

Meeting of the Board of Selectmen Of the Town of Alexander, Maine

5 September 2024

Attendance:

David Davis,
Skip Colson
Foster Carlow Jr.
Carl Oakes
David Sanford

Kristy Crawford

Jane Manza
Joe Manza
Ted Carter

Larry Hill (arrived at 6:03)

Meeting called to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance recited

Additions/Deletions

Ted asked to also talk about about business for the planning board of appeals

Motion to approve minutes of previous meeting as amended by Foster and 2nd by Carl
Voting: Unanimous

[Larry Hill arrives]

Downeast Broadband Utility Project:

Ted Carter:

The Crawford Arm Road, co-location building has been hooked up and wired for electricity. Hopefully broadband internet will be offered there in a month. Money from those customers will go to both the town and the DBU: \$25 per customer.

The First National Bank has agreed to finance the DBU in taking on Alexander's loan for installing the fiber optic cable. It is a 25-year loan. There is no prepay penalty. Machias Savings Bank was also interested, but their interest rate was 3/4 of a percentage higher. (The Downeast Credit Union does not do that kind of loan.) Ted is authorized to sign, but he and the DBU are waiting for the US Federal Reserve to *maybe* make an announcement [at 2:00 PM on September 18] that would lower interest rates.

Kristy wants the loan off the books of the Town of Alexander by October 10.

The town of Cooper's fiber optic installation is going to be finishing up in a month. Princeton will be done soon after that.

David Davis advocated that Alexander should get money for Crawford customers who use the line that comes from Alexander. Ted explained that Crawford is totally Pioneer and ARDOF grant-funded and not with Alexander at all. Alexander gets no money for Crawford customers. But it was cheaper and more efficient for the line to go down the Crawford Arm Road.

Kristy had questions about the colocation building next to the town building. What is going on with the lease agreement? What is going on with the town insurance in relation to that building? Ted had not heard anything about that at this point.

Jane said that the board of assessors needs a value on that building for tax purposes.

Skip asked Ted to please give him a call as soon as he gets the answers to those questions.

The DBU has over 1000 customers in total among Indian Township, Alexander, Baileyville, and Calais. (It didn't seem like a lot to some board members, but it is over \$25,000 a month for repaying all the loans that the DBU holds.

[That's more than 1/3rd of around 2700 households: (About 1600 households in Calais, 660 in Baileyville, 232 in Indian Township and 200 in Alexander.)]. There are not many customers in Baileyville because of a well-entrenched cable TV company. But cable is projected to be totally obsolete in 5 years.

There is another internet service provider (ISP) based in Canada that is trying to provide internet service. They first need the insurance permits. That will be good for competition.

The next meeting of the DBU will be on September 19.

The Planning Board of Appeals

Ted Carter:

The board is going to be meeting on Wednesday, September 18 at 6:00 PM. Andy Snowman, Town Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), will attend. Members of that board are Ted, David Sanford, Skip Colson and perhaps Josh Kinney will be able to come (could not yet get a hold of him). There is one vacancy. At least 3 members are needed. Ted will contact the property owners involved and let them know when the meeting will be.

Ted has looked over the property information. He and Larry Hill visited the lot that is at issue, which is very small: 35' x 100'. It looks like the situation can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

School Board

Ted Carter:

Next Tuesday is the School Board meeting. Ted has requested that a study be done for what it would cost to have the school close. It is not that he wants to close it, but simply for a cost comparison between that and keeping the school open. He said that at town budget meetings, people always ask: "How much to close the school?" (With the school closed, the town would no longer have school liability and insurance costs, for example.)

To find the answer, Chad Allen, the AOS 77 business manager, would have to do the extensive work of putting together those numbers.

Kristy thought that finding that out might create an expectation in townspeople that the annual budget with the school open must be less than the budget with it closed. If not, then people might vote the budget down. But Ted said he wants to do this because it is important to the town.

Skip asked, "But how do you quantify what the school means to the town? I think you get more out of the school than just the school." Ted and others agreed.

