

Note: Before beginning the meeting, those assembled stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

FEBRUARY 23, 2022

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order at 6:12 PM by Chairman Paula Johnson-Rolfe. In attendance were Board members Leslie Haynes, Sandra Sinford, and Carole Porcher; Town Manager Bill Kitchen; Secretary Cathy Lord; Police Chief Keith Mercier.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2022 Board meeting.

2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Sandra Sinford, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To approve municipal warrant #63 in the amount of \$21,486.84; to approve municipal warrant #64 in the amount of \$1,018.70; to approve municipal warrant #66 in the amount of \$15,185.24; to approve municipal warrant #68 in the amount of \$18,141.18; and, to approve municipal warrant #70 in the amount of \$12,122.33 .

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

To approve municipal warrant #65 in the amount of \$31,209.23; to approve municipal warrant #67 in the amount of \$138,643.65; to approve municipal warrant #69 in the amount of \$300,444.12; and, to approve municipal warrant #71 in the amount of \$984,249.16 .

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

To approve school warrant #11422 in the amount of \$299,703.77 and to approve municipal warrant #21122 in the amount of \$455,161.36 .

3. APPROVAL OF AMBULANCE CONTRACTS - MACHIASPORT & WHITING

Ms. Johnson-Rolfe noted that the ambulance contracts are the standard contracts for ambulance coverage with no changes. Mr. Kitchen explained that the contracts have been signed by officials of the contract towns and returned to Machias for the Board to sign.

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

To sign and approve ambulance contracts with the Towns of Machiasport and Whiting.

4. CORRECTION TO AMBULANCE CONTRACT FEES - EAST MACHIAS & CUTLER

Mr. Kitchen explained that annual contract retainer fees need to be corrected on the ambulance contracts for East Machias and Cutler.

On a motion by Sandra Sinford, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To approve the ambulance contract with the Town of East Machias in the amount of \$15,582.50 and to approve the ambulance contract with the Town of Cutler in the amount of \$5,796.

5. APPROVAL OF FIRE CONTRACT - TOWN OF WHITNEYVILLE

Mr. Kitchen noted that Whitneyville officials have signed and returned their standard fire contract.

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

To sign and approve the fire contract with the Town of Whitneyville.

6. TOWN REPORT - DEDICATION/COVER OF TOWN REPORT

Mr. Kitchen reviewed the practice of publishing a cover page and the dedication of the town's annual town report. Mr. Kitchen recommended that this year's report be dedicated to first responders. He commented that all town employees responded to the needs of people over the past year. Mr. Kitchen asked the members of the Board to give these items some thought. The members of the Board decided to table a decision on the content of the cover and the dedication.

7. TAX-ACQUIRED PROPERTY AND FORECLOSURE

Mr. Kitchen informed the Board that Machias has over twenty pieces of tax-acquired property in municipal ownership. He told the Board that there is a spreadsheet being put together containing pertinent data on the properties in question. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe commented that the Board needs to look at these properties to make decisions on how to get the properties back into the tax base.

Mr. Kitchen advised the board that a piece of property was foreclosed upon in 2016 by the Town and that the Board was approached by the prior owner in 2018 to arrange a payment schedule to regain ownership of the property. Mr. Kitchen reported a payment schedule of \$50. a month was agreed upon until the amount owed to the Town was paid off. He advised the Board that in March 2020 the original owner defaulted on the repayment agreement and the property remained in the Town's ownership. Mr. Kitchen reported that the prior owner's son has been living on the property and is interested in being allowed to pay the amount owed on the property to regain ownership. Mr. Kitchen told the Board that the son advised him that he had no idea of the status of the taxes. Mr. Kitchen advised the Board that the total amount owed has not been determined. He asked the Board if they are interested in allowing the son to regain the property by paying what is owed on the property. Ms. Sinford questioned why no one advised the son living in the house that ownership of the property had passed to the

Town of Machias for non-payment of taxes. Mr. Kitchen added that there are also IRS liens on the property; Ms. Johnson-Rolfe questioned how the liens factor into this situation. Mr. Kitchen reviewed the repayment agreement agreed upon in 2018. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe pointed out that since the repayment plan was defaulted upon there are additional property taxes and sewer bills to factor into the equation and she asked if the son is aware that more is owed on the property since the default in 2018. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe commented that there are many considerations and questions; she noted the ultimate need to get the property back onto the tax rolls.

8. BUDGET COMMITTEE/SCHEDULE

Mr. Kitchen reviewed the schedule for budget meetings: March 16th (4:00 to 8:00 PM) and March 30th (4:00 to 8:00 PM) at the tele-business center and on Zoom.

Mr. Kitchen commented that of greatest concern is budgeting for energy costs in this year's budget. He noted that in October 2020 the Board had voted to move forward with participating in a solar energy program initiative. Mr. Kitchen said that he would research if the Town was formally signed up for the program.

9. SEWER ABATEMENT CORRECTION - CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mr. Kitchen explained that the Board had approved a sewer abatement of \$415.80 for the Holy Name Catholic Church (the church had requested an abatement due to the fact that there was a problem with the church's waterline in back of the church which was not discovered until the January sewer bill). He noted that there was a miscalculation in the amount of the abatement; the amount which needs to be abated is \$452.80 .

On a motion by Sandra Sinford, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board
VOTED:

To abate the amount of \$452.80 in sewer charges to the Holy Name Catholic Church.

Ms. Sinford asked if the problem had been fixed at the church. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe pointed out that the abatement was granted with the assurance that the waterline was to be repaired.

10. POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Mr. Kitchen commended the activities of the police department under Chief Mercier.

Mr. Kitchen noted that there was a discussion regarding the purchase of another cruiser for the department. He noted that there are funds in the police department budget due to the fact that the Town did not have a functioning police department for many months; he added that the recommendation was to make the purchase this year using funds in the current budget. Chief Mercier reviewed the availability of police vehicles and the purchase cost. Chief Mercier did not recommend purchasing another hybrid vehicle and he pointed out that these vehicles are experiencing problems (he noted that the department's hybrid cruiser is currently in Bangor being repaired). He commented that the technology has not progressed far enough to warrant investment in another hybrid vehicle. Chief Mercier advised the Board that if a vehicle is purchased this year the Town will not need to purchase another vehicle for another two to three years. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe commented that the Board can go out to bid for a vehicle; she suggested allowing the Chief to explore options for the purchase. Ms. Sinford said that she agrees

with the suggestion that the Board utilize funds in the current budget to purchase a vehicle. The Board gave its consensus to pursue development of bid specifications for them to review.

Ms. Sinford asked about progress with ordering tasers for the department. Chief Mercier said that the tasers have been ordered and he is waiting for them to be shipped.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Mr. Kitchen noted recent newspaper articles commenting on illegal drug distribution in Washington County. He pointed out that the drug problem is occurring in many other counties in Maine as well.

B. Mr. Kitchen pointed out that MDOT and Machias Public Works are busy making road repairs in Machias.

C. Chief Mercier advised the Board that the police department plans on escorting basketball teams into Machias.

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM.