

TOWN OF CUSHING
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Cushing Community Center
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, October 26, 2020

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

Selectmen Absent: none

Staff Present: Town Clerk Lisa Young

Public Present: Robert Ellis, Rich Moody, and Karen Goodwill

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 2020 Warrants 93 and 94.

Discussion: Dan Staples commented on how much money the town is saving with the use of the flail mower, and thanked Alton. Alton said it's making the bushes smaller and said how many people have said how much it's improved visibility in certain areas. Corey mentioned his one concern was in areas like the town line in Thomaston where big sticks are left sticking up, commenting if a motorcycle ever went off there it could be dangerous to the rider, and maybe we should think about doing something to pick them up. Alton said it's a state road, he had contacted them, and they never did anything, so he figured he should do something. Corey just noted it's like 2-inch spears on the side of the road. Dan said it'll only be like that for a couple years, then doing it yearly they will get less and less.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

4. Review and approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting

ACTION: Selectwoman Martha Marchut made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting as written

Discussion: none

Motion Carried 5-0-0

5. Additions and Changes to the Agenda:

5a. Culvert

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Alton said Tom Fellows said he wants the culvert changed on his driveway. He asked the Board to check it out; he added if it was the State they wouldn't change it, there's nothing wrong with it, the bottom is just rusted and it might be eaten out on the end. The Board agreed to check it out.

5b. Cemetery Question

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa said she received a call from a person who has a husband buried in Pleasant View Cemetery, but she had really wanted him buried at the Montgomery cemetery up by Philip Young's but there weren't any lots at the time. The lady said Philip is now selling lots, so she wants to remove him from Pleasant View and move him to Montgomery. Lisa added she also wondered about getting her money back from the Pleasant View lot. Dan asked who owns the Montgomery Cemetery. Alton said he didn't think the Town did. Dan brought up the point that the Town mows and maintains is though. Alton said that's like all the cemeteries; he couldn't think of any the Town really owns. Dan asked if we are obligated to take care of private cemeteries. Lisa said the only cemetery the Town sold lots at was Pleasant View. Dan said this is an interesting situation and thought maybe they should seek a legal answer. The Board agreed to check with MMA before making any decisions. Lisa also noted the lady was upset that her stone had been chipped from the mowing.

5c. After Election hours

ACTION: Chairman Alton Grover made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, that the Town Office opens at 10:00 am the day following the Election

Discussion: Lisa also asked the Board to consider maybe allowing the office to open an hour or so later the day after election. Martha thought it was a really good idea and mentioned 9 or 9:30 am. Alton thought even 10 am would be even better.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

6. Unfinished Business

6a. Food Pantry sill, wooden shingles, and trees

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to approve hiring Richard Olson to remove the trees at the Food Pantry

Motion Carried 5-0-0

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to hire Miller and Miller to replace sill at the Food Pantry

Motion Carried 5-0-0

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Craig Currie, to approve Alton Grover to fix the ditch by the Food pantry

Motion Carried 4-0-1, Alton abstained

Discussion: Alton said he had talked with Rich and the first thing was to remove some trees along the left side before any sill work is started. He then said the sill work may run into a lot more work, not knowing how far the rot has gone. Rich Moody said some of the flooring had been removed inside the building to level it out, and you could see how things were framed up under the flooring and could give an idea on the rotted area on the left side. Dan said it was looked at four or so years ago as the prisoners were going to do it but never got to it; he added it was bad then. Rich showed some pictures he had taken around the outside of the building for the Board to see the existing damage. Karen Goodwill said the Town of Friendship had paid for half the roof, they pay for pest control, and they've painted the interior and cleaned the carpets. She added more Cushing residents come to the food pantry than residents from Friendship. She said there are more Friendship volunteers than Cushing. Alton said Miller and Miller can only do it for time and material because they don't know what they will get into when they start. He said they may be able to get to it in December, but they are pretty busy right now. Alton didn't think anyone would put a bid in on it not knowing, he feels time and material is going to be what anyone wants for that job. Martha suggested designating a certain amount of money and asked different contractors how much they could do with that amount to get the most done. Alton said they're fighting with time and winter now and the time it could take to meet with a lot of people you'd be losing time. On the topic of siding, Alton said the cost of vinyl siding would be about half the cost of wooden shingles, but wondered if it was a historical building are you allowing to have vinyl or do you need to keep the shingles. Corey said the store is vinyl and that's on the historical building list. Lisa didn't recall having any paperwork on the Food Pantry being a historical building. Alton said there isn't enough money to do the siding right now, they will see how far they can go on the sill. He said there's \$15,800 in the account now and he feels the sill is the most important and maybe next year after Town Meeting they can get more to do the siding next spring. Rich also mentioned the washout on the side of the road being a concern, adding it's now down 2-3 inches. Alton later asked what was going on with the ditching. Dan asked what he thought it would cost. Alton estimated \$2-300. He said it needs some more gravel, he had done a little something to it just going by one time. He said it doesn't have to be him to fix it, he just wants to know what's going on.

