

Town of Northport

Select Board Meeting

April 8, 2024 @ 6:15 pm

Chair: Jeanine Tucker	Finance Director: Vicki Eugley
Vice Chair: Breanna Pinkham Bebb	Town Clerk: Amy Eldridge – excused absence
Municipal Officer: Molly Schauffler	Road Commissioner: Amon Morse - excused absence
Town Administrator: James Kossuth	NVC Representative: Janae Novotny – not present

**Present:** Jeanine Tucker, Breanna Pinkham Bebb, Molly Schauffler, Vicki Eugley, Peter Gallace, Barry Hodge, Mark Lynch, James Kossuth.

**Finance Director:** Eugley provided the Payroll & Accounts Payable warrants to the Board for review and approval. The Board reviewed, signed, and approved the Payroll & Accounts Payable warrants. Eugley explained that 12 bills paid and mailed last month were returned, unsent by the Post Office with no postmark and no explanation. The warrants for the meeting included rewritten checks.

**Rising Star nomination:** The Board discussed process and reasons for nominating Kossuth for a Maine City, Town, and County Management Association (MTCMA) Rising Star Award, due June 1.

**Citizen Concerns:** Barry Hodge was present to hear an update about Shore Road stabilization in the vicinity of his house (around 591 Shore Rd.) Hodge explained that the shoulder is undermined and in immediate need of attention. He met with a person from FC Work right after Gartley and Dorsky completed their survey. Tucker suggested we might post the road as one way until work can be done. Kossuth has more information, and the Board will ask Kossuth to give Hodge the latest update. The Board thanked Hodge for keeping an eye on the situation and letting us know about it.

**School budget:** Peter Gallace, the new school superintendent, reviewed the school budget for next year. The budget is up 1.6%, which is low compared to other school budgets, but it will mean a 5.8% increase for taxpayers. There is \$300,000 that will carry over to next year. The increase is due to increases in health insurance, required paid family and medical leave, a \$12,000 increase in transportation cost, salary increases to keep positions competitive, and other factors. Pinkham Bebb asked about tracking the point at which the school budget exceeds the budget when we were in RSU 71; this will be the first year that will happen.

Schauffler shared a summary of heat and electricity expenses for Town facilities and reviewed the option of taking advantage of potential energy savings through Maine Power Options consortium, in which Northport is a lifetime member. Gallace expressed interest in the school participating in the cost-saving program. Lynch said the school does not have room for solar panels, and has looked into joining a solar farm, but is hesitant to invest in something with such a long-term commitment.

Pinkham Bebb asked about more opportunities for instrumental music instruction; Tucker asked about ways to help Drinkwater students engage more with peers from Troy Howard to build their socializing experience. Pinkham Bebb asked about ways to make our Town meeting more family friendly. Options for these ideas were discussed.

Tucker gave a copy of the flyer announcing Town Clean-up Day on May 4 to Gallace so students can encourage their families to participate.

**Northport Village Corporation (NVC):** (no report)

**Roads & Bridges:** (no report, but see below)

**Town Administrator:**

**Shoreline Stabilization update:** Kossuth reported via cell phone that Jennifer Work from FC Work estimated that the shoreline stabilization project near 591 Shore Road would cost \$90,000-\$125,000, and said that they could do it now, before the season gets too busy. Eugley said that we have the amount left in this year's budget, and that we would not need to put it out to bid because it is an emergency situation. Tucker made a motion that we complete the work now, and stop through traffic until the work is completed. Pinkham Bebb seconded the motion and it was passed 3-0. Kossuth will let the County Sheriff and emergency services know about the temporary road blockage.

**Funding for new Town Office and Community Center:** Kossuth reported that the Congressionally Directed Spending grant application is due April 22. He also just learned Friday that we have been invited to submit a full proposal for update and Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program grant, which is due May 3. We will need a letter of support from the Select Board, and he will recirculate one sent last year to the Board to revise and resubmit.

**Butters Cottage:** Rick Fischer told Rooney he would set up for completing the list of tasks on Sunday, April 7, and plans to complete the work on Friday, April 12. The Board agreed to hold off further action until the next Select Board meeting on April 22.

**Boundary issue:** The Board decided that Kossuth should continue checking on other surveyor options. The Board will decide at the next Board meeting about how to proceed.

**Administrator Annual Report:** Kossuth provided the Board with a draft of his annual report. The Board provided feedback.

**New Business:**

***Tucker motioned to enter executive session under 1 MRSA §405(6) (A), to discuss employment of an individual at 8:15 pm, seconded by Schauffler. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.***

***Tucker motioned to return to regular session at 9:01 pm, seconded by Schauffler. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.***

Tucker motioned to renew Kossuth's contract as Town Administrator for another year, July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, seconded by Pinkham Bebb. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.

**Adjourn:** ***Tucker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 pm, seconded by Pinkham Bebb. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Molly Schauffler