

BOARD OF SELECTPEOPLE - TOWN OF MACHIAS

DECEMBER 9, 2020

A meeting of the Machias Board of Selectpeople was called to order via the Zoom platform at 6:00 PM by Chairman Josh Rolfe. In attendance were Board members Paula Johnson-Rolfe, James Jackson, and Leslie Haynes; Town Manager Christina Therrien; Secretary Cathy Lord; Town Clerk Sandra Clifton; Police Chief Todd Hand; Mary Angarola, Dale Lambert, Bob Berta.

1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the November 11, 2020 Board meeting.

2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by James Jackson, the Board
VOTED:

To approve municipal warrant #43 in the amount of \$14,304.14; to approve municipal warrant #44 in the amount of \$50,160.39; to approve municipal warrant #45 in the amount of \$16,886.80; to approve municipal warrant #46 in the amount of \$67,014.63; to approve municipal warrant #47 in the amount of \$11,347.16; to approve municipal warrant #48 in the amount of \$23,931.27; and, to approve municipal warrant #49 in the amount of \$198,125.33 .

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To approve school warrant #120420 in the amount of \$390,006.33 .

3. SEWER ABATEMENT REQUEST - DALE LAMBERT

Mr. Rolfe reviewed the circumstances behind Mr. Lambert's request for a sewer abatement noting that Mr. Lambert used an excessive amount of water last summer to establish a new lawn on his property. Mr. Rolfe noted that the Board had requested that Mr. Lambert gather data on his sewer usage for the Board to review. Ms. Therrien reviewed the data on usage with the Board: in 2017 Mr. Lambert's average usage was 850 gallons, in 2018 average usage was 825 gallons, and in 2019 the average usage was 900 gallons. Ms. Therrien explained that Mr. Lambert is contesting 8100 gallons of water that went through his system as he was establishing his new lawn. She noted that usage in 2020 per quarter use was 1900/1900/1300 gallons. Ms. Therrien suggested that 1900 gallons would be a sufficient estimate of usage.

Mr. Rolfe noted his concern that this type of situation continues to happen (he pointed out when the Board was asked to consider an abatement for a greenhouse located on Court Street) and that users end up asking for abatements after the situation of the use of an excessive amount of water occurs; he noted that it is difficult to inform the public that these types of situations should be monitored to alleviate these types of circumstances. He added that there should be a method of simplifying the process when property owners find they have used an excessive amount of water. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe asked if there was space on the municipal sewer bills to place a note to sewer users warning that users should contact the Town if they have this type of situation. Ms. Therrien noted that there is not a lot of empty space on sewer bills. She suggested a public notice advising sewer users of the consequences of excessive use of water. Mr. Haynes suggested asking users like Mr. Lambert to install a water meter. Mr. Rolfe commented that having Mr. Lambert install a meter now is too late to rectify this problem. Mr. Rolfe suggested running a public ad in the spring warning users of excessive water use.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To abate an average use of 1900 gallons based on the past three years of data for an abatement in the amount of \$477.40 on Mr. Lambert's sewer bill (\$146.30. to be billed).

Mr. Lambert thanked the Board for their considerations on his abatement request.

4. AIRPORT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Ms. Therrien advised the Board that the request for proposals on the airport project went out to forty prospective consultants and that responses were received from three companies: Stantec, Aviest, and Dubois & King. She noted that the proposals will need to be reviewed and scored in order to award the contract. Ms. Therrien advised the Board that she, Machias Airport Committee Chairman Mike Radeka, and Bill Kitchen will score the proposals and she asked if a member of the Board would also score the proposals. Mr. Jackson said that he would assist in scoring the proposals.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by Leslie Haynes, the Board
VOTED:

To appoint Christina Therrien, Mike Radeka, Bill Kitchen, and James Jackson to a committee to review and score the airport proposals.

Ms. Therrien said that she would send the proposals out to Mr. Radeka, Mr. Kitchen, and Mr. Jackson.