6b. Windows for the Cushing Community Center

ACTION: Selectman Craig Currie made a motion, seconded by Martha Marchut, to accept the funding from the Center for Tech and Civic Life for the window replacement

Discussion: Alton thought we needed a motion to accept the windows from the grant, adding that they are in because he thought we needed them quick (before Election). Lisa asked if we knew anymore about the fan. Corey said Peter had looked and knew it had to be done by the end of the month; he hadn't heard back yet but would check in with him. Lisa said with the grant it can be done by the end of December and still be covered. Lisa also said we got the new tables, they'll be easier to maneuver.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

7. New Business

7a. Office Issue

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Corey said he feels the Board needs to get Kristin to come down and do a workshop with the Board. He said no one wants to email but he knows there is a lot of phone calls going on. He said with the office stuff, when it pertains to Sami, he has the right to know but he can't vote on it, but when it comes to Lisa and Danika he can vote. He feels the best and nicest way to all get on the same page is to have Kristin come and give a learning lesson, adding he listened to her training on the Board of Appeals and a lot of the stuff we do, she says you can not do. Corey said it's the same crap and it's never going to change until we all set down with Kristin right here and learn the same things. Dan said this was a policy that was already voted on and doesn't know why it's being brought up again. Dan said he [Corey] again referred to us doing things shady and he feels that is directed to the whole Board. He said they were talking about what the four of them already voted on which he can't vote on. Dan said he knows Corey talked to Kristen today because she called him and wanted to know what it was all about, and he explained to her what Corey is upset about. Dan said when to monetary, which means vacation time, sick leave, hourly wage, with anyone in that office it effects your wife and you shouldn't be talking about it all. Corey replied b-----. Dan said Kristin agreed; anything else in the office, repairs etc., he has a say, but anything personnel or monetary evaluations he doesn't because if it's something they all get it could be construed as him fighting for it for him to get it himself because he gets it through his wife. Dan said he has been told that by MMA lawyers and twice by Kristin. Dan said nothing has been done shady, it's a policy that was voted on months ago. Corey said Sami was discussed; the stuff with Danika's pay was never discussed, it's two separate subjects. Corey also added he didn't talk to Kristin, he's called her six times the past two days and she doesn't call him back, but Dan can get a hold of her. Dan said she called because he is the contact. Corey said he is a Selectman too, and he should be able to call and ask a question, he left his number and she should have returned his call, he feels that's unprofessional as h---. Dan said he has been the contact for several years; he added this has never been a problem in this town before, never before a Selectman had a spouse working in the office. Dan brought up a letter of reprimation from Sami. Corey stopped him saying that is Sami, not him, he and her are totally separate; he doesn't care how they see it. He said Martha flat out lied to him saying Sami was grandfathered [during all talk about employee vacation time]. Martha said she did not, she said there was the possibility Sami would be grandfathered. Corey again replied b-----, he said she flat out told him, "you must have misunderstood what I said, Sami is grandfathered." He said she later told Sami in the office that it was worth a conversation and she never followed up on having that conversation. Corey said he doesn't make this crap up to add stress, he just feels its corrupt. Martha said she would like to get back to the topic of what brought up the email Corey wrote. Martha said she got a phone call from Lisa while doing the payroll checks and Danika had been [as discussed before when you were angry then and felt I should have discussed with everybody] incorrectly paid as if she were a full time person for two vacation days, so the way to solve it was for two more vacation days she wouldn't get paid at all; it was a clerical error and they happen. She said she made the decision how to handle it and Corey was very angry how she handled it and wanted her to consult with everyone; she added that's why when she got the call from Lisa asking if we'd want to pay her anyway for her goodwill and donations she's made into the office, Martha wanted to think about it and asked how soon Lisa needed to know. When Lisa said by 4pm today, Martha knew it eliminated the possibility of saving the decision until the next meeting so she knew if she was going to decide she was going to get paid after we said she wasn't, she clearly couldn't make that decision herself. She said she could have just said no, but she felt she would call the others [the ones that can be consulted on this] and asked their opinion. She said she spoke with each of them and asked if she should be discussing this with Corey and each of them said no, and she agreed. She said it's a question about money; it's not directly to do with Sami but could in the future. Martha said in hindsight, she could have just said no and then they could have discussed it later in a meeting, but that's what it looked like at the time. She added she wasn't trying to sneak around, she knew he would hear eventually, like he did. Corey said yes, I did, and it wasn't from Sami. He said anything that is discussed needs to be brought to the Board. He said he could make a list of shady s--- that has happened and been swept under the rug. Dan said Corey needs to clean his language up; Corey replied it can be edited out. He said Kristin should return calls to the Select Person calling. Dan said he can't use her for his own personal use, it should have been authorized by the Board before he called. Corey said Dan calls her all the time. Dan said he has never called without authorization. Corey said he didn't call for his own personal use, he called her for the right way to get her to come down here and do a seminar like she

