

Town of Northport

Select Board Meeting

September 23, 2024 @ 6:15 pm

Chair: Jeanine Tucker

Finance Director: Vicki Eugley

Vice Chair: Breanna Pinkham Bebb

Road Commissioner: Amon Morse

Municipal Officer: Molly Schaufler

NVC Representative: Janae Novotny – not present

Town Administrator: James Kossuth

Present: Jeanine Tucker, Breanna Pinkham Bebb, Molly Schaufler, James Kossuth, Vicki Eugley, Amon Morse.

Citizen Concerns: None at this time.

Northport Village Corporation: No report.

Road Commissioner: Morse reported that Lowe & Bassett (L&B) had finished its work on Knights Pond Road and that he had approved the work. L&B had submitted an invoice for \$10,128 for an additional 456 yards of gravel that they had to use. Morse explained that he (Morse) had underestimated how much gravel would be needed, and that he had authorized that extra gravel to finish the road. The Board approved the additional \$10,128. L&B began its ditching work on Beech Hill Road on September 23.

Morse reported that he moved the speed feedback sign to Route 1 southbound, near Midcoast Fence, on September 21.

Kossuth reported that he had downloaded the data from the sign from its Bluff Road placement, but he has not yet had the chance to analyze it.

Kossuth reported that he had received two messages about road concerns. One resident asked about repaving High Street. Morse said that he would consider it for next year's paving, and he would look at it now to see if anything could be done to patch it for the winter.

Kossuth reported that another resident asked about a tree on Summit Ave that was very close to a utility pole and the resident is concerned about the tree falling and knocking over the pole. Morse said that the Town's policy is not to remove healthy trees, but he would look at it and see if there is anything for the Town to do.

Town Administrator:

Belfast – Northport Boundary Survey update: Kossuth reported that he had confirmed with Belfast City Manager Erin Herbig that the Select Board and Belfast City Council would be meeting jointly on Tuesday, October 15, at 6pm at Belfast City Hall to hear an update from Robert Yarumian on his progress on the survey.

Because the Board had rescheduled its regular meeting from October 14 to October 15 because of the Indigenous Peoples Day holiday, Kossuth asked the Board if it would like to hold a regular Board meeting on Monday, October 7. The Board agreed to hold a regular meeting on October 7 at 6:15pm.

New Town Office / Community Center update: Kossuth reported that he had met twice with Amanda Austin and Will Bennett (Bennett Engineering), once with Schaufler to talk about mechanical, electrical,

plumbing, and energy efficiency, and once with Josiah Twitchell of AngelCom to talk about information technology. Bennett recommends air-source heat pumps rather than ground-source, but he will check the cost for ground-source heat pumps. He also suggested that if the Town wishes to use radiant floor heating in the future, it would not be too expensive to install the tubing when the new slab is poured, and then it would be an option for the future. Bennett will calculate projected electrical loads for the new building so the Town can determine whether rooftop or community solar will be the better choice.

Twitchell recommended adding sufficient cables to allow for future expansion, since it is much cheaper to install the wires during construction than to add them later. Twitchell will also explore options for video technology for the meeting room.

Kossuth reported that he had spoken with Brady Brim-DeForest, who owns the former Northeast Boat property (845 Atlantic Highway), and Kossuth will work on arranging for Town Office staff to visit the property to judge its suitability as temporary office space.

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.

Waldo County Hazard Mitigation Plan update: Kossuth reported he attended the Hazard Mitigation Plan meeting on September 18, and that Northport is currently up-to-date with all its assignments. The goal is to submit the plan to FEMA for approval before the end of the year. There are a few tasks for Kossuth to complete before the next planning meeting, including presenting the hazards and proposed mitigation projects to the Planning Board, which Kossuth will do on October 8.

Ramsey Judgment Debt update: Kossuth had provided the Board with the amount of the Town's legal fees, but that amount included only those costs incurred through the end of the trial. Eugley was looking up the legal fees to cover the appeal as well. The trial cost the Town over \$3800, and Eugley had so far found a similar amount for the appeal, with a total cost to the Town of approximately \$7600. The Board decided that, given the amount of legal fees, the time since the judgment, and Ramsey having not made any attempts to pay it off, the Board would not support adding an article to the next Town Meeting warrant to forgive the debt.

Dubrow Driveway Permit update: Kossuth reported that he had received an email from Paul Bernacki in response to Kossuth's letter to Donna Dubrow after the previous Select Board meeting, in which Bernacki rescinded his prior public records requests, made some new public records requests, and advanced legal arguments on behalf of Dubrow, even though he (Bernacki) is not an attorney. Kossuth advised the Board that he was planning to respond to the letter and seek confirmation from Dubrow whether Bernacki is actually acting as her agent; ask for clarification on the document requests; and notify Dubrow that Bernacki appears to be making legal arguments on her behalf. The Board agreed with that approach.

Community Action Grants update: Kossuth reported that the State is seeking applications for the next round of Community Action Grant funding, with a deadline of December 17. Kossuth reported that there would be an informational webinar on September 26, and that he, Celine Bewsher, and Schaufler were planning to meet on September 27 to discuss what project the Town might seek funding for.

Block Brothers Community Development Block Grant update: Kossuth reported that the Block Brothers CDBG application is due on Friday, September 27, and that they appear poised to submit on time.

Scone Goddess CDBG update: Kossuth reported that he and Veronica Stubbs had each had a separate close-out meeting with Doug Ray of the State Department of Economic and Community Development, that The Scone Goddess had complied with all of the conditions of the grant, and that the State would be issuing closing paperwork soon.

Abatement request: Kossuth presented the Board with an abatement request for unimproved property on Bluff Road (R4-1A-1). The Town had mistakenly taxed it as 13.8 acres, when it is actually 9 acres. The abatement request (\$67.26) was for the difference. The Board approved the abatement request.

Crest Street Seawall: Kossuth reported that the owners abutting the Town's right of way on Crest Street intend to repair their seawall, and that the contractor would be willing to build a wall for the Town on its 40' right of way at the same time, for approximately \$8000. The Board agreed that that was a reasonable cost, and asked Kossuth to get more information before the Board can make a final decision.

Resolution for John Clifford: Kossuth reported that the Town's former intern, John Clifford, had recently started a new job as an Elections Specialist for the Department of State. The Board approved a resolution congratulating Clifford.

Minutes: Kossuth provided minutes from the meeting of September 9 for the Board to review. The Board approved the minutes with corrections.

Kossuth also presented a request from an attendee at the Board's October 12, 2023, meeting to redact her name from the minutes or to remove the minutes from the Town's website, for personal safety reasons. The Board agreed that Kossuth could remove the minutes from the website and have them available upon request.

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 presented the Payroll Agreements for the Board to sign for several employees for FY2025. The Board reviewed and signed the agreements.

Eugley asked the Board to approve Social Services payments to charitable organizations, as appropriated by the voters at the Town Meeting. The Board reviewed the list of charitable organizations, and approved contributions as follows: \$3500 to WCAP; \$2500 to Northport Food Pantry; \$1000 to Waldo County Woodshed; and \$500 to Spectrum Generations.

Unfinished Business: None at this time.

New Business: Pinkham Bebb reported on the Maine Municipal Association / Midcoast Council of Governments Regional Public Forum in Searsmont on September 12, which she, Kossuth, and Janae Novotny had attended.

Adjourn: *Tucker motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 pm, seconded by Pinkham Bebb. Board voted 3-0, motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted by,

James Kossuth, Town Administrator