

Town of Northport
Select Board Meeting
May 28, 2024 @ 6:15 pm

Chair: Jeanine Tucker
Vice Chair: Breanna Pinkham Bebb
Municipal Officer: Molly Schauffler
Town Administrator: James Kossuth

Finance Director: Vicki Eugley
Road Commissioner: Amon Morse
NVC Representative: Janae Novotny

Present: Jeanine Tucker, Breanna Pinkham Bebb, Molly Schauffler, James Kossuth, Vicki Eugley, Amon Morse, Tinsley Morrison, Janae Novotny, John Clifford, Sid Block, Kim Ervin Tucker.

Citizen Concerns: Sid Block, re Town's boundary survey with Belfast: Block asked the Board to refuse to participate in any municipal boundary survey with Belfast, or, in the alternative, add an article to the Annual Town Meeting warrant regarding the Town's participation in a municipal boundary survey with Belfast; enter into a memorandum of understanding with Belfast that Northport not be liable in any way for Belfast's subsequent use of the survey; or simply deny all his requests.

Tucker thanked Block for his passion in continuing to seek the Board's support on this issue. Tucker explained that it is far better for the Town to be involved in the survey and have some say in the process than to find out at the end that the Town's interests had been negatively affected. Schauffler pointed out that the Town does not have to agree with the results of the survey, and agreed that a memorandum of understanding with Belfast about the process would be the logical next step.

Pinkham Bebb asked Kossuth to summarize the meeting that he had had that afternoon with the Belfast City Manager, Belfast City Attorney, and Robert Yarumian II, the surveyor. Kossuth explained that they had asked Yarumian to focus his survey on the portion of the boundary between the Little River Dam and the river's mouth. Kossuth also explained that Kossuth and Collins had informed Yarumian that the Maine Law Court's decision in Mabee v. Nordic Aquafarms had explained where the mouth of the river is not located, and defined where the mouth of the river is legally, but did not specify the location on the face of the earth where the mouth of the Little River sits.

The Board instructed Kossuth to draft a memorandum of understanding between the Town and Belfast to memorialize what the Town and Belfast had discussed and agreed to up to this point.

NVC: Novotny reported that the floats had been installed, and that the lifeguard would start soon. She reported that they have been unable to find a part-time police officer for the summer, and that they might be unable to hire one at all.

Road Commissioner: Morse reported that he is sweeping the Town's roads, and that he had repaired some potholes on Bayside Road near The Hoot. He had received a call about trees blocking the end of Priest Road at the school bus turnaround, and he had them cut up and moved out of the way. He repaired the Knights Pond boat ramp, which had been moved out of alignment during the winter. He has picked up the trailer for the portable speed feedback sign, and will be working on mounting it.

Town Administrator:

Summer Intern update: Kossuth introduced Clifford, who started today and will be working on various projects for the Town during the summer. The Board welcomed Clifford.

Congressionally Directed Spending / Town Office Project update- Kossuth reported that he had heard from Rep. Golden's office that they will not be supporting the Town's CDS request. Representatives can support only 15 projects, and the Town's did not make his cut. Senators can support as many projects as they wish, and Kossuth reported that both Sen. King's and Sen. Collins's office have indicated that they intend to support the Town's request.

Kossuth asked the Board for suggestions for preparing for the June 3 informational session about the project. The Board recommended emphasizing the need for community space, the deteriorating structural condition of the current Town Office, energy efficiency benefits of the new facility, and the enhanced accessibility of the new facility, along with the improvements to the space for the fire department and first responders.

MMA Property Insurance update: Kossuth provided the Board with the report from MMA's property insurance adjuster, who had inspected all of the Town's buildings on May 7. The adjuster had noted several minor issues for the Town to address, but the adjuster had also recommended that MMA cancel all coverage for the Town Office, because of the 2018 structural engineer's report. Kossuth reported that he contacted the structural engineer who had completed that report to ask if she could do an update, to demonstrate that the Town Office is not in fact structurally unsound. Kossuth reported that she will send him a quote for that work soon.

Joint Letter to Maine DOT with Lincolnville: Kossuth provided a draft letter from the Boards of both Northport and Lincolnville to Maine DOT regarding upcoming work on Route 1 in both towns. The Board signed the letter. Assuming Lincolnville's Board signs the letter too, Kossuth will send the letter to the DOT.

Butters Cottage (9 North Ave) update: Kossuth reported that the Town had served an interim demand letter to the Butterses, rather than a "final" demand, because the Town continues to incur legal fees relating to the dangerous building. The letter included language that the Board still retains jurisdiction under the Order and Decision, because full payment of fees was an express condition of the order. James Butters's lawyer asked Bill Kelly, the Town's attorney, to resend the demand letter and say that the Order and Decision has been lifted. Kossuth asked Kelly to explain to J. Butters's lawyer that the Order cannot be lifted until all the fees have been paid.

Spirit of America resolution: Kossuth provided the Board with a draft resolution honoring the 2024 Spirit of America recipient, Tinsley Morrison. Kossuth read the draft and the Board thanked Morrison for all that she has done for the Town.

Fire Department Concerns re Waldo County Dispatch: Kossuth provided the Board with a letter than Fire Chief Paul Rooney had sent to Waldo County Communications Director, Michael Larrivee, about a dispatching error on May 24. The Board asked Kossuth to keep the Board informed about any response, and to let Rooney know that the Board will provide whatever support he needs.

Property Tax abatement: On behalf of the Tax Collector, Kossuth presented the Board with a property tax abatement request to correct an error in 2023 taxes where a lot that had been divided, R02-12 (834 Beech Hill Road), was mistakenly taxed without regard to the division.

Minutes: Kossuth provided minutes from the meeting of May 20 for the Board to review. The Board approved the minutes with corrections.

Finance Director: Eugley provided the Payroll & Accounts Payable warrants to the Board for review and approval. The Board approved the Payroll & Accounts Payable warrants.

Eugley reported that we had received no responses to our request for proposals for auditing services. She had contacted the Town's prior auditor and asked if they would be willing to audit the Town again this year, and they agreed. The Town will likely need a new auditor for fiscal year 2025, but the Town does have one for this year's audit.

Old Business: Nothing at this time.

New Business: Nothing at this time.

Adjourn: *Pinkham Bebb motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:04pm, seconded by Schauffler. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted by,

James Kossuth, Town Administrator