

TOWN OF CUSHING
SELECT BOARD
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, August 23, 2021
Cushing Community Center

Selectmen Present: Chairperson Alton Grover; Selectpeople Tracey Bally, Craig Currie, Daniel Staples, and Martha Marchut

Selectmen Absent: none

Staff Present: Town Clerk Lisa Young

Public Present: Cheryl Stackpole, Danika Poland, and Corey Jones

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: Selectperson Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Martha Marchut, to approve 2021 Warrants 34 and 35.

Discussion: none

Motion Carried 5-0-0

4. Review and approve the minutes of the August 9, 2021 meeting

ACTION: Selectperson Dan Staples made a motion, seconded Craig Currie, to approve the minutes of the August 9, 2021 meeting with one change

Discussion: Page 2, 6a discussion, 2nd sentence he should be Alton

Motion Carried 4-0-1 (Martha abstained)

5. Additions and Changes to the Agenda:

5a. Flag at CCC

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: When going by the Town Office on Sunday, Nick Jones found the flag in the middle of the road. He put it on one of the large rocks and Lisa was contacted. The rope had broken off the flagpole. Alton will contact the Thomaston Fire Department to see if they can come and put the rope back on the pole.

5b. Library Door

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: The Library door that exits to the outside has a piece that is broken off the bottom. Terry [Melanson] said it will need to be taken off the hinges to be fixed. He also thought that all doors coming out of a public building should swing out; this one swings in. Alton will check into this and get back to the Board.

6. Unfinished Business:

6a. Remote Participation Policy

ACTION: Selectperson Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Tracey Bally, to accept the Remote Participation Policy

Discussion:

Motion Carried 5-0-0

7. New Business:

7a. Blinds for community center room

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Alton will get samples and prices

7b. County ARPA funds and survey

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said Knox County is getting 7.7 million from ARPA and has already gotten half of it. He said the remaining half will be received sometime next year. Craig said they are supposedly taking grant bids until the end of August for anyone nonprofit or municipalities who would like a piece of that. He said in September they [the three commissioners] will make decisions about how to spend that. The discussion continued about how they will be able to oversee how it's spent, and how it will be spent. Dan said they have already allotted some of extra law enforcement and jail. Dan said this year it's all free money, but next year it will be coming out of the Towns' pockets; will these extra costs get passed on to Town's next year. Craig thought it was a possibility, but he understood it as bonus money for Covid; money they are giving to deputies and dispatchers for working through Covid as it's something ARPA allows. Craig said it is not set up a salary increase, it's a one-time bonus. Craig noted Owls Head is making an application out to use funds for tennis court repairs and float repairs at a town dock. Craig said this was the first he had heard of a Town making a request as before he knew it was being asked to go towards broadband and affordable housing. Craig suggested Cushing trying to fill out an application but wondered how much we would want and what we would want it for. Martha asked if there are things that need to be done to prepare for Broadband. Craig wasn't sure until the feasibility study was finished. He said the private company doing the study would provide us all the information needed on Broadband rather or not we go with the private utility company or not. Craig said this grant was only announced about a week ago, and added it's not our money, it's the county's money, but he's willing to work on it if

the Board would like to. Craig said he would look at the application and see what it requires for information. Lisa said people have mentioned an electronic sign. Alton said that was a good idea and said they run around \$15,000. Corey Jones said a sign would be nice if it would be set down in front of the store where more people would see it. Craig said those in north Cushing never go down this way. Dan didn't see why you wouldn't put it in front of the Town Office like all the other Towns have them. Corey said most Town Office's are in the center of town; his biggest complaint he hears around Town is that people don't see stuff. Craig said now they have some ideas he is going to look at the application and see. Martha suggested requesting funds for a town landing.

7c. LD 1522 "An Act to Update and Eliminate References in Statute to Aldermen, Selectmen, and Overseers of the Poor"

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said there was apparently a law passed by the State that we can no longer use gender specifications for our Select Board and the Overseer of the Poor is now just an Overseer. He said he is just bringing this up because all of the Towns now need to get into compliance with the new State law. He said he is assuming they will not need to go back and change minutes from the past, however going forward with the minutes and such everyone is a Selectperson or the Select Board. Craig wasn't sure if it required a motion or not. Dan said it's a law now, so we just need to do it. Martha said we need to look at all of our forms and make sure they are in compliance.

