

Town of Alexander Selectmen's meeting

9 January 2025

Attendance:

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

Kristy Crawford
Larry Hill
Ted Carter

Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM.
Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Motion to approve the minutes of the 5 December 2024 meeting, as amended, by Foster and 2nd by Carl.

Voting: Unanimous

Broadband Project

Ted Carter:

(He and Liz were getting back from Pittsburg from Pittsburg ballet during last meeting and therefore he had not available).

As far as the Downeast Broadband Utility (DBU), Ted is still waiting for the written "language" of the terms of transferring the loan from Alexander to the DBU. He said, "We are ready to fund." The lawyer at Eaton and Peabody was out for 6 weeks. The lawyer got on it right before Christmas. Ted had emailed the officers of the DBU but hadn't heard from them.

Today, he sent Danny Sullivan (the DBU chairman) a strongly worded letter to asking what the hold-up is with taking on the loan and more or less demanding that the DBU do so immediately.

Also, the DBU found cheaper insurance that they may be able to use, but is usually only for municipalities and quasi-municipalities. They are trying to figure out how they can make that work. The DBU has 1072 customers, 147 of whom are in Alexander. That's pretty good. Princeton is finally in. (The DBU was being held up, while a competing cable TV company ran its lines). Cooper is all done and they are hooking people up for service.

The numbers in Calais and especially Baileyville are lower than the DBU would like, mostly because of the cable companies. But cable is becoming obsolete. You use Youtube and other channels on the internet now.

There is another Internet Service Provider (ISP) coming to the DBU called "NCS". It's from Nova Scotia. They will offer more plans for people who may want to switch plus competition to hopefully lower prices.

Skip asked Kristy if she had heard anything about the letter they had sent out. Kristy had not. Skip and Ted mentioned their displeasure that even though the DBU has plenty of money, it is not paying off the principal on Alexander's Broadband loan.

Larry, Ted and Carl talked about the cost of installation of the fiber optic internet at their homes: Larry thought it seemed a little high:

\$230 for Larry's new home (fairly close to the road, but with an underground line),

Ted's was close to \$400 (above-ground line but with a very long driveway) and

Carl's was almost \$200 (close to the road, with an above-ground line).

School Board

Ted Carter:

The next meeting is January 14 at 6:30. There are no major issues. There will be policy readings and an executive session to talk about a student matter. The School Board will be looking at purchasing a van. One school, either Pembroke or Perry, found it saved them money.

The School Board will get the Alexander readout for state reimbursement by March.

Cemetery

Kristy Crawford:

Rhonda Oakes came and got the numbers for each account. The cemetery committee members are looking at purchasing the sign for the cemetery; still no quote for the sign, though. They are seriously considering hiring a professional to cut down the trees and clean it all up.

Tax Assessing

Kristy had not been informed if the assessors have decided on abatements for unpaid taxes. There is a time limit between applying for an abatement and replying with a response to whether the application will be considered [and before the lien forecloses].

The Clerk's Report

Kristy Crawford:

The Financials

From July 1, 2024 until today:

The school revenue is at \$282,947.89.

The total revenue from the state (not including for the school) is \$166,202.73.
\$154,142.26 (other than local property taxes) is the revenue from town sources.
\$458,068.28 in local taxes have been received so far
For a total revenue of \$1,061,361.16

Expenses to the school total \$513,063.06
County tax was \$123,005.00.
Solid Waste was billed through October for a total of \$31,341.75.
Administration is a bit high at \$91,802.31.
Donations (such as to Down East Community Partners) total \$3,242.45 that the town gives to them.
The town has spent \$1,071,635.55. The town Income Expense report shows \$10,274.39 in the hole, at the moment, from a lack of tax revenue: Almost 55% of the taxes are yet to be collected.

Some of the 2022 taxes are still not in. Those property owners have until the 27th of this month to get that money in.
-\$440,226.05 of the 2024 taxes are yet to be collected. (Taxes come as receivables. You spend it before it comes in).
-For the 2023 taxes, there had been \$29,679.15 to collect on July 1. Now \$22,262.69 left to collect.
-A couple people have paid their 2025 taxes.

The Profit & Loss Report is the raw data from Quickbooks.

Ted will be asking about the audit the school.
Kristy talked to Chad Allen, AOS 77 school district business manager. He said that the School Board should keep about \$140,000 in their account, which leaves up to \$70,000 to use.
Ted said that they have a couple of expenses.

The Annual Audit

The audit was good and bad and will be talked about at a later meeting. The goal is to run efficiently. The town should not have too much money in savings. Kristy and the auditors want some of the overage accounts to shrink.
There is a difference between what the auditors found that the town spent and what Kristy has for numbers of what the town spent. She needs to look into why those numbers are a little different.

