

TOWN OF MACHIAS SELECT BOARD MINUTES

NOVEMBER 13, 2024

Chairman Jake Patryn called a meeting of the Machias Select Board to order at 6 PM. Also in attendance were Board members Carol Porcher, Sandra Sinford, Michael Hinerman, and Ben Edwards; Police Chief Keith Mercier, Officer Tim Mace, Ambulance Chief Ryan Maker, Ambulance Deputy Chief Stephen Simmons, Paul Sylvain, Comprehensive Plan Committee Members Ann-Marie Evans and James Jackson, Public Works Director Mike Schoppee, Dr. Tora Johnson, and Board Secretary Sarah Craighead Dedmon.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board voted to adopt the minutes of the October 23, 2024 meeting and the October 28, 2024 meeting.

2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To approve payroll warrant #30 in the amount of \$17,949.39; to approve payroll warrant #32 in the amount of \$27,829.52; to approve payroll warrant #34 in the amount of \$35,752.05; to approve payroll warrant #36 in the amount of \$29,804.21; to approve payroll warrant #38 in the amount of \$4,723.31, and to approve payroll warrant #39 in the amount of \$18,673.89.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board
VOTED:

To approve accounts payable warrant #31 in the amount of \$656,589.65; to approve accounts payable warrant #33 in the amount of \$66,792.92; to approve payroll warrant #35 in the amount of \$64,059.16; to approve payroll warrant #37 in the amount of \$1,245,287, and to approve payroll warrant #40 in the amount of \$2,633,968.64.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board
VOTED:

To approve school warrant #101824 in the amount of \$395,561.04 and to approve school warrant #110124 in the amount of \$371,617.94.

3. PUBLIC WORKS USED TRUCK PURCHASE

Public Works Director Mike Schoppee told the Board he has located a used 2016 Western Star truck with 43,000 miles on it, previously belonging to Berwick, and in good condition in part due to being stored indoors. It has been inspected by Freightliner, and the cost is \$77,500.

Mr. Schoppee explained he had included budget for a used truck in this year's town warrant and \$530,000 in spending was approved by voters, to include this truck. Because several other towns were on the waitlist for the truck, Mr. Schoppee requested permission to waive the bid process.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

To waive the bid process and approve the purchase of a public works truck at a cost of \$77,500.

4. SEWER ABATEMENT 29 WEST STREET

Resident Matthew Barrett requested an abatement of his sewer bill after his basement was flooded by a water heater malfunction. Because the majority of the water went into the ground and not the sewer system, Mr. Barrett asked for an abatement of \$200 on a bill of \$378.88. He has repaired the water heater.

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board
VOTED:

To abate \$200 off a sewer bill for Matthew Barrett.

5. NOVEMBER 27TH MEETING CANCELLATION

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To cancel its Nov. 27th meeting due to its proximity to Thanksgiving.

6. MMA LEGAL ACCESS FOR SARAH DEDMON

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To authorize Sarah Craighead Dedmon, interim operations manager, to access legal counsel of the Maine Municipal Association.

7. SHELLFISH CONSERVATION ORDINANCE

Mr. Patryn told the Board that he and Mr. Edwards recently attended a meeting of the Machiasport Clam Committee to speak about flat closures and the Machias Wastewater Treatment facility.

Following the meeting, Mr. Patryn said it is important for Machias to adopt its own Shellfish Conservation Ordinance, including the likely hire of a shellfish warden.

Mr. Patryn said a similar ordinance was attempted several years ago but never finalized with the state. He is currently drafting the ordinance for the Board's future review.

8. FULL-TIME PUBLIC WORKS POSITION

Town employee Reagan Smith has served as a part-time public works and part-time transfer station. She has recently begun working for public works on a full-time basis.

Many Board members said they have heard wonderful things about Ms. Smith's work for the Town.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board
VOTED:

To appoint Reagan Smith as a full-time public works employee.

9. DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP POLICY

The Board discussed adding a domestic partnership offering to its Town insurance policy.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To adopt domestic partner coverage to be offered in our personnel policy according to the language laid out by Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust, written below.

Effective November 13, 2024, The Town of Machias amends its personnel benefits policy to allow any employee who is eligible to enroll in the employer benefits the option of enrolling a domestic partner.* Any employee who wishes to add a domestic partner will be advised of the requirements set forth in the Domestic Partner Affidavit to add said partner. Furthermore, said employee has been advised there could be tax implications for adding a domestic partner. The Domestic Partner of an Employee shall be:

- A "life partner of either the same sex or opposite sex of the employee;
- Not legally married or separated, to either the employee or anyone else;
- At least 18 years of age and mentally competent to consent to contract;
- Are each other's Domestic Partners and intend to remain so indefinitely;

- Have been each other's Domestic Partner for at least 12 months prior to the date of the signed Affidavit;
- Are not related by blood to a degree of closeness that would prohibit marriage in the State of Maine
- Are jointly responsible for each other's common welfare; share financial obligations and share their primary residence

10. MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE

The Town is currently reimbursing employees at a rate of 46 cents per mile. The current state rate is 50 cents per mile.

On a motion by Mike Hinerman and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board VOTED:

To match the state reimbursement mileage rate in perpetuity, and retroactively reimburse employees paid at the former rate, back to the beginning of FY2025.

11. TOWN CREDIT CARDS

The Board discussed reinstating credit card accounts for Town department heads. Chief Mercier and Chief Maker said credit cards would simplify their work, and Officer Mace said it would greatly aid in employee travel.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Sandra Sinford the Board VOTED:

To authorize the Town to seek a credit account for \$15,000 to be dispersed to each department head by credit card.

12. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES

Comprehensive Plan Committee members Ann-Marie Evans and James Jackson sought the Board's approval to appoint four community members to the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Ms. Evans said she would like the committee to hold its first meeting before the end of the year.

Dr. Johnson said that the average cost of a comprehensive plan is \$33,000 but that the cost could potentially be covered through a grant from the Community Resilience Partnership if the Town is working with Sunrise County Economic Council on its plan.

Ms. Evans asked permission to advertise for new committee members.

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board

VOTED:

To appoint Chris Meroff, Andrew Mulholland, Wendy Schoppee, and Aaron Ackley to the Machias Comprehensive Plan Committee.

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Mike Hinerman the Board
VOTED:

To approve the purchasing of advertisements to recruit additional members to the Comprehensive Plan Committee, to be paid for from the comprehensive plan budget.

13. EMAIL TRANSITION UPDATE

Ms. Evans updated the Board that all of the town email accounts will be moved to BlueHost on Friday, Nov. 15. Emails will be available again on Monday, Nov. 18. The Board thanked Ms. Evans for her extensive work in making the domain and email transfer possible.

14. EXTENSION OF INTERIM OPS MANAGER 45 DAY PERIOD

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To extend Sarah Dedmon's interim operations manager position by 45 days, from December 7, 2024, to January 21, 2025.

15. UPPER MACHIAS BAY MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Dr. Johnson asked the Board to appoint three members to the Upper Machias Bay Master Plan Leadership Committee. The Board requested one additional member to represent Machias.

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board
VOTED:

To appoint Ben Edwards, Jake Patryn, Andrew Mulholland, and Sarah Dedmon to the Upper Machias Bay Master Plan Leadership Committee.

16. AMBULANCE SERVICE CONTRACT UPDATES

Chief Maker said that it is time to consider what rate the Machias Ambulance Service will charge each town for the 2026 year. For FY2024, the service increased its rate from \$12 to \$50 per capita. Chief Maker said for FY2025, the service elected not to increase its rates, and proposed an increase of \$10 to the FY2026 rate plan.

Mr. Edwards said that other services charge as much as \$90 per capita and he would like to make sure the Machias service is charging enough. As an enterprise account, the service is funded only by its own earnings and not by tax dollars.

Once a rate is decided after further discussion, Chief Maker will send a letter notifying the service's member towns of the rate increase.

17. AMBULANCE BID OPENING

Chief Maker said the voters approved an amount not to exceed \$200,000 for a new ambulance at this year's town meeting. He said last September the Town purchased an ambulance which is working well but the Town's oldest ambulance is increasingly experiencing mechanical issues.

All bids were requested to be a transit-style ambulance.

Mr. Patryn opened a bid from Autotronics LLC out of Madawaska and Bangor, for a 2024-25 Ford Transit T250 AWD ambulance. Decal wrapped, with a striker power load, and striker power cot, with installed radios and antenna for **\$218,535**. The cot was not requested.

Mr. Hinerman opened a bid from Greenwood Emergency of North Attleboro, MA. for a Ford Transit 240 with a new power load installed, and a graphics wrap available 60 days after receipt of contract for **\$172,950**.

Ms. Porcher opened a bid from Northeastern Rescue Vehicles Inc of Syracuse, NY, for a 2024 Ford V6 Echo Van AWD, T350HR - including a full body wrap for **\$176,300**. Radio installation is not included, available 30-60 days after receipt of the contract.

Ms. Sinford opened a bid from Northeastern Rescue Vehicles of Syracuse NY, 2024 Ford Gas V6 Echo Van T250MR, **\$166,300**, in a 4x2 model vs. the requested AWD model.

Chief Maker asked the Board to approve the bid from Northeastern Rescue Vehicles for \$176,300 because they work in conjunction with a Maine vendor, Sugarloaf Rescue Vehicle of Wilton, which allows them to deliver excellent service.

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board
VOTED:

To approve awarding the bid for a type 2 ambulance to Northeastern Rescue Vehicles for \$176,300.

18. AMBULANCE NEW HIRES

Chief Maker asked the Board to approve two new per diem EMTs for the Machias Ambulance Service.

Sarah Morad has extensive EMS service in Missouri and in Maine, and a flexible schedule. Maximus Ginn has experience in the Army Reserves and at Eastern Maine Medical Center, and is a truck driver.

The addition of two new employees brings the Machias Ambulance Service Roster close to 30, said Chief Maker.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To approve the hiring of Sarah Morad and Maximus Ginn as per diem EMTs for the Machias Ambulance Service.

19. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To enter executive session in accordance with Title 1 Chapter 22 MRSA §405 Paragraph 6A at 7:43 PM.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board
VOTED:

To adjourn from executive session at 8:09 PM.

20. AMBULANCE CHIEF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To approve an employment agreement between the Town of Machias and Ryan Maker as proposed pending legal verification.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To approve paying Ryan Maker his Chief of Ambulance service stipend retroactively from July 1 to November 3.

21. EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Mike Hinerman and seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board

VOTED:

To enter into executive session in accordance with MRSA 36 §841 at 8:11 PM.

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board

VOTED:

To adjourn from executive session at 8:23 PM.

22. TAX PAYMENT PLAN

On a motion by Ben Edwards and seconded by Mike Hinerman, the Board

VOTED:

To put in place a payment plan for a resident of Machias for \$175 per month until the 2022 and 2023 taxes are paid off, and to abate interest for the duration of the payment plan.

23. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mike Hinerman and seconded by Ben Edwards the Board voted to adjourn at 8:24 PM.