7d. South Thomaston Broadband letter

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said this was the letter our lawyer, Kristin Collins, wrote and sent for South Thomaston. Craig felt she raised some good points and wonders what the reaction from the utility will be. Craig said our letter will probably be almost identical to that. He said he wanted everyone to see the letter and would like to wait and see what South Thomaston receives for a response before sending anything. Craig said he really likes the guy that is doing the feasibility study; he added the first draft should be expected sometime in September.

7e. ARPA guidelines for municipalities and MMA response

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said he wrote MMA's legal department and asked if we can use the \$157,000 for property tax relief. He said they didn't really know but seemed to discourage it. Dan said he took the answer as a no. Craig thought he felt it sounded like there is still more guidance to come. He said there is going to be a link where we can ask questions to someone who can officially answer them; he added MMA will not officially answer them.

7f. Owls Head Town office mask mandate

ACTION: Selectperson Martha Marchut made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, to put a sign on the door of the Cushing Community Center that it is recommended that everyone who comes into the building wear a mask

Discussion: Craig said Owls Head is now requiring masks for everyone at the Town Office. He said Appleton, Hope, and another town are also requiring them. Martha said she wasn't thinking about a requirement but since the CDC is now recommending all people in public places wear mask; she feels instead of the sign we have now where we request unvaccinated people wear mask it should be changed to we request all people wear masks. Alton said he noticed today a lot of people are wearing masks again. Martha said we are in a substantial rating right now where transmission is concerned. Martha said she feels we should be in support of what the CDC recommends. Lisa confirmed it was a request and not a mandate. Martha said yes but said it could be a mandate if people wanted. Dan said he isn't ready for a mandate; other board members agreed.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

7g. Set public hearing for annual General Assistance Ordinance and appendices approval

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa said this is an annual thing and asked if before the next meeting would work for everyone. The Board agreed for it to be Monday, September 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

7h. Covid protocol

ACTION: motion located under 7f.

Discussion: This was discussed in amongst 7f discussion where motion was made

8. Comments from Citizens: Corey Jones asked about the Planning Board and why they meet random times and shouldn't all meetings be recorded and have minutes recorded and posted like these meetings. Dan said they are recorded. Corey asked if he is able to get a copy of the minutes. Lisa said once she has them, he could; she said she can ask as she doesn't have them right now. He said he knew one of the last minutes he went by and noticed a meeting, but he had never seen it posted. Lisa said she did notify Bill that last meeting wasn't posted and reminded him that they always need to be posted. Dan said this happens a lot and said he will speak with him about it again as it continues. Dan agreed with Corey, adding it's aggravating. Corey said his other question was with the Town Attorney, Kristin, he is curious how she can represent Scott in any form where it seems to be a big conflict of interest considering she is representing people in Rockport suing Scott and the Town of Rockport's decision on hotel. Alton said this is a different town. Corey said but it's the same person, going against Scott in one town and then representing him here. Corey said he would like to see something in writing from MMA as a question and response on if it's really okay because he feels it's the biggest conflict of interest he has ever seen. Alton said Scott in Rockport and Scott on Cottage Lane are two different towns and two different cases. Corey said but it's still Scott. He said he has looked into a lawyer before and was unable to be represented as they had done something for one of the opposing parties one time, although completely unrelated, it's the same thing. He said it's still Scott Bickford, the CEO, and he doesn't know how it's able to work. Danika asked how Scott feels. Dan said he doesn't have a problem with it. Craig said Kristin, as a member of the Bar of Maine, would need to know the rules of conflict of interest and would need to remove herself or she could be disbarred for. Corey feels it is something that should be looked at and doesn't see how she can have the best interest of our Town as she is going against him in another town. Corey suggested the Board check with MMA for clarification. Martha agreed they can check with MMA. Dan said he [Corey] wants it in writing and to be sure it is done the right way. Craig said he wouldn't go to Scott, he would go right to MMA, and said he is happy to write them for the clarification.

---Executive Session---

The Select Board entered into Executive Session, pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) for a personnel matter at 6:45 p.m. A motion was made by Chairperson Alton Grover and seconded by Dan Staples, to go into Executive Session.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

Selectperson Dan Staples motioned, seconded by Craig Currie, to enter back into the main meeting at 7:09p.m.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

ACTION: Selectperson Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Alton Grover, that if any violations are served by the Code Enforcement Officer, the Select Board will refrain from any involvement

Discussion: The Board reprimanded Tracey for her actions on the night of Thursday, August 12.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

9. Adjourn

ACTION: Selectperson Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Tracey Bally, to adjourn at 7:17 p.m.

Motion Carried 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Jones
Recording Secretary