Alexander town officials such as Ted and Kristy are watching nearby towns that have closed or stopped using their schools to see what happens, especially Robbinston, Charlotte, and Wesley. In Charlotte, the school budget still increased (but by less than if the school had stayed open). In Robbinston, the budget decreased for 2 years because of a special deal with Calais, then has increased ever since.

They have also been watching what those towns will do with their buildings. At least a few Robbinston residents have said that ever since closing their town Grade School building [in 2015], they have felt no sense of community.

Charlotte plans to turn its recently closed school building into a community-based building. But, you have to heat it, plow it, insure it. That's \$100,000 or so per year that still must be spent by the town [plus the tuition to send its students to another school].

There is also Dennysville, which has sent its students to other town schools for generations. That town recently voted to send all its students to Pembroke Elementary (instead of Edmunds Elementary) for an agreed-upon lower cost per student. A family of 7 with special needs kids moved in and

doubled the town's school budget. The town mill rate was about to increase going from around 19 to 34! So, they voted to do an exclusive, less expensive contract with Pembroke Elementary School. The already small Edmunds school lost those 15 students.

Kristy concluded: "Having a school hurts our budget but it also protects us. It's something to keep our eyes on."

Skip agreed with Ted that it would be nice to have the numbers.

David D. expressed concern that although people are moving in, they tend to have no children, and therefore may not care as much about having a school.

Cemetery

Jane Manza:

The lawns are all mowed. The cemetery has looked very good all year.

Carl addressed the mystery of the moving flower arrangements. He said that the crows were doing it. They were coming and taking out the flowers from the styrofoam holders in order to take out the bugs underneath and eat them.

Jane said that no action has been taken at the cemetery. Joe and Albert might be getting together to work on one of the big lots. No money has been spent except for mowing.

Kristy said that ARPA money has to be spent by December 2025 but she recommended no later than April 2025.

Nick Hansen might do some work at the cemetery. Foster told Jane that Nick Hansen has been working at Joel Leeman's house construction site on the Pokey road, pouring cement and that she might catch Nick down there tomorrow.

Assessing

Jane Manza:

Basically the assessors are done as far as visiting properties. There is only one where they still need to take pictures. They did not go to any islands this year. Also, there were a few properties with "No Trespassing" signs, so they did not go on those properties, but used previously taken photos instead. They visited about 423 properties and took 2000-2500 pictures in total. Amy will make a visit to the town office for the cards on September 22. She can clean up and enter data. Commitment will be by early October.

Next year, tax commitment will be done by July.

Clerk Report:

Kristy Crawford:

The audit for the town is coming up on October 10. Auditors were already given any required files that

are electronic. They will audit the school on the 8th and 9th.

Financial Report

The school and the town, have \$205,000. \$270,000 have been spent, so the town is \$65,000 behind but not to worry, money is coming in.

The town has made payments for solid waste disposal for March, April and May of 2024. We spend about \$55,000 per year, but the Baileyville Transfer Station doesn't bill very promptly.

The elected officials workshop is Tuesday, September 17. Also it can be viewed on Zoom from 4:30-8:30. If anybody would like to, Kristy will come to the town office to set up the Zoom. She recommended it to any board member. The MMA classes are excellent.

The 88th MMA annual convention is October 2 and 3. Lesliann and Kristy went last year. She gave the convention overview on the last page (See A). Let her know and she can book you a hotel room.

Lesliann and Kristy are going to that. The office will be closed for those 2 days.

Kristy and Lesliann just got back from elections/polling place training in Bangor, which was really good.

Larry found out from Kristy that the income from excise tax is not around \$9,000, but \$22,714, making about \$162,000 in the Road Account.

The town's chequing interest is over \$1000 per month. Agent fees are increasing rapidly. ATV's are now \$5 each to register. Crawford registrations are coming over to this office. \$3 for vehicles and \$5 for Crawford's. Kristy and Lesliann also "did" the Crawford town books. She copied and stapled them together, and charged a copying fee.

Kristy said that the town received two cheques from the state for "energy recovery", meaning that some townspeople have installed off-grid electricity generating equipment: specifically Brian & Susan Giles, and Jane & Joe Manza.

Road Supervisor

Larry Hill:

The Davis Road work by David Lee will be done Monday or Tuesday. David Lee will put a finer gravel on the road, and grade it up.

