

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

JULY 14, 2021

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Paula Johnson-Rolfe. In attendance were Board members Leslie Haynes, James Jackson, Sandra Sinford, Carole Porcher; Interim Town Manager Bill Kitchen; Secretary Cathy Lord; Mary Angarola, David Clark, Bruce Smith, Wayde Carter, Carol Christenson, Josh Rolfe.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2021 Board meeting with the following revision to Item #1:

NOMINATIONS FOR CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Mr. Haynes nominated Ms. Johnson-Rolfe for Chairman with a second to the motion by Ms. Johnson-Rolfe

Ms. Porcher nominated Mr. Jackson for Chairman with a second to the motion by James Jackson

Board voted:

3 votes for Ms. Johnson-Rolfe (Mr. Haynes, Ms. Sinford, Ms. Johnson-Rolfe)

2 votes for Mr. Jackson (Ms. Porcher, Mr. Jackson)

Ms. Johnson-Rolfe nominated Mr. Haynes for Vice-Chairman with a second by Mr. Haynes

Ms. Porcher nominated Mr. Jackson to be Vice-Chairman with a second by Mr. Jackson

Board voted:

3 votes for Mr. Haynes (Ms. Sinford, Ms. Johnson-Rolfe, Mr. Haynes)

2 votes for Mr. Jackson (Ms. Porcher, Mr. Jackson)

It was also pointed out that Mary Angarola and David Clark did not attend the June 9th meeting or participate via the Zoom platform.

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board voted to approve the June 30, 2021 Board minutes.

2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by James Jackson, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To approve municipal warrant #107 in the amount of \$15,440.95; to approve municipal warrant #2 in the amount of \$11,281.47; and, to approve municipal warrant #4 in the amount of \$16,202.27 .

On a motion by Leslie Haynes, seconded by James Jackson, the Board
VOTED:

To approve municipal warrant #1 in the amount of \$26,947.32; to approve municipal warrant #3 in the amount of \$41,317.43; and, to approve municipal warrant #5 in the amount of \$68,378.41 .

On a motion by James Jackson, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To approve school warrant #70221 in the amount of \$257,236.12 and to approve school warrant #71621 in the amount of \$220,918.91 .

3. CONCERT SERIES - FORMAL APPROVAL

Mr. Kitchen asked the Board to authorize the Bad Little Falls concert series this summer. He noted that the concert program has received the sum of \$2400. from R.H. Foster/Freshies as sponsor for the event and he asked that the funds be placed in a dedicated account to finance costs for the concert series.

On a motion by James Jackson, seconded by Sandra Sinford, the Board
VOTED:

To establish a separate dedicated revolving account for the Bad Little Falls concert series.

Ms. Porcher asked about brochures advertising the concerts and Mr. Kitchen advised that flyers advertising the concerts have been placed at various locations such as restaurants, motels, and other public places as well as ads being placed in local newspapers to make people aware of the dates and the performing bands. Mr. Kitchen added that the participating bands are doing their own social media outreach. Mr. Kitchen noted that the first concert was very successful. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe commented that she heard many positive comments about the concert. Mr. Kitchen added that the concert attracted a nice mix of attendees and people were very appreciative of the event. Mr. Smith asked who would be responsible for the funds in the separate account and Mr. Kitchen explained that accountability for the funds rests with the town manager and the town treasurer.

4. HIRING OF NEW PERSONNEL

Mr. Kitchen advised the Board that he and Public Works Director Mike Schoppee reviewed candidates and held interviews and would like to recommend that Donna Greiser be hired as supervisor of the Bay Area Transfer Station with a start date of July 20th. He added that Ms. Greiser would receive training with Mr. Farley to prepare her for the requirements of the position. Mr. Kitchen also advised the Board that he and Mr. Schoppee recommend that James McLaughlin be hired to fill the split position within the transfer station (half-time) and public works department (half-time) with a start date of July 26th and with training on the job for Mr. McLaughlin during the previous weekend. Mr. Kitchen told the Board that with the addition of Ms. Greiser and Mr. McLaughlin the Bay Area Transfer Station and Public Works Department will be fully staffed.

On a motion by James Jackson, seconded by Carole Porcher, the Board

VOTED:

Based on the Interim Town Manager's and Public Works Director's recommendation, to hire Donna Greiser as supervisor of the Bay Area Transfer Station with a six month probationary period and completion of the standard fit-for-duty physical; and, to hire James McLaughlin to fill the shared position for the transfer station and public works department with a six month probationary period, completion of the standard fit-for-duty physical, passing the required drug screening, holding a Class C driver's license, and obtaining a Class B license within a year.

