careful on who supplies it. He said the place we're working with right now has been really good to work with, but added it depends on the bid. Alton said he recommends to wait and see what the State says and what the County says, and then at the next meeting we can all discuss the pricing.

7c. Annual Flail Mower rental

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Craig Currie, to rent the Flail Mower for one week, the last week of September, for \$3400.00

Discussion: Dan thinks this has been one of the best things they've done for years. Alton asked if Corey had something he wanted to say. Corey said he was just chuckling because he noticed that someone took it upon themselves to clean up all the stuff by Corbett's that he had said was dangerous. Craig said he had noticed that too. Alton said he knows who did it because he called them; he said it was the State because they were supposed to do it last year but didn't which is why he went up there with the mower.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

8. Comments from Citizens: Ryan Minikis said he lives on the unpaved end of Killeran Lane and he wants to thank the Board for agreeing to fix the road. He said he is also the guy that called about fixing the cemetery a year or so ago when the Oak fell, and he wanted to thank them for fixing that up, as well.

9. Adjourn

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Jones
Recording Secretary