5. SHELLFISH ORDINANCE

Ms. Therrien noted that the proposed shellfish ordinance was sent to Board members today for their review. She advised the Board that she added to the document that the Board would have the right to adjust the yearly fee and that the ordinance may be amended on a yearly basis. Ms. Therrien noted that fees for licenses would be allocated to the general fund and designated as shellfish fees. Mr. Rolfe asked the Board members to review the proposed ordinance for discussion at their next scheduled meeting. Ms. Therrien noted that a public hearing would be scheduled to review the ordinance with the public and then the ordinance would be voted on at a town meeting.

6. MACHIAS WATER COMPANY RATE INCREASE

Ms. Therrien advised the Board that the rate increase proposed by the Machias Water Company has been approved by the Maine Public Utilities Commission. She noted that the Town has been fighting against the rate increase for over a year and has done as much as possible to mitigate the increase. Ms. Therrien informed the Board that the water company was approved an annual revenue increase of \$520,661. Mr. Rolfe said that the increase is a thirty percent increase on rates. He asked the members of the Board to look for grant money for municipal infrastructure to purchase the water company since the town owns forty-nine percent of the company. Ms. Therrien commented that since the rate increase was requested more than a year ago that the company will probably institute the increase in 2021. Mr. Jackson cautioned that the town office will probably be inundated with phone calls from upset customers once the new rates appear on bills. Mr. Rolfe advised that personnel in the town office will give out the telephone number for the water company to people wishing to speak to someone about their water bills.

7. MACHIAS ROTARY DONATION FOR PLAYGROUND

Ms. Therrien advised the Board that Machias Rotary is donating \$2500. to fund a handicapped swing at the playground. It was the consensus of the Board to accept the donation and allocate the funds for a handicapped swing. Mr. Rolfe expressed the Board's appreciation for the donation.

Ms. Therrien told the Board that she is working on the layout of the playground and that she will start reaching out to area businesses for financial support. Ms. Therrien said that she would look for grants to purchase playground equipment; she added that donations will be accepted from anyone willing to participate.

8. MUNICIPAL ZOOM ACCOUNT

Mr. Rolfe suggested setting up a different e-mail for the municipal Zoom account to allow anyone to use it and not be specific to the Board chairperson. Ms. Therrien said that she would follow up on this change.

9. DECK THE FALLS CONTEST

Ms. Therrien discussed a scoring format for the "Deck the Falls" decorating contest. The Board decided to utilize a 1 to 10 scoring format. Ms. Therrien reminded the Board that scoring will be done on December 20th, 21st, & 22nd and that the members of the Board would be provided with a list of contest participants.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Ms. Therrien noted that \$10,000. from the DEP consent agreement can be used to help neighboring communities impacted by the storm by-pass incidents. She suggested that the funds can be used for reseeded clam beds in Machiasport.

B. Ms. Therrien advised the Board that she forwarded state valuation information to them.

C. Ms. Therrien informed the Board that fire, ambulance, and transfer station contracts have been forwarded to municipalities utilizing these services.

Ms. Therrien advised the Board that she is setting up a meeting of all the transfer station contract towns.

D. Ms. Therrien informed the Board that a letter has been sent requesting a drawdown of funds on the 75% reimbursement on the flood protection system. Ms. Therrien advised the Board that it appears the matching amount of \$92,000. was pulled out of the agreement but that she is working on getting the match placed back in.

E. Ms. Therrien told the Board that town office personnel have requested using vacation time on December 24th. Mr. Rolfe asked that the public be made aware that the town office will be closed on this day.

F. Mr. Berta requested copies of the proposed shellfish ordinance, data on the cost of special elections, and a summary of legal fees the Town has recently paid.

G. Mr. Rolfe asked the members of the Board if there was still a consensus to remain a four person board and not fill the vacant seat until the municipal town election usually scheduled in June. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe said that she believes it is ill-advised to hold a municipal election in light of the health risks of Covid-19 at the present time. Mr. Jackson noted that the Board considered the timing and filing deadlines and they did not think that continuing to operate as a

four member board over the short expanse of time until the next municipal election was detrimental. Mr. Haynes said that he was satisfied with the functioning and efficiency of the four member board for the short-term. Ms. Johnson-Rolfe recommended that the Board continue to operate as a four member board and to re-evaluate the functions of the four member Board, if needed. It was the consensus of the Board to continue with four members.

On a motion by Paula Johnson-Rolfe, seconded by James Jackson, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 PM.