

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

MARCH 13, 2024

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order at 6:09 PM by Chairman Jacob Patryn. In attendance were Board members Sandra Sinford, Ben Edwards, and Michael Hinerman; Town Manager Bill Kitchen; Secretary Cathy Lord; Town Clerk Sandra Clifton; Police Chief Keith Mercier; Officer Tim Mace; Officer Taylor LeBlanc; Paul Sylvain, Dennis Perry.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Michael Hinerman, seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2024 Board meeting.

2. POLICE DEPARTMENT - WAGE SCALE ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Tim Mace, the union negotiator for the Machias Police Department, reviewed proposed changes to the police department pay scale. Mr. Mace noted that the wage scale is being revised to attract qualified applicants to fill vacancies and to be competitive with other departments. He noted that the proposal calls for the removal of the current first four steps on the wage scale thereby making the current fifth step the actual first step of the new pay scale (\$25.74 per hour as Step 1; \$26.47 per hour as Step 2; \$27.20 per hour as Step 3; \$27.93 per hour as Step 4; \$28.65 per hour as Step 5; and, \$29.35 per hour as Step 6). Mr. Mace noted that there is currently one full-time vacancy in the department. He explained that the Town Manager has the ability to negotiate the steps with potential candidates upon a review of their work history and experience. Chief Mercier explained that a candidate's work experience would be reviewed for placement on the wage scale. Mr. Mace advised the Board that the police department is hoping to advertise as soon as possible if the wage agreement is signed by all the parties involved. Mr. Patryn suggested that the members of the Board review the proposal and place this on the Board's next meeting agenda for action. Mr. Edwards also suggested that the town's finance director be consulted as to the financial impact of revising the wage scale as has been presented to the Board.

3. RESIGNATION OF OFFICER TAYLOR LEBLANC

Mr. Kitchen advised the Board of a resignation by Mr. Taylor LeBlanc from the Machias Police Department effective March 30, 2024. Mr. Kitchen asked Mr. LeBlanc for the reason for his resignation but Mr. LeBlanc chose not to answer the question. Ms. Clifton asked why Officer LeBlanc was leaving; Mr. LeBlanc declined to answer the question. Mr. Kitchen asked Mr. LeBlanc why he was resigning after having agreed to stay for a period of two years when he was hired? Mr. LeBlanc chose not to answer the question. (Note: at this time in the meeting Mr. LeBlanc walked out of the meeting saying nothing.) Mr. Kitchen noted that Mr. LeBlanc has refused to answer questions about his resignation.

Chief Mercier noted that Mr. LeBlanc had verbally promised to commit two years of employment to Machias as a police officer. Mr. Kitchen noted that some of the funds for Mr. LeBlanc's attendance to the police academy will be reimbursed at a standardized rate but that there would be no reimbursement for the first year. He added that Mr.

LeBlanc has only filled shifts as a police officer since mid-December. The members of the Board discussed the unfortunate circumstances that Mr. LeBlanc did not follow-through with his commitment to the Machias Police Department as he promised. Mr. Patryn expressed his disappointment with police agencies "poaching" officers from other departments. The Board discussed how to proceed.

On a motion by Ben Edwards, seconded by Michael Hinerman, the Board

VOTED:

To accept Taylor LeBlanc's resignation as a Machias police officer effective March 30, 2024.

Vote On Motion: Motion defeated by a vote of 3 to 1; Ms. Sinford voted for the motion; Mr. Edwards, Mr. Hinerman, and Mr. Patryn voted against the motion.

Mr. Edwards commented that the integrity of police officers is important in society. Chief Mercier noted that there needs to be adequate time to find a replacement; he commented that Mr. LeBlanc's March 30th effective date of resignation allows additional opportunity to find a suitable replacement.

4. 17 STACKPOLE DRIVE

Mr. Kitchen reported that work is being done to improve the temporary town office facilities at 17 Stackpole Drive. He reported that the phone systems have been moved from the 7 Court Street location, file cabinets have been moved to a concrete-based room, and shelves/counter space have been installed. Mr. Kitchen explained that the contents of the current town office room in the tele-business center will be relocated to the front area of the building so citizens can access the facility more conveniently. He noted that he hopes to pave the front walkway providing access to the building when spring thaw occurs.

5. 7 COURT STREET

Mr. Kitchen advised the Board that he is awaiting the report from Maine Municipal Association on the damages to the Machias Town Office. He noted that he has refrained from hiring contractors until he knows what damage was covered. Mr. Kitchen explained that the Town is awaiting a decision by President Biden as to the FEMA assistance request by Governor Mills.

Mr. Kitchen reviewed municipal grant requests. He noted that the \$825,000. grant for the Porter Memorial Library was approved and that the Town could be considering seeking a grant for expansion of the sewer system in the future. Mr. Kitchen noted that the Town could seek grant monies for the construction of a new town office and police department.

6. SUNRISE TRAIL REPAIRS UPDATE

Mr. Kitchen told the Board that a group of interested parties recently walked the Sunrise Trail to survey the extent of the damage. He noted that there has been additional damage since last weekend's rain and wind storm. Mr. Kitchen commented that from this walkthrough he hopes that bid specifications will be developed for repairs and it is hoped that repair bids will be opened by the end of May which is the target date. Mr.

Sylvain pointed out that drone surveillance photos have been posted on the Internet showing the damage.

Mr. Edwards commented on the significant deterioration to the Dike. Mr. Kitchen noted that he took pictures of the Dike area illustrating significant disintegration of the area and he forwarded the photos to the Maine Department of Transportation.

7. MACHIAS POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Chief Mercier advised that firearms training was recently conducted by the department and that the University of Maine at Machias has hired a campus police officer who will provide support when necessary.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A. The Board reviewed and signed the ambulance contract with the Town of Machiasport.

B. The Board reviewed and signed the liquor license renewal for Helen's Restaurant.

9. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Sandra Sinford, seconded by Michael Hinerman, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM.