

TOWN OF CUSHING
SELECT BOARD
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022
Cushing Community Center

Select Board Present: Chairperson Alton Grover; Selectpeople Martha Marchut, Craig Currie, and Daniel Staples

Select Board Absent: Tracey Bally

Staff Present: Town Clerk Lisa Young

Public Present: none

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 Craig Currie, to 2022 Warrants 3 and 4

Discussion: none

Motion Carried 4-0-0

4. Review and approve the minutes of the January 10, 2022 meeting

ACTION: Selectperson Martha Marchut made a motion, seconded Craig Currie, to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2022 meeting as written

Discussion: none

Motion Carried 4-0-0

5. Additions and Changes to the Agenda:

5a. Tracey's absence

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Dan announced that Tracey couldn't make the meeting tonight as her husband's mother passed away out in California and he was the executor of the estate and they had to fly out today.

5b. Covid Policy Updates

ACTION: none

Discussion: Martha said her and Lisa had attended a virtual training on covid, and the one thing they might want to think about is that they should be reviewing the policy on a regular basis. She said she wondered if they could just add that to meeting agenda once a month so they can either take a quick look or decide that they don't need to take a look at anything. She said it would be for liability reasons that the policy or protocol is consistent. Craig said he felt once a month would be good too.

5c. Remote access for meetings

ACTION: Select person Craig Currie made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, to investigate remote access to meetings

Discussion: Craig brought up looking at pricing to have the ability to have remote access to the Select Board meetings, as well as other meetings. He asked Lisa if she could begin to look into that. Lisa said she is crazy busy right now but could have one of the girls research it. He said they have had good luck in the Library with Blue Maple Systems, the guys out of the barn in Thomaston on the waterfront across from Jeff's. He said it was the Tishman's place, but the company in there does a lot of IT and computer stuff. Craig said if they need help, he would be happy to help too. Dan said South Thomaston is already doing it and he thinks Thomaston as also done it off and on. Dan said he would like to ask them what they have to do, only because of what you said to me tonight, and if that is so, do you have to offer it to everyone. Lisa said it is. Craig added RSU 13 is also doing it. Dan asked if it would complicate doing it. Craig said no, you just have to have the hardware. He said he thinks it's as simple as when you come in to the meeting you just press a button. He said you just need the cameras and the microphone situated. He added the problem with Tracey trying [in the past] with her laptop was the resolution just wasn't enough on those tiny little things. Dan said he thinks they're talking about two different things. Alton asked what is it, a tv program everyone can watch or what? Craig said basically it would allow if someone is gone, a select person is gone, or someone from the general public wants to interact, they can join through. He said it's basically Zoom except we'd all be here for the most part. Dan said that answered it right there. Lisa asked if Dan was going to contact those towns and ask. Dan said he would, he didn't realize they were going to get into all that equipment and stuff, but maybe it could be done by the ARPA funds. Craig said it would definitely be covered by the ARPA funds, adding all the other towns used those for it. Dan said it would be more transparency for the public. Martha added with the whole covid thing, towns people in some towns are complaining because they want to attend the meeting but don't want to go sit in the room. Craig agreed adding this would allow them to do that. Martha said it would eliminate a possible liability. Craig said he wonders if people doing this need written minutes anymore, or if they can just put the video up on the website, but he doesn't know for sure. Lisa said she thinks we have to have a copy of the written minutes for the motions.

Motion Carried 4-0-0

5d. Potential dredge material coming to Cushing

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Dan said he had a phone call today wanting to know what's going on with the dredging in Rockland that is proposed to come down here to Cushing. He said he didn't know anything about it until he read the new mail, but he already had phone calls on it, so asked; is it coming down? Craig thought it was dredging from Vinalhaven. Dan said in the new mail there is another one in Rockland. Craig said he hadn't seen that yet. Alton said they must be going through with that in Rockland Harbor, he said the county had cancelled that for a while, but it must be open again. Dan asked if it was going to Cushing. Alton asked if that is a fact or is it hear say? Dan said it's a question someone has challenged so he thinks we need to get more information on it and wants to make people aware that a second town could potentially be bringing their sludge to Cushing. He asked how much do we want to fall into that category.