FEMA Reimbursement of December 2023 Storms

The town has signed off and gotten the letter of approval for reimbursement for the December storm. (See "A").
On the second page there is a little chart.

On the back page is the actual cost for the event. (Ted said that the DBU is getting about \$19,000 from FEMA storm damage repairs.)

Trainings By The MMA

There are a lot of trainings provided by the Maine Municipal Association (MMA). Members of any town board that are interested in participating, can please let Kristy know. Such as:

1. How to run a mass cooling and warming center and other emergency shelters. This is on Zoom or in person, when requested.
2. Elected officials training on key things to know. Zoom only in January.
3. Also one called Title A, moderating town meetings and local election law. This is a 2-part webinar on February 5 and 6.
4. Basic municipal budgeting. Help with budget, preparing a budget. This is on Zoom or in Augusta. Kristy would like to go but I doesn't think she can, depending on the date of the March Town meeting. If Town meeting is on the March 31, then she can attend this one.
5. Planning boards and Board of Appeal will be February 11, only Zoom.
6. Training on running the dog licensing database, that is brand new. Kristy has asked Lesliann to learn that. It will be on January 14 or 21.

Concerns About 2022 Unpaid Taxes

The 2022 taxes have to be paid by the 27th of this month.
Currently, Kristy is worried about Mary Jean Landry, who lives in a double-wide trailer on Tommy Long Road. Other 2022 taxes that are unpaid are Terry and Rhonda Cobb and properties of the late Brenda McPhail.

Agent Fees

Kristy normally charges \$3 for the agent fee for vehicle registrations. But she has been getting a lot of people asking her to mail it to them as well. Kristy would like to charge the \$5 like she does for Crawford. It's almost a dollar just to mail it. There is a maximum rate fixed by the State: \$5 for most vehicle registrations, except \$6 for a brand new registration. So, it can be up to \$5. If a Crawford resident comes in, she charges \$5 because she has to re-type it. Skip said he wouldn't have a problem with \$5 dollars plus postage.
Kristy proposed \$5 plus \$2 shipping and handling.

Inland fisheries and Wildlife vehicle registrations (for ATVs, snowmobiles and motorized boats) already charges a \$5 agent fee.

Motion by Skip and 2nd by Foster to charge agent fees at the Town Office as follows:

- \$5.00 for each Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife vehicle and boat registration.
- \$3.00 for a BMV vehicle re-registration—that's not mailed—for someone from Alexander.
- \$5.00 for a BMV vehicle re-registration for someone from Crawford.
- For all BMV re-registrations that have to be mailed, it's \$5.00 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling.
- All brand new BMV registrations are \$6.00.
- It's an additional \$2.00 shipping and handling if it's mailed.

Voting: Unanimous

Private Property on Town Land

Skip phoned Andy Snowman today. Andy said that he had decided to wait until Spring to send a letter to Greg & Willow Owen. But he had made that decision without consulting Skip. Skip told Andy that he would prefer to have the letter sent now, so they won't put their docks back there next Winter. So, Andy will send them a letter. He will send a copy to Kristy. Skip asked Kristy to please let him know when she gets that letter.

Planning Board of Appeals

Kristy has sent a message from MMA legal about what would be required to change the board from 5 to 3 members. She has not heard back yet.

Ted said he wants to make it 3 members, because of difficulties with getting board members. He thanked the other two active board members, Skip and David for their service.

Concerning the last appeal--that was denied--neither Ted nor Kristy have heard from the appellants Darren & Tracy Hardy. At that meeting, he had implied that they were going to sue the town ["Next...you'll be hearing from my lawyer"], but apparently have not followed through. The time limit (of 45 days from the decision) is over for filing a suit in court.

The Planning Board's denial of Alan Curtis's permit (on Birch Lane) was filed on December 17.

Unresolved Pay for Steve Parks

Skip asked Larry what did Steve Parks tell him when he approached him to do the job in the first place?

Larry said that he had told Steve that they town would pay him \$2000 plus the cost of any gravel he

used. Larry insisted that the Selectmen had told him not more than \$2000. Steve demanded more pay, but insisted that he would stay and finish the job, which he did.

The Board discussed written bids versus verbal estimates versus being paid by the hour. Written bids now seem like a great idea.

Several selectmen concluded that the work had taken longer than Steve had thought it would take.

There was discussion about whether this work was supposed to be 90% reimbursed by FEMA or not.

Skip said that the town has a very good group of people that have done road work in the past and don't cheat the town. He doesn't have a problem using these people. Depending on the size of the job, the town has rotated through these people. But instead getting a bid in writing covers the town.

Foster said he would like to see contractors come to the meeting, so that it is clear what kind of job is to be done.