Mr. Hartford, of County Concrete and Asphalt, said he needed 2-3 weeks notice for him to pave it. He said leave it and it will pack down as cars drive over it.

It is going to run probably like last year: \$38,000 to dig it up and haul gravel. Hot top was \$70,000. It will be a total of about \$115,000 like last year.

Steven Parks started grading the sides of the upper Davis Road. (Larry's granddaughter got tangled up in the rocks and gravel on the road from that work and blew a tire.) Steve is doing a good job. Carl has been flagging up there, watching the traffic. Steve brought a tractor in that made a huge difference. But work has gone a bit slowly and it has been a learning experience for Steve. He may have expected it to take about 2 days (and \$2000), but it is clear that it will take more days to get it done. He was not happy about this.

Skip's view on the cost was that Steve gave that bid to do the work, and that is what he would like to pay Steve, regardless of how long it takes him.

Larry said they have hauled gravel to several places: his place, Allen Lyford's, Billy Seavey's and Jimmy's.

Larry got an estimate from Shawn Sullivan on trimming back the branches on the McArthur, Flat, Berry, Spearin, Davis, and Pokey Roads. But it depends. What roads need to be done most and when? It's \$180/hr for the machine (an excavator with a drum mulcher), about \$1400 to \$1600 per day. They take care of signs, etc. and it ends up being about \$2000 per day. There will be a laborer with a chainsaw.

Shawn thinks it will take 10 to 12 days to do the work on those roads. Time frames could vary. He isn't going to go on any new hot top. The best time to do this work is when frost goes in to save the excavator from sinking into or marring the hot top. He has about a week after it gets cold, around December.

They found under the power lines on the Berry road, there was a wire that was in the ditch. Larry has gotten permission from Eddie Hansen, the property owner. Shawn charges Eastern Maine for work that he does under any power lines: possibly 3 or 4 hours of work.

Shawn said to talk to Mike Currier of Eastern Maine Electric as a reference. Skip concurred that Shawn does a good job.

David D. expressed concern that the McArthur Road has mostly big trees that are encroaching onto the road, rather than smaller limbs. Larry said that Shawn has a crew that cuts the trees down with chain saws. Foster said that Shawn dealt with large trees when doing this work on the Pokey Road.

Skip asked Larry to give a *prioritized* list of which roads need brush cutting.

There is also work that FEMA wants done on the Pokey, Berry and Arm roads.

-The Arm road past the Davis Road requires ditching.

-A washout has to be fixed on the side of the Pokey road.

-Skip talked to Kevin Dean about working on the Berry Road. One Culvert needs to be replaced, as well as two need to be reset and two flushed out. Also, there are rocks and runoff damage and ditching to take care of. (Kevin recently tripped and fell and thought he had fractured his sternum. He is feeling better, but still has a hard time breathing.) Skip will get together with Kevin on Sunday or Monday and Kevin will give an estimate for what that work will cost. He will use his own equipment. 90% of that work will be paid for with FEMA money.

Kristy said that Steve Parks needs to provide proof of general liability insurance at the town office. If Shawn Sullivan and Kevin Dean do any work for the town, then they need to provide that proof of general liability insurance too. C.J. Cooper needs to fill out his W2.

David D: The Crawford Arm Road has rocks that are marked in orange that need to be removed (they are protruding too high on the road) because Cathleen Perkins is now living full time there. A big backhoe (rather than a smaller one) will be needed to remove them.

A letter was sent to Dale Earle (about not parking his loader inside the sand/salt shed). No word about if he received it nor his reaction to it.

New Business

Dog Licensing Enforcement

Skip Colson's story: I took 4 guys from FEMA and 1 guy from the state to look at road damage. While we were doing that, we were accosted by dogs that had no tags and no collars. It was a little bit embarrassing. I talked with David Townsend (Town Animal Control Officer). I gave him a list of the owners of the dogs we encountered. He has assured me that he will get something done. (One of the people won't talk to him and has "No Trespassing" signs, so he may involve the sheriff.)