did for the BOA. He said any citizen can come in here and request cell phone records to see how much people talk, that is what Corey is trying to make right; he is black and white and just wants things done right. He added the office morale is down and they have the best crew they've ever had in there, but it's never been micromanaged before like it is now. He added Lisa knows more about things than us, she corrects us in the meetings. Dan said if the people in the office are that unhappy, they can come to us themselves, or if they are that unhappy then they have the option to resign. Corey said Sami had written a very perfect good letter and not one of you responded. Dan said he felt he was being reprimanded, he's not sure how others felt. Corey said he had spoken to MMA and they suggested contacting the Town Lawyer for a training. Dan said these things have never been an issue before. Corey replied yes, it's because I'm married to Sami and she's a great worker in your office Danny; it has nothing to do with that. Dan asked why we're sitting here arguing then. Corey said it's because you all talk on your phones, and you can not sit here and say you don't talk about town business on your phones. He questioned how it's right you're not supposed to email but you can talk on phones, adding emails have black and white paper trails when needed and wouldn't be leaving the odd man out for the need to know basis. The discussion heatedly continued on the Board's different views of how issues and communication should be handled. Corey pushed strongly for a Selectman's workshop with Kristin to put everybody on the same page, no one seemingly agreed. Dan felt everything we are doing is costing the Town money now. He said everyone pushed Alton enough that he decided he doesn't want to deal with it or plow anymore, and that's going to cost the town another \$60k. Corey said it's hard to find driver's too, and putting up with the headache of having trucks. Alton said he always thought it went pretty good until you [Corey] started hammering on me, then I just wasn't going to put up with it anymore, I didn't want to plow snow anyway. Corey said Alton said it was health issues as to why he was getting done, rather or not that was true or is just throwing a fit over the backhoe. Corey said that was the only thing he was trying to change. Alton said well you changed it, aren't you happy. Corey said Selectman shouldn't profit from their positions. Dan suggested everyone going through their handbooks and bringing it back to the next meeting to know what we're talking about and make any decisions then. Craig agreed. Dan said when you're emotional it's not a good time to handle it. Corey said he's not emotional, he's p----- about how the way you three communicate. Alton said he gets stuff done, he waits for other people and nothing gets done. The plow truck Corey took to Cushing Diesel is still up there in the bushes. Corey said the other one is at Copeland's. Alton said where is it [it was back]. Corey asked how much they quoted for a sticker. Alton said Lisa should have the bill, it's all done. Corey said if it's all stickered he assumes there was nothing wrong with it since the Board agreed to get an estimate [before any repairs were made]. Alton said there was something badly wrong with it, the steering box had a hole rusted through it, so they needed a new one. He said they were over warranty and it was about \$1200 for the box. Corey thought they were going over it before any work, but that just shows what he means, there's no consistency. Corey didn't understand the rush to have stickered trucks when we are in a contract with snow plowing.

