

# SELECT BOARD - TOWN OF MACHIAS

**MAY 22, 2024**

A meeting of the Machias Select Board was called to order at 6:05 PM by Chairman Jacob Patryn. In attendance were Board members Ben Edwards, Michael Hinerman, and Sandra Sinford; Board Vice Chairman Carole Porcher, Town Manager Bill Kitchen, Machias Police Chief Keith Mercier, Officer Tim Mace, Officer Wade Walker, Machias Ambulance Chief Ryan Maker, Interim Board Secretary Sarah Craighead Dedmon, Bob Berta, and Paul Sylvain.

## **1. MINUTES - REVIEW AND ACTION**

On a motion by Carole Porcher and seconded by Ben Edwards, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2024 meeting with the following correction. Section 8, subsection A should read: "Pam Everett, owner of Armstrong House located at 10 Colonial Way spoke to the Board regarding the Colonial Way parking spaces, which currently sit under town signage prohibiting overnight parking. Ms. Everett showed where the property lines had been recently surveyed. The Board noted that the town's overnight parking ban does not apply to private property. The Board will request Tax Assessor Doug Guy to review the property maps to determine ownership of the parking spaces, and then ask the Department of Public Works to confirm to remove the town no parking signs if they are determined to be private property. The Board discussed the lack of public parking spaces for the businesses located between Colonial Way and Water Street."

## **2. WARRANTS - REVIEW AND ACTION**

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

To approve payroll warrant #81 in the amount of \$27,927.82; to approve payroll warrant #83 in the amount of \$24,170.65; to approve payroll warrant #84 in the amount of \$2,749.83; to approve payroll warrant #86 in the amount of \$16,936.14; to approve payroll warrant #88 in the amount of \$22,494.39; to approve payroll warrant #90 in the amount of \$26,362.52; to approve payroll warrant #92 in the amount of \$23,735.01; to approve payroll warrant #94 in the amount of \$18,403.92, and to approve payroll warrant #96 in the amount of \$21,531.18.

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

To approve accounts payable warrant #82 in the amount of \$3,543,926.40; to approve accounts payable warrant #85 in the amount of \$3,849,324.50; to approve accounts payable warrant #87 in the amount of \$32,981.79; to approve accounts payable warrant #89 in the amount of \$120,888.50; to approve accounts payable warrant #91 in the amount of \$69,299.68; to approve accounts payable warrant #93 in the amount of \$63,208.81; to approve accounts payable

warrant #95 in the amount of \$264,184.34, and to approve accounts payable warrant #97 in the amount of \$57,085.64.

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

VOTED:

To approve school warrant 040524 in the amount of \$707,512.41; to approve school warrant #041924 in the amount of \$291,499.36; to approve school warrant #050324 in the amount of \$324,555.15, and to approve school warrant #051724 in the amount of \$333,435.73.

### **3. NORTHFIELD INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT**

Mr. Patryn asked the board to sign the Northfield Interlocal Agreement which Mr. Kitchen explained allows the Town of Machias to collect all of the vehicle and boat excise taxes on behalf of the Town of Northfield for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The document was already executed by the Town of Northfield. The Board executed the document on behalf of Machias by signing it.

### **4. MACHIAS VALLEY AIRPORT UPDATE**

Mr. Kitchen updated the board that he continues to meet with various agencies regarding the future expansion of the Machias Valley Airport. He noted there have been new mapping and plotting efforts completed as the airport prepares to undergo an environmental assessment in advance of future runway construction. He said he's hopeful that the town will soon be able to hold a public meeting about the airport project to answer people's questions.

### **5. MACHIAS BUDGET UPDATE**

Board members indicated that their work is proceeding with review of the town's various budgets, in order to be on schedule for the September annual town meeting.

Mr. Kitchen informed the Board that Maine State Statute does not prohibit non-Machias residents from sitting on the Machias Budget Committee, and nothing prohibits non-residents in the ordinance which created the budget committee. He also said he can't find evidence that a non-resident has previously been on the Committee. Mr. Patryn and Mr. Edwards said that it would be beneficial to the town to have non-residents on the committee. Mr. Edwards asked what was preventing the town from moving forward.

The Board asked Mr. Kitchen to call the Maine Municipal Association to ask for their opinion on the matter. Ms. Dedmon said she would ask Machiasport resident Bob Mercer, who serves as treasurer to several adjoining communities. Mr. Mercer said few towns have budget committees but he is unaware of any that do have non-residents on board. He also stated that as Machias is a service center community, he believes it would be beneficial for Machias to allow non-residents to sit on the Budget Committee.

## **6. ARMSTRONG HOUSE PARKING**

Mr. Kitchen requested two more weeks to research ownership of parking spaces in the town's parking lot on Colonial Way.

## **7. MACHIAS POLICE DEPARTMENT - NEW HIRE**

Chief Mercier asked the Board to approve the hiring of retired Baltimore Police Officer James Frauenhoffer of Cutler, who would like to return to work full-time for another 10 years. Chief Mercier spoke enthusiastically of Mr. Frauenhoffer's professional experience as a detective of 20 years, and of his character.

