

Town of Northport

Public Hearing and Select Board Meeting

October 28, 2024 @ 6:15 pm

Chair: Jeanine Tucker

Finance Director: Vicki Eugley

Vice Chair: Breanna Pinkham Bebb – excused absence

Road Commissioner: Amon Morse

Municipal Officer: Molly Schaufler

NVC Representative: Janae Novotny

Town Administrator: James Kossuth

Present: Jeanine Tucker, Molly Schaufler, James Kossuth, Vicki Eugley, Amon Morse, Heidi Blood, Janae Novotny.

Citizen Concerns: None at this time.

Animal Control: Heidi Blood, Animal Control Officer, provided an update to the Board. She reported that she has seen an increase in the number of stray and feral cats. There are also a number of low- or no-cost spay and neuter clinics in the area, as well as a \$10 rabies clinic at the Belfast VFW on November 9. She reported that she had transported 10-20 cats and kittens from Northport to PAWS this year, and that PAWS is currently not accepting any new animals. Blood reported that there have been only a few calls about loose dogs this year, and that she had had to issue only two summonses for failure to license dogs. The Board thanked Blood for her report.

Public Hearing: Tucker opened the public hearing at 6:32pm to consider revisions to the Town's General Assistance ordinance. Kossuth explained the proposed changes, all of which were added to the model General Assistance ordinance by the State Legislature in the previous session.

Tucker asked for public comment on the proposed amendments, and, hearing none, closed the public hearing at 6:38pm.

Tucker motioned to adopt the revised General Assistance Ordinance, seconded by Schaufler. Board voted 2-0, motion passed.

Northport Village Corporation: Novotny reported that the swim and dinghy floats have been removed from the water, and that many residents are having construction done on their homes. She reported that more than 30 homes have signed up to participate in the Bayside Trick-or-Treat this year.

Road Commissioner: Morse reported that Lowe & Bassett (L&B) finished their ditching and culvert replacement work, and that it was satisfactory. Morse reported that he will have High Street power-graded to fix the potholes. He reported that he had moved the speed feedback sign from Route 1 to Bluff Road. Kossuth reported that he had downloaded the data from the Route 1 location and is going to contact Maine DOT about interpreting it. Morse reported that he had heard about damage to the freshly cleaned ditch on Bayview Drive caused by Lucas Tree. Kossuth will call Lucas Tree to make sure that they fix the ditch.

Morse reported that FC Work and Ford Enterprises will be performing their brush cutting and tree removal, respectively, in the coming weeks.

Kossuth asked about the maintenance for the spurs of Crest Street, and Morse reported that the Town does not plow or maintain those portions of Crest Street.

Morse reported that he had received a FOAA request for all of the Town's driveway permits.

Town Administrator:

Belfast – Northport Boundary Survey update: Kossuth reported that the surveyor, Robert Yarumian, had indicated that he would have his final report completed by the first week in November.

New Town Office / Community Center update: Kossuth reported that he and Fire Chief Rooney would be meeting with Amanda Austin on Tuesday, October 29, to talk about additional design aspects of the fire station.

Kossuth reported that he has been trying to obtain more information about the sprinkler system requirements, and why the current projected cost is so much higher than the original estimate.

Kossuth reported that he had contacted Paul Crowley about the use of his property and building at 555 Atlantic Highway. Kossuth reported that Crowley said that it could be an option for the Town, and that Kossuth could visit the property when Crowley returns to Town later in November. Kossuth reported that Kristine Wentworth had informed him that 1229 Atlantic Hwy (Oaknut Property Management, former Maine Energy) would no longer be an option for the temporary Town Office.

The Board discussed the merits of using 845 Atlantic Highway and decided that it would not be a suitable location. The Board expressed gratitude to Brady Brim-DeForest for letting the Town consider using the space for the temporary Town Office.

Kossuth reported that he had received a proposal from Air Quality Management Services, Inc., for a hazardous materials analysis of the Town Office to prepare for demolition. The estimate came in higher than anticipated (\$3800). The Board discussed the proposal and had some questions about it. The Board authorized Kossuth to accept it, pending the response to the Board's questions.

Investment Committee update: Kossuth reported that the Investment Committee met on October 22 to discuss other investment options for the Town. The Committee asked Kossuth to schedule a meeting with the Town's account representative at Fidelity to discuss some of Fidelity's index funds.

Eugley reported that one of the Town's CD's had recently matured and the Board authorized her to purchase another three-month CD or Treasury at the highest yield.

Climate Resilience Committee update: Schauffler reported that the Committee had met on October 25, and had discussed the progress on the Committee's webpage and the Town's plans for its application for the latest Community Action Grant for construction costs for the stabilization of Bayview Park.

Block Brothers Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) update: Kossuth reported that Block Brothers had been awarded a \$100,000 CDBG. Kossuth reported that there is still additional paperwork, and another public hearing will be necessary. Kossuth will speak with Ben Block to coordinate next steps.

Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) letter of support: Kossuth reported that MCOG had asked the Town for a letter of support for a mobile home replacement program grant from the EPA. The Board reviewed and signed the letter of support.

Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund (MIAF) Grant agreement: Kossuth provided the Board with a copy of the MIAF grant agreement for review. The Board approved the agreement and authorized Kossuth to sign it.

Kossuth reported that he spoke with Will Gartley about finalizing the design plans for the project at Kelly Cove, and also updating the plans for Bayview Park, for the next Community Action Plan grant application. Kossuth also reported that he contacted the owners abutting the Kelly Cove project area to discuss ways to ensure that the Town's shoreline stabilization complements the existing stabilization on the abutting property.

MMA Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) update: Kossuth reported that he attended the LPC meeting and that the LPC is close to finalizing its platform for the upcoming legislative session. Items on the proposed platform include a request for 100% state funding of jail operations, various property tax reforms, 100% state funding for special education, and some others.

Kossuth reported that the LPC is not including as part of its platform a reform of the excise tax exemption for 100% disabled veterans. Because the exemption does not limit the number of vehicles that can be registered and the state does not reimburse the Town for the forgone excise tax, the Town is losing thousands of dollars in revenue. Kossuth will be working with the MMA and other interested towns in trying to set a limit on the number of vehicles that can claim the exemption.

Minutes: Kossuth provided minutes from the meeting of October 7 for the Board to review. The Board approved the minutes with corrections.

Tax Collector: Kossuth presented the Board with property tax abatement requests and supplemental property tax bills. The Board reviewed and approved the abatements and supplemental bills.

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 8:03 pm, seconded by Schauffler. Board voted 2-0, motion passed.*

Respectfully submitted by,

James Kossuth, Town Administrator