

TOWN OF MACHIAS

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

AUGUST 28, 2024

Chairman Jacob Patryn called a meeting of the Machias Select Board to order at 6:07 PM. In attendance were Board members Ben Edwards, Carole Porcher, Sandra Sinford, and Michael Hinerman; Town Manager Bill Kitchen, Interim Board Secretary Sarah Craighead Dedmon, Ambulance Chief Ryan Maker, Assistant Ambulance Chief Stephen Simmons, Paul Sylvain, and Machias Police Officer Tim Mace.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Carole Porcher, seconded by Michael Hinerman, the Board voted to adopt the minutes of the August 14, 2024 meeting.

2. SEWER RATE INCREASE

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

To approve the sewer rate increase discussed at the August 14, 2024 meeting, and to authorize Town Manager Kitchen to write a letter notifying those affected of that increase.

3. SEWER ABATEMENT - 57 CENTER STREET

Upon review, this item was struck from the agenda due to a lack of supporting documentation.

4. ALCOHOL APPLICATION - SPECIAL TASTE TESTING EVENT - ANAH MINI CAR FALL FEZTIVAL

The Board agreed that the documents requesting a special taste testing license for the October 19th Anah Mini Car Fall Feztival were complete, and signed the application.

5. ENTERPRISE ACCOUNT BUDGETS

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

To approve the enterprise account budgets for 2024-2025. Those accounts include the Telebusiness Center, Machias Ambulance Service, Wastewater Treatment Plant, and Machias Transfer Station.

6. UPDATES: 7 COURT STREET AND 17 STACKPOLE DRIVE

Bill Kitchen told the Board he would like to put the repairs for the town office at 7 Court Street out to bid. He believes that once repaired, the Town will be able to find tenants for 7 Court Street, but reiterated that the repair funds will not pay to protect the building from future flood damage.

The insurance amount allotted to repair the building is nearly \$60,000. To prepare for the work, Mr. Kitchen anticipates closing the town office for one day to move the remaining records and supplies into 17 Stackpole Drive.

Once 7 Court Street is repaired, Mr. Kitchen suggests renting it.

Mr. Kitchen also updated the Board that Bar Harbor Foods would be ending its lease at 17 Stackpole Drive effective September 4, 2024, making additional space available for Town use.

Mr. Kitchen suggested the Telebusiness Center, 17 Stackpole Drive, receive some maintenance, including exterior cleaning, sanding and painting of wood trim, improved signage, and a repaved walkway. He also said that repurposing the space vacated by Bar Harbor Foods will likely require some interior renovations, which he will propose at a later date.

Mr. Edwards suggested that the bid request for repairs to 7 Court Street also include a quote for waterproofing the building. The Board agreed that would be a good idea.

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

To approve the town manager to begin the bid process to pay for repairs to 7 Court Street.

7. AMBULANCE - HIRE DRIVERS

MAS Chief Ryan Maker shared a letter of recommendation to hire Jeffrey Ingemi, a retired state police sergeant, as an ambulance driver.

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

To approve hiring Jeffrey Ingemi to the Machias Ambulance Service on a new-hire basis.

Chief Maker notified the Board of another job application from Nickolas Graham, who is interested in working shifts as an ambulance driver when home from school at Maine Maritime Academy.

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

To approve the hiring of Nickolas Graham as an ambulance driver.

8. NEW AMBULANCE RFP AND SPECS

Mr. Kitchen said the Machias Ambulance Service has determined bid specifications for a new ambulance, and he would like to move forward with requesting bids that could be opened at the town meeting later in September. The funding has already been approved by the Board.

It was noted that the Board's vote is not required to initiate a bid process.

9. NEW AMBULANCE FULL-TIME POSITIONS AND WAGE SCALE

The Board discussed proposed changes to ambulance service wages, including a proposed \$10,000 signing bonus for a paramedic.

Chief Maker said that number is commensurate with bonuses offered by other services, and that it costs the service \$50,000 to make a paramedic with an existing employee. He hopes a signing bonus might influence someone to move here for the job.

Chief Maker said the ambulance service is reimbursed \$1,300 at the Medicare rate per paramedic transfer to Eastern Maine Medical Center, and that the service receives at least 5 to 6 requests per week, spending money to hire a new paramedic would make good financial sense. Mr. Patryn agreed.

Chief Maker also requested to raise the Ambulance Service pay rates to the following levels:

Ambulance Operator - \$15/hour
EMT Apprentice - \$15/hour
EMT - \$17/hour
Advanced EMT - \$19/hour
Paramedic - \$25/hour
Shift Supervisor Differential - \$1/hour

QA/QI Coordinator - \$25/hour
Training Coordinator Stipend - \$2,500/year
Assistant Chief Stipend - \$6,500/year
Ambulance Chief - \$74,880/year

In the case of hourly employees, wages are the same whether on standby or on ambulance runs.

All employees except for the Ambulance Director would be paid hourly. Chief Maker indicated that in some rare instances, the Ambulance Director would be paid hourly according to the paramedic or EMT rate if they were called in on a day off to assist with an urgent transfer.

Chief Maker indicated that for the most part, all of the proposed wage changes are reflected in the proposed 2024-25 budget.

Chief Maker said making the wage increases is a time-sensitive matter, and that he would return to the Board with more numbers forecasting the cost of standby wage increases, more input on the handling of sign-on bonuses, especially bonus repayment should the employee leave soon, and get the input of the financial director on these changes.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kitchen said the Route 1 paving process was nearing completion. Chief Maker said that the Shawn Thyng Paving Company was recently paving apartment complexes near the public safety building and graciously paved parts of the public safety driveway for free.

Mr. Kitchen said Court Street will also receive a skim coat of paving this year.

Ms. Sinford asked about the status of 15 Charles Street. Mr. Kitchen said the town needs to sell the building, with the aid of a realtor, due to a recent change in state regulations. He said the town currently has three tax-acquired properties that need to be condemned, but the recent change in state regulations has made that process temporarily ambiguous.

11. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board voted to adjourn at 7:27 PM.