

Town of Northport

Select Board Meeting

October 7, 2024 @ 6:15 pm

Chair: Jeanine Tucker

Finance Director: Vicki Eugley

Vice Chair: Breanna Pinkham Bebb

Road Commissioner: Amon Morse – excused absence

Municipal Officer: Molly Schaufler

NVC Representative: Janae Novotny

Town Administrator: James Kossuth

Present: Jeanine Tucker, Breanna Pinkham Bebb, Molly Schaufler, James Kossuth, Vicki Eugley, Paul Rooney, Janae Novotny, Tinsley Morrison.

Citizen Concerns: None at this time.

Transfer Station: Discussion about transfer station winter schedule tabled.

Fire Department: Fire Chief Paul Rooney reported that Engine 4 had been overheating, and that the Department had tried a variety of repairs in-house, none of which ultimately solved the problem. A mechanic diagnosed the problem as a failed head gasket, and the repair may cost approximately \$10,000. The Fire Department had not specifically budgeted that much money for truck repairs and maintenance, so Chief Rooney was seeking the Board's guidance on how best to pay for the repairs. The Board and Chief Rooney discussed various funding options, and ultimately decided that the Fire Department should pay for the repairs out of its general operating budget, and seek additional funding, if necessary, at a Special Town Meeting later in the fiscal year. The Board thanked Chief Rooney for his service to the Town.

Northport Village Corporation: Novotny reported that the Overseers will meet on Sunday, October 13, and that the swim and dinghy floats will be removed from the water the week of October 14.

Road Commissioner: Kossuth reported on behalf of Morse that Lowe & Bassett (L&B) expects to finish their ditching and culvert replacement work within the next week.

Morrison asked about a pothole on High Street, and Tucker asked Kossuth to have Morse repair it.

Town Administrator:

Belfast – Northport Boundary Survey update: Kossuth reported that he had left a message for Belfast City Manager Erin Herbig about the format of the joint meeting on Tuesday, October 15. The Board had additional questions for Kossuth to ask Herbig about the meeting's format, and he said he would ask her when they next spoke.

New Town Office / Community Center update: Kossuth reported that he and Fire Chief Rooney had met Amanda Austin and Will Bennett (Bennett Engineering) to discuss the electrical/mechanical/plumbing needs for the fire station and its integration with the new building.

Kossuth reported that he also met with Austin, Andrew Hedrich (Gartley & Dorsky), the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to talk about permitting and mitigation for the wetlands filling that the Town needs to do for the project. The DEP and ACOE estimated that the permitting process would take 60-90 days. The DEP and ACOE also confirmed that no threatened species would be impacted by the project.

Kossuth reported that he and all the Town Office staff visited the site at 845 Atlantic Highway this week to assess its suitability as a temporary town office. Kossuth also followed up with Kristine Wentworth to see about follow-up visits to 1229 Atlantic Hwy (Oaknut Property Management, former Maine Energy).

Kossuth reported that Austin has recommended that we have a hazardous materials survey done for the existing Town Office building, to determine the presence of asbestos or lead or anything else that could complicate its demolition. Kossuth reported that the survey is estimated to cost \$2000-3000. The Board agreed to have the hazardous materials survey done.

Kossuth reported that he has scheduled Carmen Bombeke from Gartley & Dorsky, who performed the 2018 structural assessment of the building, to conduct a follow-up assessment on October 8. Representatives from the Town's property insurer will also attend and be able to ask Bombeke any questions at the time.

MMA Annual Conference recap: Kossuth reported that he attended the MMA Annual Conference on October 2 and 3, gathered some ideas for energy efficiency at the new town office, including rebate opportunities for solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling, and an upgrade to three-phase electricity, and some guidance on website accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act (which becomes mandatory for government websites in April 2027).

Maine Power Options Electricity Supplier update: Kossuth reported that he spoke with representatives from Maine Power Options at the MMA Conference. The Town is currently a member of MPO and enrolled in its electricity supplier program, but the Town's supplier contract expires in December. Kossuth explained how the process works, and asked for the Board's permission to monitor supplier rates for the coming weeks and to lock in a rate before the price gets too high. The Board agreed.

DOT Route 1 Project update: Kossuth reported that he contacted Maine DOT for an update on their Route 1 project in Northport/Lincolnville, and the DOT hopes to be ready to meet with the towns later this fall about our safety improvements to the Route 1 corridor between Lincolnville Beach and Point Lookout.

2025 State Valuation: Kossuth reported that the Town received its 2025 proposed state valuation, which, at over \$661,000,000 is more than double the Town's own assessed valuation, up 12.5% from last year, and still the third-highest in the county (after Belfast and Lincolnville). The difference between the Town's own valuation and the state's valuation affects things like the homestead reimbursement, revenue sharing, and school funding, and is a big reason why the Town's planned revaluation is necessary.

Minutes: Kossuth provided minutes from the meeting of September 23 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: None at this time.

Adjourn: *Tucker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm, seconded by Pinkham Bebb. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted by,

James Kossuth, Town Administrator