

Town of Northport

Select Board Meeting

August 12, 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

Intern: John Clifford

**Present:** Jeanine Tucker, Breanna Pinkham Bebb, Molly Schauffler, James Kossuth, Vicki Eugley, Amon Morse, John Clifford, Janae Novotny.

**Citizen Concerns:** None at this time.

**Animal Control:** Heidi Blood, Animal Control Officer, was unable to attend.

**Northport Village Corporation:** Novotny reported that the Village's annual meeting is on Tuesday, August 13, and she distributed copies of the Village's Annual Report.

She asked about Village property tax bills and why they have not yet been mailed. Kossuth reported that there has been a problem with the data in TRIO, and that TRIO is reporting an incorrect value for the Village property valuation, which is \$500 higher than it is supposed to be. Neither TRIO nor the Town has been able to determine the cause of the error, and they are both still investigating. Because the Village property tax payments are due on September 1, the Board and Novotny discussed options for handling payments, and the Board decided that the Town would not charge interest for payments received within 30 days of the date of mailing, and that payments received within those 30 days would be backdated to September 1.

Novotny reported that the Village's Parks & Recreation Committee has drafted signs for the footpath to connect Bluff Road and Shore Road, and she showed copies to the Board.

Novotny reported that there have been some concerns about a person who seems to have created a driveway off Shore Road without a driveway permit, and who has been confronting people who park on the road in legal parking spots there, because he claims that they are blocking the driveway. The Board discussed options, and asked Kossuth to write a letter to the property owners informing them that that area is not a legal driveway and that those are legal parking spots.

**Road Commissioner:** Morse reported that none of the road work contractors has started their work, and he has been busy filling in washouts from the recent rains. He will price out culverts for the culvert replacement projects to make sure the Town gets the best deal.

Kossuth reported that he had received a call from a resident asking that the speed limit signs on Beech Hill have the brush around them trimmed so that they are fully visible.

Clifford reported that he and Kossuth had been trained on the Maine DOT's RSMS software last week and that Clifford has been inputting data from the road and culvert inventories that he had been working on. The software will also help the Town track the condition of the roads and their repair and maintenance schedules.

### **Town Administrator:**

**Block Brothers Community Development Block Grant update:** Kossuth reported that Block Brothers has been invited to submit a full application for the CDBG. As part of that application, which is due September 27, there must be a public hearing, with the opportunity for community input into the project. Kossuth scheduled that hearing for August 26, and Block Brothers will encourage people to attend and ask questions.

**New Town Office / Community Center update:** Kossuth reported that he and Clifford met last week with Andrew Hedrich from Gartley & Dorsky and Amanda Austin of 2a architects to talk about site conditions, soil testing for septic, permitting, and the like. Austin has updated the design documents and is working on developing construction documents.

Kossuth, Schaffler, and Clifford met with Revision Solar last week to talk about solar for the new Town Office. One takeaway from that meeting was that the cost of investing in a solar farm sufficient to meet all the Town's electricity needs will not be that different from the cost of putting solar panels on the roof for the same amount of electricity. The Board suggested that it may be wiser in the long run to invest in a community solar project and promote that investment as part of the Town's commitment to energy efficiency.

SW Cole will be looking at the soils that will underlay the new building to help determine the footings needed.

Kossuth presented the Board with the proposed contract from 2a architects for the next year's work. The contract came in slightly under the Town's appropriation for it. The Board reviewed the contract and authorized Kossuth to sign it.

Kossuth will be meeting in September with Austin and Bennett Engineering to talk about the mechanical and electrical systems for the building, including heat pumps, and the Town will have to start making final decisions on some of these features in the near future.

Kossuth reported that he and Clifford met with Diane Lebson and Eric Lebson from Evergreen Philanthropic Solutions to talk about a capital campaign for the project. Although they told Kossuth that they (Evergreen) were not interested in being hired for the project, they did offer lots of advice, and they are willing to serve as informal advisors.

Kossuth reported that he has an appointment with Kristine Wentworth on August 21 to look at the former Maine Energy property at 1229 Atlantic Highway (currently Oaknut Property Management) to see if their space might work as a temporary Town Office during construction.

**2025-2026 Cemetery Mowing request:** Kossuth reported that Tim Parker, who currently has the cemetery mowing contract, asked Kossuth if the Board would be willing to renew his contract for two more years at the same price. The Board expressed gratitude at Parker's interest in the contract, but decided that it would not be fair to alter the existing competitive bid process.

**Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Grant update:** Kossuth reported that the Town had been awarded a grant for one of the three shoreline stabilization projects the Town had applied for -- Kelly Cove. The grant is for \$133,000, with the Town required to contribute \$7,000. The State will follow up with details.

Kossuth reported that he had asked for feedback for why the other two projects (Bayview Park and Auditorium Park) were not awarded, and that he had been told that because the grants appeared to be focused on private property, they were ruled ineligible. Kossuth reported that he had followed up to as whether there had been some misunderstanding over the role and status of the NVC and its property, which is public, but he has not heard back.

**Recognition and Celebration of John Clifford:** Friday is Clifford's last day as the Town's intern. The Board thanked him for his service to the Town, which has been very helpful. He thanked the Board for the opportunity, which he greatly enjoyed.

**2024 Tax Commitment signing:** Kossuth presented the Board with the property tax commitment forms for the Town taxes and Village taxes, which the Board signed.

**Minutes:** Kossuth provided minutes from the meeting of July 22 and the Annual Town Meeting 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.

**Unfinished Business:** None at this time.

**New Business: Howard Quitclaim deed:** Kossuth reported Susan Howard, whose undeveloped property on Beech Hill (R03-1A-1) had been foreclosed on, had paid all her outstanding taxes, interest, and costs. Kossuth asked the Board to approve the quitclaim deed releasing the Town's interest in the property. The Board agreed.

**MMA Executive Committee Ballot:** The Board approved the slate of nominees for the MMA Executive Committee.

**MMA Legislative Policy Committee Platform discussion:** The Board discussed ideas for the LPC platform, including ways to make it easier for Towns to regulate short-term rentals. Kossuth is unable to attend the LPC meeting on August 29, and Schaufler offered to serve as an alternate that day.

**Hazard Mitigation Plan Potential Mitigation Projects discussion:** The Board discussed potential hazard mitigation projects to focus on for the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Board agreed to focus on specific projects that residents and the Climate Resilience Committee have identified as important, such as shoreline stabilization near 590 Shore Road, near Kelly Cove, and near Temple Heights; strengthening and possibly raising the Bayside wharf and jetty; protecting public shoreline access at Bayview Park and Auditorium Park; upsizing culverts throughout Town for better stormwater management; assessing vulnerability of trees to storms, including along Shore Road; ensuring Town buildings are fortified against severe storms, windstorms in particular; conducting a forest vulnerability assessment to address wildfire risk and identify possible management and remediation measures to address forest pests; enhance wildfire fighting capacity with equipment and better fire road access to large wooded tracts; and ensure the Town has sufficient public safety, emergency shelter, and communications equipment.

**Adjourn:** *Pinkham Bebb motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:09pm, seconded by Tucker. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted by,

James Kossuth, Town Administrator