7b. Ad hoc broadband committee formation

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said there have been a number of citizens who have contacted Lisa saying they don't have broadband. He said we have a contract with Spectrum, which is pretty basic; where if the density supports, they need to supply, but there is trouble on private roads not having access. He said a new bill was passed through Maine Connect and he suggests looking into it and possibly forming this committee to try and explore if they can get some of the State money to improve the broadband in town. He said if no one joins he won't go any farther with it, as he doesn't have an issue with it at home personally, but would like to put an ad out on the Cushing Post to see if there is interest in town to form this and explore options. The Board agreed with Craig looking into this.

7c. Norton Cemetery

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Alton said there are two big pine trees that are about 90 feet tall and the whole bottoms are rotten. He said if they fall, they will do some damage to the stones. Dan said it goes back to the question from before, who owns the trees. Alton said when the Town took over the maintenance, we didn't take over the land, just the maintenance. He said the trees are in the cemetery. He said he got an estimate of about \$1800 per tree because each tree will take about a day. He said the stones all around the trees make it difficult. Corey asked who the estimate was from. Alton said it was Hoppe and added Richard had looked but didn't want to do it saying it was too risky with all the stones. Alton said they don't have to go with Hoppe, he just contacted him to get an idea of where the price point might be. Dan asked where the money will come from. Alton said that's the question, there isn't enough in the cemetery account to pay for it. Dan said doing the budget we need to start adding a little more than is actually needed so over a few years we have extra for things like this. Dan said it should be put out to bid, probably before we get any bad winter storms. Alton asked how to pay or is there a since to put it out to bid if there's no money for it right now. Dan said there are accounts you can take the interest from. Corey asked if you could use money from a different cemetery account. Dan asked if the trees come down and damage stones are we responsibly for those, adding that could be much more.

7d. Foreclosure list

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa updated the Board with a recent foreclosure list and said a few have been removed since she printed it for the Board members. She said she had spoken with Garnett about the first account on the list and it is a trailer on someone else's land. She said we don't know where the owner is anymore, and told the Board that Garnett said it's not worth ever foreclosing on so he could add it onto the landowner to clear it up. Lisa said the foreclosure date this year is December 6.

7e. Application to use the CCC gymnasium for Fire Dept. Christmas party

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to approve the use of the CCC gym for the Fire Dept. annual Christmas Party

Discussion: Lisa said there was no actual application, but they had done it here last year. She said being a part of the town there wasn't an application needed.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

8. Comments from Citizens: Robert Ellis asked about the Appeals Board and what happened with the issue that was supposed to go the Appeals this summer. He asked if that was no longer an issue and why no decision was made. Lisa thought he should speak with Bob Stackpole as he is the chair. Robert said he was just curious why it never materialized and suggested every time a Board is re-stacked, they should have training. Lisa said they did, that was the training Corey had said he attended with Kristen. Bob said that's good because anything mishandled by the Appeals Board can later go to court. Dan said if there is an appeal with a lawyer involved, we would almost always have our town lawyer involved too, for the chance it later went to court. Craig spoke as a citizen and said Knox County had their first budget meeting last week via Zoom. He said there isn't anything he can say as a Selectman, but as a citizen he is saying they are looking at a 5.5% budget increase. He said it was almost all in the jail and the Sheriff's Dept., and as a citizen if you have a problem with that, you should get in touch with Robert Parent who is our representative. He said they got a lot of push back on it at the meeting.

9. Adjourn

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Corey Jones, to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Jones
Recording Secretary