We have a lot of unlicensed dogs running the streets. You can't have government people come, and you can't have people move in and have a neighbor dog attack. To be clear, none of us were attacked.

Kristy explained the usual yearly dog licensing process in the town. In October, she gets a list of all the people who have licensed before. She puts a sign out to remind about re-licensing. Owners are mailed a postcard to remind them to get their dogs re-vaccinated against rabies. Then Lesliann sends out a reminder to come in for re-licensing at the town office.

But because this has become an issue now, Kristy plans to do more: This Fall, she will mail out to everybody with a rabies-vaccinated dog, saying "You have until this day (basically January 31) to register your dog." After that day, she will give a list to David Townsend to issue summonses to owners of unlicensed dogs.

There are around 80 known dogs in the town. Laurel Gallant has a dog that is on the list of licensed dogs, even though the dog has no proof of vaccination. But at least now the town has a record of that dog too.

Shelly Crosby, the town clerk in Orono, gets on Facebook. If she sees an Orono resident post a picture of an unknown dog, then she sends the name of the owner to the Animal Control Officer to investigate.

Approve Ballot Clerks

Kristy explained that in last November's election, a lot of votes were cast and so, having 6 people helps avoid counting the votes until late into the early morning.

Motion to appoint the following people as ballot clerks of the town of Alexander, Maine by David D. and 2nd by Carl:

Chanise Provencher
Ellie Sanford
Jane Manza
Josie Wallace
Emogine Hill
Spencer McCormick
Carly Davis
Marty Colson
Kenneth Colson Jr.
Leslie Stewart
Lesliann Barnard
Kristy Crawford

Voting: 4 for, Skip [AKA Kenneth] abstains because he's on the list.

Humidistats for the Garage Bay and Bathroom of the Town Municipal Building

David Sullivan came in and looked around the municipal building including above the ceiling tiles, but did not really find new areas of mold. Never-

theless, there has been a big humidity issue and some parts of the building do have mold. Billy Barnett came over and he recommended that a humidistat be installed. This involves having a big exhaust fan to remove humidity. It turns on or off based what looks like a thermostat but that detects humidity. The town may get a heat pump for the conference room, although there is no mold there (yet).

It will be \$868.58 to install the humidistat.

Carl questioned whether an exhaust fan would help with humidity.

Skip proposed using money from the capital improvement or building maintenance fund to pay for it. Kristy thought it would probably have to be the building maintenance fund because in order to use the capital investment fund, the expenditure has to be over a certain number of dollars. The Building Maintenance Fund currently has \$7490.43.

Motion to approve installing the humidistats for the Fire Department bay and bathroom in the amount of \$868.58 by Foster and 2nd by David D.

Voting: Unanimous

In a related topic, Kristy would like to move some expenditures that have been in the Administration Fund to the Building Maintenance Fund such as the hourly pay for building cleaning, the electricity bill and other costs of keeping up the building.

Planning Board

Larry Hill:

The Planning Board has sent out 2 letters, and Andy Snowman has sent 2 more letters to property owners.

Andy looked at one place on Pleasant Lake that has a 24' x 10' screened-in porch. He has ordered that it must be torn off for being completely out of conformity with the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Momentum is building for the Planning Board to fine people—via Andy—\$25 a day and up to \$2500 per offense for not conforming to building requirements.

Sixteen to eighteen people were at the recent Planning Board meeting. Two of them swore constantly. Larry was on the verge of ordering those two to leave. Skip told Larry that he doesn't have to put up with that. He can contact the sheriff to escort them out, if need be.

Four new building permit requests were considered.

One permit request was brought into the office today.

Foster was accidentally phoned by Stephanie Austin, who lives on Noddin Lane or Maple Lane on Pleasant Lake. (She had thought she had called Andy Snowman.) She has had a heated dispute with neighbors Kathy Beal and whoever owns the former Gary Townsend place, over boundaries and farm animals on Kathy's property.

Matt and Stephanie Austin have come to the town office to look at the property file of their neighbors.

Member's Reports

Foster: Downeast Ambulance will meet on the 29th of this month.