Craig asked if DEP has to let us know if they're doing that or no. Martha said she read over it quickly but thought it said they would be putting in an application. She said she assumes once the application comes in it'll be like the other one and come to us and maybe we'll want to request a hearing and see if they're willing to do it this time around. Dan said he agreed with Martha but wasn't getting his point across clear. He said he was more like here we go again, adding he was kind of bothered last time, but all abutting landowners were contacted and no one else said anything. Craig said he feels the Rockland dredge could potentially be even bigger and might be filled with more stuff than Vinalhaven that we don't want.

5e. Foreclosure Update

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa wanted to update on the status of the 2019 foreclosures. She said we have them all paid except for one person who has paid half and plans to come in the pay the other half before the foreclosure date.

6. Unfinished Business:

6a. Discuss Knox County ARPA Meeting

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said you all got a copy of my letter I sent to Parent. Dan said it was very well written. Craig said he has not heard a peep from anyone. He said he also sent it to Robert Duke who is on the budget committee and a few other people. He said it's also going to be a letter to the editor in the Villagesoup this week. He said he got a call today out of the blue from the Town Manager on Vinalhaven and he was very upset with the meeting, too. He said he had similar feelings and they talked about being able to get some of the smaller towns together. He said the bigger towns feel like they've already said their piece with the County, and they've written them and still going down the subjective beauty contest. He said basically everybody who put in, they made it seem a couple are worthy, and the rest aren't. He said he doesn't know where it'll go but they have another meeting February 9th, they haven't made any decisions that was just the first of four or five meetings before they go to vote. Dan said if it went to the Commissioners and the Budget County, you've got no response it's been almost a week, they have a responsibility to us. Craig said he sent it to the two that represent us on Friday. Craig said he will keep going to the meetings and see where it goes. He said the process hasn't been approved at all. Dan said he is glad it went to the paper because right now it's just communication back and forth and the public doesn't know what's going in; it needs to be put out there.

6b. Fire Station & Food Pantry repair quotes

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Craig Currie, to solicit bids to repair Fire Station/Rescue building

Motion Carried 4-0-0

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples revised his previous motion, seconded by Craig Currie, to state that the Board would like a Building Inspector to come and look at the Fire Station/Rescue building and make recommendations

Motion Carried 4-0-0

ACTION: Selectman Dan Staples, seconded by Craig Currie, withdrew his original motion

Motion Carried 4-0-0

Discussion: Craig asked if we want to go ahead, or maybe we already are, with getting some pricing on what exactly needs to be done for repairs to the Fire Station and Food Pantry with the ARPA funds. Dan said he thinks we need to put it out to get estimates. Craig said to treat it like a normal bid process. Alton asked if we should go ahead with the Food Pantry. Craig said just getting prices of what needs to be done and what it will cost at this point. Dan said if you get prices and bring it back; he said the Fire Station definitely needs to be done. Craig asked what needs to be done there. Dan said all kinds of things. Alton said he's talking about the sides, what about the roof. Dan said he is talking about the roof. Craig said go about everything that needs to be done and see what the price is. Dan said at the last meeting he said they shouldn't piece meal it, they should repair the whole building and bring it up to code. He added then it'll last another 25-30 years, but right now it's in pretty hard shape. Craig said another \$75,000 is coming to us in April. Dan motioned to get bids. Alton asked what they are getting bids for. Lisa agreed with Alton, saying it needs to be more specific to write the bid up. Craig said that's the thing, he doesn't know what needs to be done. Dan said he thinks if a carpenter is going to do it, he'll want to look the building all over to see what needs to be done. Alton said it's not so much a repair, it's re-do the whole building. Dan said word it anyway you want Alton, roof, sides, floor, whatever needs to be done; he doesn't know, he's not a carpenter. Dan said they need to have someone come in and look and go over it and see what needs to be done. Alton asked who comes to look at it. Dan said put bids out and have people come look. He said the roof leaks, it gets fixed every few years, then happens again. Alton said you still need to have something to bid on, you can't just say look at the building and give us a bid. Lisa agreed. Martha said she doesn't know a lot about those things, but wouldn't it be a two-step process. She said when she bought her house, they first had an inspector come in and give a list of things that need to be done, then second you put it out to bid to look for people to do the things that need to be done. Dan said that's a good idea and revised his motion, saying you could have an inspector come in and give a list of recommendations for repair. Alton asked if anyone knew any building inspectors. Craig said it should be someone who won't bid on the job but can tell you what needs to be done, then knowing what needs to go out to bid. Craig said same for the Food Pantry, have the same guy do that while he's here so we at least have a professional opinion on what needs to be done. Alton said he is afraid some of these big companies are going to be out a year or two before you get anybody. Dan said it just needs to get started sooner than later. Craig said the ARPA funds don't need to be spent until the end of 2026, and don't need to state what you're using them for until 2024. Craig asked who's going to find the person or company to do this. Dan suggested asking someone like Gartley and Dorsky if they would have a recommendation on someone who can do this. Lisa asked if an engineer came and looked at the sand shed once. Alton said yes, it was someone who was local. Martha thought MMA might have a list of suggestions. Alton thought maybe Thomaston or Rockland would have a contact for someone, too.

7. New Business:

7a. Buffer rental for floors

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa said Terry wanted her to put it out there; he finally found a place in Damariscotta where you can rent a buffer to do the floors. He said it is \$40 a day and he is willing to go get it. Alton thought the new place across from McDonald's in Thomaston might rent them, too. Lisa said she thought he researched and looked a lot of places; she thought he looked there already. Dan said over a two-to-three-year period, if they get what they get for a new buffer, would it be worth it for them to buy one and own and take it out of the fixtures account. He asked if it would be a better cost in the long run over

renting it and sending Terry over to get it and bring it back. Alton said you also have to look at if you buy one, if something breaks you got to get someone to fix it. Lisa said Terry felt the cost was pretty reasonable. Martha said she had talked to him a while ago about it, too. Dan complimented how much better the floors and building looks since he's taken over. Martha said she quickly looked up prices and buying them ranges up to \$2400 so there is quite a price range. Lisa said she can ask Terry again, but she had mentioned it and he said that was a reasonable rate for renting it for a day.

7b. State Budget Surplus uses discussed

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Craig said you may or may not be aware the State of Maine has an \$822 million surplus in its budget and the Legislature is in a special session right now trying to decide what to do with it. He said there is a lot of talk about handing a big piece of it back adding there's actually a bill someone proposed about giving 90% of it back to taxpayers while leaving the other 10% in the rainy-day fund. He said it's the biggest budget surplus the State has ever had and it's real, there's no borrowed money or anything. He said a piece of it did come from the federal government, but also our revenues in Maine, sales tax and everything else went up, not down. He asked if we, as a local Select Board, want to recommend to our local representatives that we would support the bill that wants to give 90% of it back to taxpayers. Dan said he would like to see them do away with state income tax. He said if you have all that coming in from sales tax and everything else; we're being overtaxed in his opinion. Craig said he just didn't know if we wanted to send a letter of support towards this bill, or not; he said he would be happy to draft it if so. Dan said he didn't feel he was in favor of it, but he was just one of three. He said a tax relief that would help over the next ten to twenty years, instead of one-time relief, would be better. Craig said they probably realize they can't get something like that through so they're trying to do something with what they have now. Martha said her opinion is 90% seems like a lot, she would prefer to have a little more in the rainy-day fund. Craig said that's not the entire rainy-day fund, that fund already has a substantial amount in it, that 10% is just what would be added to what's already in it. He said the \$822 million surplus is just this year, they always put some into the rainy-day fund, too. Taking 10% if this would be added to that in addition to what is already there. Martha said she would like to know what is already in there before being in favor of anything. Alton said he doesn't care. Craig said he will look into it a bit more.

