

Meeting of the Selectmen of the Town of Alexander

6 June 2024

Attendance:

Foster Carlow Jr.
Carl Oakes
David Sanford
Skip Colson
David Davis (slightly late)

Larry Hill
Gerard Berry
Jane Manza
Joe Manza
Kristy Crawford

Pledge recited at 6:00 PM, followed by a short moment of silence for D-Day, as requested by Skip.

New Business

Pocomoonshine Lake boat landing
1 concealed weapons permit

Approve minutes of last meeting

Motion to approve minutes of selectmen meeting of 2 May 2024 by Foster and 2nd by Carl
Voting: 4 for, David Davis absent

A Planning Board Member Resignation

Chad Smith has resigned from planning board. The town must vote for his replacement; he cannot be appointed by the selectmen.
We should have a term that ends in 2027.

Motion to accept resignation of Chad Smith from the planning board by Skip and 2nd by David D.
Voting: Unanimous

Tax Assessing

Jane Manza: The tax assessors are working at it. Lots and lots of surveys have come in. Kristy is fielding the complaints about the survey.

Kristy said that she tells those people in a way that they seem to understand: "You don't have to do the survey. But if you don't, then the assessors will have to come visit personally." They usually have then agreed to fill out the survey.
Jane clarified that even for those who do send in the surveys, assessors will come to briefly verify everything.

Amy Dunn, assessors agent, will come down in the next several weeks.

The survey is providing all the information that is needed for the updated valuations.

Cemetery

Jane Manza: Jane, Skip, and Nick Hansen met at the cemetery and Nick hopefully will give a quote on how much it will cost for him to do the cemetery roads. [It will not be hot topped]. It will include a couple of loads of gravel.

Kristy Crawford: Town clerk, tax collector, treasurer

This Tuesday there will be a state primary election. It is a small election that will be from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Foster will be available to bring lunch and supper to the election workers, as needed.

The 2024-2025 town Budget warrant to be voted on in the June town meeting:

Kristy had some prediction numbers that were more accurate than the numbers in the budget workshop of 21 May.
Administration should be \$137,238 instead [higher]. There is \$10,000 already in the account. We need to raise \$127,238.
Unassigned fund balance: 107,238 needs to be raised from taxes.

Nothing will be put into the Grant Writing Fund.

Larry does not yet know how much it will cost to remove the sand from up against the the metal sand/salt shed roof.
He talked about having 2 or 3 people with screw guns to unscrew the affected metal roofing from the outside. Gerard proposed sand-blasting the rust off the steel. Kristy made it clear that there will be absolutely no going down into any trench-like situation. Larry said sand removal would be done from the outside next to the concrete walls. His thoughts were to have the metal roofing cleaned off and then rust encapsulator applied.

Also, he does not think the town needs to buy nearly as much sand and salt for the coming winters; not much more than 4 or 500 hundred yards.
The building maintenance fund has \$4690, but it was unclear whether that fund is intended to be used for the sand/salt shed. Kristy said that the selectmen have to decide if it applies to the sand salt shed. If the repair is

over \$5,000 dollars, then they could use capital investment fund.

Foster proposed putting \$3000 into the building maintenance fund and Skip agreed.

No money will go into the Archive Project fund
The Capital Investment fund is just going up \$1000.

What the road budget would be had to rehashed again.
The total for roads that had been decided at the budget workshop had been as much as \$356,000. But we couldn't remember why it was so high.

We decided to go back to the drawing board, or, in this case, the whiteboard, where Kristy wrote all the dollar amounts:

\$7000 to plow school and municipal lot
\$102,000 for Dale Earle' winter road maintenance
\$16,000 on both Salt Sand
\$115000 Rest of Davis Road repair
Ditching
Cut back branches from the end of the Davis Road, Flat Road, Pokey Road and Berry Road
\$1000 Regular work (putting up signs, etc.)
\$400 Electricity
\$800 mowing
\$1500 Road mowing
\$10,000 Shoulder work

Total so far \$257,000

Kristy anticipated \$140,000 in excise taxes next year (an increase).

Skip: We only need to raise 58,000 instead of 90 some thousand.

81,200

36800

Local road assistance

Down to 14,800

Skip and Kristy agreed that \$257,000 is not enough if there is anything unanticipated, such as one bad storm.

Skip proposed making it \$275,000.

\$275,000

- 22,000 for LRAP (Local Road Assistance Program)

- 92,000 Reserve

=161,000

- 140,000 Excise taxes

= 21,000 left to raise

Skip: I think we could raise that 21,000 from the undesignated fund.

Kristy: We might not get the LRAP money, but we always have.

Gerard said that culverts on the Cooper Road aren't sufficient. They need to raise that part of the Cooper road. Selectmen said it's a state road.

Ways to cut back branches from road sides. Which is most cost effective?

A. \$250 / hour for the work by the light thing.

B. Several people could go through with chain saws and a chipper.

C. David Lee could use an excavator with a grinder.

Skip asked Jane about the cemetery budget request of \$5,000. Currently, the cemetery has just over \$23,000: \$10,500 in the cemetery fund and just under \$12,600 in the cemetery restoration fund.

Jane mentioned how much it would cost to hire people to do what is currently volunteer work. Skip said that he can support the \$5000 request for this year. But that in the next year or 2 this might not be possible and that it seems like a lot of money.

Also, someone will put posts in at the cemetery to prevent the trucks from cutting the corners and driving over graves. The materials will not be free, but a guy who will install them for free. David D. thought the posts would be more of a nuisance.

Animal welfare.

Article 23 to raise money for animal welfare. The Animal Welfare fund will be \$3586. Kristy recommended raising nothing, since funds are already there, but that there should still be an article in the warrant.

Donations:

Article 34. Downeast Community partners has asked for \$3242.45. Only raise and appropriate \$500.

Solid waste:

\$55,000 from undesignated fund. The town made some money back on the solid waste because the state reimbursed the town.

David S. asked for reassurances about using the undesignated fund. Kristy said that she thought it would be OK to use about \$100,000 since about that much is put into that fund each year.

General Assistance:

Foster explained that at the General Assistance workshop, it said it should be \$5000. But the selectmen took it down to \$3500.

Kristy said that no article for the county tax is required because you can't vote it down (but it will still be included anyway). The county's mill rate is 16. The town valuation is \$76.45 million.

The Fire Department is \$19,200

Down East Emergency Medical Services (DEEMS) is \$12,072

For the Administration fund, raise \$35,000 instead of \$20,000.

The budget is going up about \$100,000 for the school. The school is anticipated to have very little surplus or cushion money. The new law says that support staff pay must be paid at least 115% of minimum wage. There is FMLA (the new Maine Family and Medical Leave Act), the state is requiring the town to cover 10%.

Skip said he would like to do the election for the planning board position to be right after voting for the moderator at the town meeting. This is because a lot of people leave after the school budget is voted on and Skip wants as much representation as possible for that vote.

Gerard strongly disagreed with the high maximum 8.5% interest rate for unpaid taxes recommended in the warrant. Kristy agreed. She pointed out that it can also be expensive, at \$12.73 per property, just to send each lien notice. Therefore she has people with multiple accounts in arrears come to the office and sign. There are basically 5 families that this most affects.

Skip, on the other hand, said he takes offense to this, when his bills are paid on time, that others want to not pay on time.

Motion to accept the June Town meeting warrant by Foster and 2nd by Carl.

Voting: Unanimous

Fire Department

The Fire Department meeting will be next Monday evening.

Roads

Danny came to get rid of beavers that had dammed up culverts. He got 6 beavers, including 2 very large "super blanket" beavers.

Larry asked if he can move the stop signs at each end of arm road closer to road to keep people from hitting the hole there? It will be temporary.

Davis Road work will start on 1 September.

The little shed next to the salt/sand shed needs to have the exterior walls painted. The stained wood is starting to degrade. David S. agreed to ask his father, Tim Sanford, if he would like to do that painting.

Larry needs to replace signs on Hickory lane, Pokey Road, another road. David D. said to put a roof over the signs, since on the top half of each, the paint has entirely worn away.

Larry has to go inside two culverts. He was asked not to do that alone.

Larry said that beaver deceivers are \$500 each, but Danny said beavers can still dam them.

Larry has been working on contacting an outfit in Canada that sells road salt for \$10 a ton cheaper than US options.

Purchasing sand for winter road traction was discussed. The price has gone up. We should put the bid out in the next month or so. David D. expressed concerns about filling the shed too full of sand partly because the sand in the bottom at the back gets too compacted to use after years of not being used. Larry said he planned to only put in 4 or 500 yards of new sand. Skip and others suspect that Dale Earle has been pushing the sand back and up so his loader can also be inside the shed. Skip said that although nothing in the contract prohibits doing so, he thinks should be verbally prohibited from doing so, since this seems to be the cause of the problems already discussed.

Larry said that if we start running low on road sand, David Lee said it wouldn't be a problem to bring in more sand (but it would be more expensive). Foster proposed having a separate stockpile of 3 or 400 yards. However, concerns were expressed about consequences the town had previously suffered from having the salt sand out in the open.

Ed Burgess has said that the salt/sand shed can hold up to 2500 yards.

Skip requested that before putting the sand out to bid, that first Larry should have David Lee measure accurately how much sand is in the shed right now.

Pocomoonshine Lake Public Landing

Skip has had people ask him about removing the trees and brush in the middle of Pokey landing, in order to make it easier and wider for boats on trailers to be backed into and out of the water. He has talked with Andy Snowman, the town Code Enforcement Officer, who said that as long as we don't put equipment in the water, we can cut down the trees at the landing and level it out.

Foster agreed to cut down the trees, but asked that someone be with him. Skip said he would be there too and handle any complaints.

Land for sale next to Town Office

Skip talked to Josh Probst, the land owner. Josh thinks it is worth \$8200, the assessed value. If the selectmen want to purchase the land, what will the town pay that is reasonable?

Jane recommended sending him a picture [of the tiny, overgrown property]. Does he even know what it looks like?

Skip and Carl did not think it would be big enough to be a buildable lot and so is not worth the assessed value. David D said that there was a small trailer that Doyle had on it.

Foster thought the town should purchase it and pay approximately what it is worth, according to the tax valuation.

David S. asked why the town might need it.

Skip wanted to put it before all the voters of the town (even if the selectmen are allowed to decide unilaterally to purchase the land).

Skip said that he will call Josh Probst and say that the selectmen are interested.

Kristy said she cannot contact MMA concerning the matter until next Wednesday.

Putting the matter before town voters will not be able to happen for the June town meeting.

Issues with Cleaning The Town Office

Skip termed this agenda item: "Men are pigs when they use the bathroom."

Lesliann Barnard has recently asked for double the pay for cleaning the town office area (a job which is separate from her duties as deputy town clerk). Much of the difficulty seems to center around the bathroom.

After fire department meetings, the bathroom has substantial urine on the floor. At other times, certain

(male) visitors to the town office have had explosive diarrhea all over the walls and floor. Kristy has been embarrassed.

The cleaning is done twice a month. It is unknown how long the cleaning takes or whether double the money would mean more time spent cleaning.

Skip said that this would be revisited.

David D. said not to blame the firemen.

Member Reports

Jane: The flag pole at the cemetery has no flag.

Skip: The rope is too big for that pulley and it gets jammed up. Figure out what size rope should be there. You want nylon rope, not fiber.

Joe: There will be 2 flags on that pole, but could be a maximum of 3.

Skip: We will handle it. We will get the rope.

Jane: I believe the pole is in a cement base.

Ask Crash how much rope is there.

Foster: We are having the Down East Ambulance meeting the 17th of June.

Eddie Moreside got the award for EMS director of the year.

Concealed Weapons Permit Approval

Motion to go into executive session to approve 1 concealed weapons permit per 1 M.R.S.A § 405 (6)(F) by Foster and 2nd by Skip at 8:25 PM.

Voting: unanimous

Out of executive session at 8:32 PM

Motion to approve 1 concealed weapons permit by Foster and 2nd by Carl

Voting:

Motion to adjourn by David D. and 2nd by Foster

Voting: Unanimous.

End time 8:34 PM