Skip said that when he showed up to do flagging on the first day of the job, he had to drive Steve to Baring to get Steve's dump truck. He got a tractor with a grader blade, but at first, he didn't have some of the right equipment at the job site to do the job.

Carl and Larry both said that Steve had said he wanted an extra thousand dollars at least.

Ted asked, "Has Steven made a specific request to be paid more [money]?"

Larry said "No."

Therefore, the matter was dropped.

David D. said it was "a lesson learned."

Roads

Skip said that a good size tree on the Spearin road is leaning more and more. Coming from the Flat Road, just past "the triangle", just prior to the dump. Thankfully, there are no wires near it. It would be better to have it down before it falls and hits somebody or blocks the road. Skip said he will look at it with Larry, if Larry wants.

Larry said that the agreed-upon one load of salt for the salt/sand shed has been delivered. The town saved \$400 over last year. The price has dropped to about \$70 per ton, last year it was \$88.50.

David D inquired about how well the sand supply is holding up. Larry said it has been OK, although he didn't check tonight.

Larry asked if the selectmen they wanted to cut back on the amount of money that the town is spending on the roads, especially for paving. Skip expressed his and Kristy's concern for the town budget in the next few years because of various budget increases that are not in the town's control, such as the County Tax increase and State-mandated school spending increases. At the same time, he doesn't want to overspend the Undesignated Surplus. So maybe there shouldn't be as much paving. Maybe inspect the roads in the Spring and see what actually has to be done and figure it out before the final budget is put together. Carl also recommended to ride around in the Spring and look at the roads.

Kristy said that the town may need to let the road account build up again. Previously, the account had gotten quite big after not paving very much for several years. Then, the Arm, Spearin, Davis, Green Hill and Pokey roads were all paved from that large amount of money. The assessors reassessed the entire town and land went up in value 30% except for blueberry land (which may have gone down). A lot of the homes went up astronomically. Townspeople will come to the June town budget meeting saying they don't want their taxes going up. Some of that is the fault of the County and the State. But the town can't spend \$150,000 at a time on roads.

The worst section is the lower end of the Pokey Road. The Crawford Road needs grading. Perhaps just gravel over the paved part of the Crawford road. Otherwise, that's 6/10 mile of hot top.

Larry has told Kevin Dean to shore up the recently hot topped Davis road.

Sealing the cracks in the roads with tar is cheaper than repaving, but David D. said that the tar caused trouble for snowplowing as the tar caught on the snowplow blade. Also, Larry has talked to contractors about sealing road cracks, but they say that the cracks have to be quite thin: 1/2 inch or less. That doesn't help with the much bigger cracks.

What is to be done on that last few hundred feet of the Davis Road right before the Campground? Larry said he had talked to David Lee and decided to gravel right over the hot top right up to Jimmy's, then put a binder on, which is just as good as 2 coats of hot top. Skip asked Larry to find out what that's going to cost.

Dog Complaints

Kristy mailed those letters to David Townsend. She has not heard from him. Foster confirmed that yes, the Magoon dogs are still coming out after people. Kristy said she would will give David T. a call next Tuesday.

Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

Kristy thought she saw in the Bangor Daily News that there is another new version of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance for the State of Maine. Usually such news would come in the MMA Bulletin, but she has seen nothing there about a new version. Skip said that the town definitely needs to be up to date on this ordinance before enforcement actions take place. He said to Larry, chairman of the Planning Board, "We need to find out for sure. We need to make sure we don't step over our own feet."

Municipal Building, etc.

David D. talked to Mike Howell to put up snow guards on the back edge of roof of the town building where the doors are. Skip directed to just take the money that's needed from the building maintenance fund. Snow guards also have to be on the roof overhanging the propane tanks and heat pump.

Skip said that after the last storm, the door was open at the little DBU building next to the town office.

Member Reports

Foster:
Foster did take care of that tree on the Davis Road.

Downeast Ambulance (DEEMS) had their Christmas party at the Happy Crab Restaurant in Eastport. The next meeting will be on February 24 and they will look at the budget for all towns. They haven't raised the budget request for Alexander in ten at least years. But this time, they may have to raise the fees. They will inform the town before the March town meeting.

Kristy said that the internet wires got pulled off the building. A guy came to put the back. She asked if there would be an additional charge for their repair, but so far, no.

Motion to adjourn at 7:24 by Foster and David D.
Voting: Unanimous.