7c. Delinquent tax rate

ACTION: Selectperson Dan Staples made a motion, seconded by Craig Currie, to set the interest rate for abated taxes at 1%, and 4% for delinquent taxes to be voted on at Town Meeting

Discussion: Lisa said the State has set the delinquent rate, the highest you can go is 4%; last year it was 6%. Dan said we've always gone 2% and 4%. Lisa said you can only be reduced by 4% for abated, which would be 0, so she thought you'd want to go 1% so there is something. Dan said we were doing 2% on abated and 6% on delinquent, so why can't we go 4% on delinquent since that's what the State allows and keep it 2% on abated. Lisa said when it was 6%, we could go 4% less, which is why we went 2%, so now that it's at 4% she doesn't know how that works. Dan said he understands that, let's go down memory lane; the reason we had it at 6% on an abatement. He said you're not going to go down to 0, you can do anything less than 4%, why not leave it right at 2%. Lisa said you could go down to 1%, too. She asked how low you want to go for abated. Alton asked if we can do that, or if it has to be voted on. Lisa said you set the rates, and it gets voted on at Town Meeting. Dan said he agrees, it's only fair to go down to 1% on abated taxes so they're not too close.

Motion Carried 4-0-0

7d. Selling Town Property Article

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Lisa said they found out you need an article to sell town property, such as the trucks. She asked if the Board wants to put a value on it, or how they want the article to read. Dan thought the article was going to be asking the Town to give the Select Board permission to sell used property. He said he didn't realize you had to put a number to it. Lisa said she isn't sure if you have to. Dan said everything is going to be different prices over the years, so you'd have to redo it every year. He thinks just asking for permission to do it. Lisa read an example she had; the Board agreed to it. Alton said Rockland has it set up so the Town Manager can sell anything that is less than \$5,000, they don't put it out to bid he can sell it.

7e. Ice back up near Gaunt Neck

ACTION: none taken

Discussion: Alton said he wants it on record, Danny called him on Saturday, he wants everyone to know what happens behind the doors. He said Dan said there was a big icy spot down by Gaunt Neck going out to the center line in the road. Alton said the ditch has been full, adding he called the State last summer and they never did anything. He said he called Jimmy Kalloch and he sent his man down almost immediately. Alton said he told him don't be afraid of the sand, put it right to it. Alton said it took care of it temporarily. He said this morning he called DOT and he said he went right down to do it. Dan said the problem hasn't been taken care of, but the road has been for it; adding it could happen again. Alton said if it does, they'll call again. Craig said there was a list of all the DOT projects planned for the next two years and the only mention of Cushing was that we're going to have a bunch of culverts replaced on River Road and Pleasant Point. Martha asked if there is a culvert there. Alton said yes there is, and there is some ledge at the end of it that blocks some of it. Martha said it's right near her house and that's the worst she's seen it. Alton said they need to ditch that ditch, if they had done that the water would have run down the ditch. Dan said there is a lot of that goes on like that, he and Alton call each other and deal with those types of issues; a lot of things they handle that the Board or the public doesn't see. Alton said just go get it done. Dan said people need to know they don't just come to meetings; they do a lot behind the scenes and most people don't know that. He added posting Posted signs, then going around and taking them back down, he added they don't even charge for it. Martha said people also need to know sometimes things are done without a meeting being involved because they need to be addressed in a timely manner for the sake of efficiency.

8. Comments from Citizens: none

9. Adjourn

ACTION: Chairperson Alton Grover made a motion, seconded by Dan Staples, to adjourn at 6:45 p.m.

Motion Carried 4-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Jones
Recording Secretary