On a motion by Ms. Porcher and seconded by Mr. Hinerman the Board  
VOTED:

To hire James Frauenhoffer at the top pay step. The offer will be conditional upon Mr. Frauenhoffer passing the Maine state waiver process, required because the applicant's professional experience is in another state.

Mr. Frauenhoffer will now resign from the Washington County Jail. Chief Mercier noted that he spoke to the jail about their intentions to hire Mr. Frauenhoffer in advance of requesting the Board's support.

## **8. MACHIAS POLICE DEPARTMENT - RESERVE OFFICER PAY RATE**

Chief Mercier said that the current reserve officer pay rate of slightly above \$21 per hour is insufficient, and requested that the Board raise it to \$30/hour.

The Board favored the pay increase and Mr. Kitchen suggested setting a minimum amount of hours that a reserve officer would be paid per event, regardless of length.

On a motion by Mr. Hinerman and seconded by Mr. Edwards, the Board  
VOTED:

To increase the Machias Reserve Police Officer pay rate to \$30/hour with a four-hour minimum.

## **9. MACHIAS POLICE DEPARTMENT - CRUISER REPLACEMENT**

Chief Mercier said that a 2016 cruiser needs to be replaced, due to mechanical failures. He has found another cruiser available for \$38,000.

Chief Mercier noted that the town will receive a reimbursement of \$47,025 from the Washington County Sheriff's Office due to its hiring of former Machias Police Officer Taylor LeBlanc. He also said that Town Finance Director Meghan Dennison confirmed there is more than \$30,000 in an account slated to cover Maine Police Academy expenses. Academy tuition is \$8,000, and the town has no current plans to send someone to the Academy.

On a motion by Ms. Porcher and seconded by Mr. Hinerman the Board

VOTED:

To authorize Chief Mercier to expend up to \$47,025 to purchase and outfit a new police cruiser.

Chief Mercier proposed giving the old cruiser to the Machias Ambulance Service for use by the Machias Ambulance Chief Ryan Maker as a “fly car.” The car would be used by Maker should a call come in for paramedic services, and would enable him to leave both ambulances in service while he responds.

If the former cruiser/fly car fails mechanically the town will put it out to bid.

## **10. MACHIAS AMBULANCE SERVICE UPDATES**

Chief Ryan Maker said he would like to establish a four-hour minimum pay structure for off-duty employees called in to provide station coverage during day-to-day operations, when the ambulance crews are backing up other services, or leaving their normal coverage area.

Chief Maker said he believes it will create more incentive to come in and cover the station.

On a motion by Ms. Porcher and seconded by Mr. Hinerman the Board

VOTED:

To implement a four-hour minimum payout for Machias Ambulance Service off-duty call ins.

Chief Maker said the ambulance service received four applications for employment: one for an ambulance operator and three for Emergency Medical Technician Apprentice: Matthew Alley, Michelle Malcolm, and Alexis Verburgt. An EMT apprentice is someone who spends time working with the ambulance service during their EMT course. When their EMT class is complete, they will transition into the role of EMT with the Machias Ambulance Service.

Machias Fire Department Driver-Dispatcher Adam Hall applied for the position of ambulance operator. Chief Maker requested the Board waive the typical six-month probation due to his current employment with the town.

On a motion by Ms. Porcher and seconded by Ms. Sinford, the Board

VOTED:

To approve the hiring of Matthew Alley, Michelle Malcolm, and Alexis Verburgt as EMT apprentices to the Machias Ambulance Service.

On a motion by Ms. Sinford and seconded by Mr. Hinerman the Board

VOTED:

To hire Adam Hall as an ambulance operator with the Machias Ambulance Service and to waive the six-month probation period.

Chief Maker noted that he was appointed exactly one year ago on May 22, and publicly thanked the Machias Ambulance Service crew, the Machias Select Board, and Machias Town Manager Bill Kitchen for all of the progress made by the ambulance service in the past year. Maker went on to say that in that year the service has added one staffing position, purchased a second ambulance, created a program for employees to attend paramedic school and increased the service's revenues by more than 100%.

The Board thanked Chief Maker in return and acknowledged his hard work and effort.

## **11. OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Kitchen updated the Board on the state of the Down East Sunrise Trail, which has been closed for repairs, saying Maine DOT and Hanscom Construction were at work on the trail.

Mr. Kitchen also noted that Maine DOT is working on Route 1 through Machias, and the work should last until July 26. He said DOT would put down a skim coating to smooth the road's surface in advance of the Memorial Day parade.

Ms. Sinford said that a parent has requested a crosswalk be placed between Machias High School and Beals Field, for the safety of students crossing particularly during baseball season. Mr. Kitchen said the town requires permission from the state because Route 1A is a state road.

Mr. Kitchen said the Bad Little Falls Summer Concert Series will begin this year on Thursday, July 11. The first band to perform will be Hot Velvet.

In light of the retirement of Machias Bay Transfer Station Director Pat Anderson, local journalist Bob Berta publicly commended her for being a wonderful town employee. The Board and Mr. Kitchen agreed that Ms. Anderson has been an exceptional employee.