5. RESIGNATION OF POLICE CHIEF

Ms. Johnson-Rolfe advised the members of the Board that she received an e-mail from Mr. Kitchen advising her of the resignation of Police Chief Hand effective July 18th. The members of the Board reviewed the letter of resignation.

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

VOTED:

To accept Mr. Hand's resignation from his position of Machias Police Chief effective July 18th.

Mr. Kitchen informed the Board that he had several conversations with Mr. Hand regarding his decision to resign and that Mr. Hand "decisively came to this decision". Mr. Kitchen advised the Board that he will be meeting with the Washington County Sheriff on Thursday morning to discuss a plan for police coverage in Machias until the position is filled. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe requested that the position be advertised as soon as possible to begin the search for a police chief. She noted that along with the resignation of the police chief, the police department also has three openings for full-time police officers. Mr. Kitchen observed that Machias is in a far better position than it was two years ago to attract candidates for the positions with the Board having increased salaries across-the-board for patrol officers. Mr. Jackson added that the salary measures put in place by the Board should make filling the positions in the the Machias Police Department more competitive and should attract qualified candidates.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Mr. Jackson noted that there is a revolutionary war re-enactment scheduled on August 21st in the vicinity of Norman Nelson Park. He explained that the re-enactment planners wanted to be closer to spectators allowing observers more of an up-close experience. Mr. Jackson added that the re-enactment will be held at high tide that day which is about ten o'clock in the morning. Mr. Kitchen added that there are several other activities planned in Machias such as a blueberry/craft fair, a version of the Blackfly Ball, and a pancake breakfast/fly-in at the airport being planned by the Machias Airport Committee.

B. Mr. Wayne Carter addressed the Board. He presented the members of the Board with copies of a July 2nd letter addressed to him by Police Chief Todd Hand. Mr. Carter told the Board that Mr. Hand failed to give him due process over his allegations; Mr. Carter added that he has filed a whistleblower complaint with State authorities. Mr. Carter explained that the ballistic vest was not returned since vests are individually measured for officers and that it is standard practice for an officer to retain their vest. Mr. Carter told the Board that he has been employed as a police officer for over

twenty years and considers Mr. Hand's accusations as "defamation of my character". Mr. Carter asked that the letter be removed from his personnel file. The Board discussed police procedures. Mr. Carter also noted that Mr. Jackson had commented in front of him and other police officers that one way to clean-up the police department was "to perform some creative report writing". Mr. Jackson said that he had never made this statement.

Ms. Johnson-Rolfe explained that this issue is a personnel matter and must be handled in an appropriate manner. She suggested that the Board allow the Interim Town Manager to handle the complaint providing process safeguards to Mr. Carter and the Town. Mr. Rolfe explained that when he was Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Mr. Carter had discussed the situation with him and that he had told Mr. Carter to keep the vest since vests are fitted for individual officers and it is common practice that officers are allowed to keep their vests.

Ms. Johnson-Rolfe commented that Mr. Carter is very well respected in the law enforcement community. She said that Mr. Hand's actions were "uncalled for". Ms. Johnson-Rolfe added that she is concerned that this matter be handled appropriately and noted it is serious when a supervisor makes allegations and does not provide due process. Mr. Carter explained that he had asked to meet with Chief Hand who refused to meet to discuss the matter. Mr. Carter advised the Board that he had turned in the equipment to Mr. Rolfe. Mr. Rolfe said that he had then turned the equipment into the Machias Town Office. Ms. Carla Christenson inquired as to why the police chief was not involved in the turn-over of equipment? Mr. Rolfe said that there was significant animosity between himself and the police chief.

Mr. Carter said that he had attempted to provide Chief Hand with knowledge and training as to the enforcement of Maine law but that Chief Hand did not want to accept this assistance. Mr. Kitchen noted that working in rural Maine is a unique situation in that there are many agencies working together and he added that people need to be willing to work with each other. Ms. Sinford commented that it is essential that all departments need to be talking to each other and cooperate with each other. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe pointed out that this is a personnel issue. Ms. Christenson added that it is important to note that Chief Hand is not in attendance tonight to defend his actions and himself. Mr. Rolfe commented that a lot of derogatory statements were made to others by Chief Hand making it difficult to deal with this situation. Mr. Rolfe said that there is a process to follow in this situation and that a lot of things were overlooked in the process. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe said that there are many more things that need to be done during the process. It was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Kitchen handle this matter.

On a motion by Sandra Sinford, seconded by James Jackson, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 PM.