Kristy said there was a break-in in the town, a snowmobile was stolen. Somebody took a screwdriver to the ignition. They think it was around the same time as an attempted truck theft. The sheriff has been out there. There has been a rash of thefts. Be aware.

Kristy mentioned the response from MMA Legal about whether the Planning Board can impose fines on people who do not apply for a building permit before starting to build. The legal advisor cited the town's Building and Property Maintenance Ordinance, but this actually does not address the issue.

Concealed Weapons Permits

Motion to go into executive session per 1 M.R.S.A § 405 (6)(F) by Foster and 2nd by David D. at 7:27 PM.

Voting: Unanimous

Out of executive session at 7:33 PM.

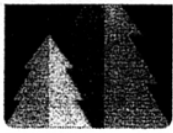
Motion to approve 5 concealed weapons permits by Foster and 2nd by David D.

Voting: Unanimous

(Skip mentioned that although the selectmen go into executive session for concealed weapons permits, state law says that it is public information as to who has a concealed weapons permit. Anyone can come into the town office and find out.)

Motion to adjourn by David S. and 2nd by Skip at 7:35 PM.

Voting: Unanimous



MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936

Two ways to attend!

ELECTED OFFICIALS WORKSHOP

Don't Wait To Register!



LOCATION: Maine Municipal Association
60 Community Drive, Augusta
OR
via Zoom Webinar

DATE: Tuesday, September 17

TIME: In-Person Registration: 4:00pm
Workshop runs 4:30-8:30 pm
Dinner will be served midway through the workshop

COST: In-Person: \$70 MMA Members; \$140 Non-Members
Zoom Option: \$50 MMA Members; \$100 Non-Members

PRESENTERS: Rebecca McMahon, Director of Legal Services, MMA
Susanne Pilgrim, Staff Attorney, MMA
Kate Dufour, Director of Advocacy & Communications, MMA

Who Should Attend:

This workshop is a "must" for newly elected and veteran officials-councilors & select persons-as well as a wonderful opportunity to learn key points of your new position while networking with officials from around the state. (*Qualifies as Maine FOAA Training*).

Course Description:

A perfect opportunity for elected officials to take advantage of the expertise that the Maine Municipal Association has to offer, attain a better understanding of their role as public officials, and stay abreast of ever-changing local government responsibilities and issues.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- What are our rights and duties as officials?
- Can we hold multiple offices?
- Which of our meetings are open to the public?
- Must we have an agenda and take minutes?
- What ordinances can we enact?
- What are our liabilities and immunities?
- What is a disqualifying conflict of interest?

Course Materials:

Participants may find it helpful to have their Municipal Officers Manual available for reference during the workshop. The manuals are available to purchase online at <https://ebiz.memun.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Store> or by calling the MMA Publications department at (800) 452-8786. The manuals may also be downloaded **for free** from MMA's website (www.memun.org), under the Member Center (access requires log in).

2024 CONVENTION-AT-A-GLANCE



Wednesday, October 2

7:30 am Registration begins
7:30 - 10:30 am Continental Breakfast
8:00 am Exhibit Hall Opens
9 - 10:30 am Welcome and Featured Speaker
10:30-10:45 am Break
10:45 am - 12:00 pm Concurrent Session #1
12:00 - 1:15 pm MMA Leadership and Recognition Luncheon
1:15 - 2:30 pm Concurrent Session #2
2:30 - 3:00 pm Exhibit Hall Break and Demos/Presentation

3:00 - 4:15 pm Concurrent Session #3
4:15 - 4:30 pm Exhibit Hall Break
4:30 - 5:00 pm Ethel Kelley Award Presentation
5:00 - 6:30 pm Member Appreciation Reception and Entertainment

Thursday, October 3

7:30 am Registration
7:30 - 9 am Continental Breakfast
8:00 am Exhibit Hall Opens
9 - 10:15 am Welcome and Featured Speaker
10:15 - 10:45 am Exhibit Hall Break and Demos/Presentations
10:45 am - 12:00 pm Concurrent Session #4
12:00 - 1:15 pm Featured Speaker Luncheon
1:15 - 2:30 pm Concurrent Session #5
2:30 - 2:45 pm Break
2:45 - 4:00 pm Concurrent Session #6