A

Excerpts from this letter:



STATE OF MAINE
JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR
BG DIANE L. DUNN
COMMISSIONER

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VETERANS AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
MAINE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
72 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0072
PHONE: 207-624-4400/800-452-8735
FAX: 207-287-3178



PETER J. ROGERS
DIRECTOR

Date: December 18, 2024

To: Town of Alexander
50 Cooper Road
Alexander, Maine 04694

From: Anne P. Fuchs
Director of Mitigation & Recovery

Reference: FEMA-4754-DR-ME - Approved Project Award
Project # 747230
#4754DRMEP00002951
CFDA #97.036

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has finalized one or more of your organization's projects and has awarded disaster assistance for incurred expenses due to the December 17-December 21, 2023, December Windstorm 2023 event. A payment has been processed and will be sent by separate mailing within the next few weeks. Please see below for a project award summary and important grant information.

CFDA #97.036	Project Costs	Current Payment	Previous Payment	Balance
(100%)	\$4,941.48			
FEDERAL SHARE (75%)	\$3,706.11	\$3,706.11	\$0.00	\$0.00
STATE SHARE (15%)	\$741.22	\$741.22	\$0.00	\$0.00
LOCAL SHARE (10%)	\$494.15			
MANAGEMENT COSTS (100%)				
LESS LOCAL SHARE (10%)	(\$494.15)			
TOTAL REIMBURSMENT	\$4,447.33	\$4,447.33	\$0.00	\$0.00

**Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency**

General Info

Project #	747230 PW# 295	Project Type	Work Completed / Fully Documented
Project Category	A - Debris Removal	Applicant	ALEXANDER (TOWN OF) (029-00660-00)
Project Title	Town of Alexander Debris Removal	Event	4754DR-ME (4754DR)
Project Size	Small	Declaration Date	1/30/2024
Activity Completion Date	8/31/2024	Incident Start Date	12/17/2023
Process Step	Obligated	Incident End Date	12/21/2023

Damage Description and Dimensions

The Disaster # 4754DR, which occurred between 12/17/2023 and 12/21/2023, caused:

Damage #1376188; Damage for Project [747230] Town of Alexander Debris Removal

During the incident period 12/17/2023 through 12/21/2023, a(n) Flood deposited the following debris throughout ALEXANDER (TOWN OF). The Applicant performed Debris Removal Operations in response to deposited debris by Flood to eliminate; immediate threat to lives, public health, and safety.

Final Scope

1376188 Damage for Project [747230] Town of Alexander Debris Removal

Work Completed

The applicant utilized force account labor, and equipment for debris removal operations throughout Alexander (Town of) between 12/18/2023 and 05/11/2024.

By submitting straight time force account labor costs; the applicant has elected to participated in the Alternative Procedures for Debris Removal.

Town of Alexander

A. Removed and hauled 148 CY of vegetative debris from roads and public property including right of ways to Final Disposal.

Work Completed Totals

- 1. Force account labor 4 Laborers: 68 hours \$1,710.41
- 2. Force account Equipment: 6 EA. 72.50 equipment hours \$3,231.07

Work Completed Total: \$4,941.48

Unit Cost: Work Completed Total Cost \$4,941.48/Total 148 CY = \$33.38/CY

Final Disposal Site:

1- Bailey Ville Transfer Station

45.14361, -67.39842

Permit No. S-021551-WH-A-E

Project Notes:

1. Scope and cost were developed based on applicant cost summaries and certification included in the Schedule EZ.
2. No root balls were removed. There was no ground disturbance.

Cost

Code	Quantity	Unit	Total Cost	Section
9226 (Force Account Labor (Straight Time) - Debris Removal)	1.00	Lump Sum	\$1,710.41	Completed
9008 (Equipment)	1.00	Lump Sum	\$3,231.07	Completed

CRC Gross Cost	\$4,941.48
Total Insurance Reductions	\$0.00
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CRC Net Cost	\$4,941.48
Federal Share (75.00%)	\$3,706.11
Non-Federal Share (25.00%)	\$1,235.37

Award Information

Version Information

Version #	Eligibility Status	Current Location	Bundle Number	Project Amount	Cost Share	Federal Share Obligated	Date Obligated
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Drawdown History

EMMIE Drawdown Status As of Date	IFMIS Obligation #	Expenditure Number	Expended Date	Expended Amount
No Records				

Obligation History

Version #	Date Obligated	Obligated Cost	Cost Share	IFMIS Status	IFMIS Obligation #
0	10/2/2024	\$3,706.11	75%	Accepted	4754DRMEP00002951

Final Reviews

Final Review

Reviewed By CONIGO, ELEANOR M.

Reviewed On 09/05/2024 8:07 AM EDT

Review Comments

Reviewed and approved

Recipient Review

Reviewed By Morgan, Harley

Reviewed On 09/07/2024 10:13 AM EDT

Review Comments

No comments available for the Recipient Review step.

Project Signatures

Signed By Crawford, Kristy

Signed On 09/07/2024