

SELECTMEN'S MEETING –TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016

Present: Chairman Karl Ekstedt, Selectmen Tim Roche, Chris Chase, Kathy Chase and Richard Clark, Town Manager Jon Carter.

MUNICIPAL OFFICERS BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Public hearing to access the Facility Maintenance and Repair Fund for replacement of the furnace at the Branch Fire Station and the relining of the Police Department furnace chimney.

The chimney liner at the Police Station has developed a hole. It was patched but needs to be replaced. The furnace at the Branch Fire Station was inspected and a hole was found. It was patched, but by Code it needs to be replaced. A Town-owned house has a furnace which is in good condition and Garthwaite said it can be moved to the fire station. Release of up to \$10,000 for these repairs is being requested.

Public comment was solicited and there was none.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to close the public hearing and access up to \$10,000 for the repairs. Passed unanimously.

2. Public hearing on accepting the proposed 2016 Beach Parking Pass Policy.

There is a beach enterprise fund with the revenues used to support the activities. This year the lifeguard program is being moved into the enterprise fund. Staff recommends discontinuing the sale of meter tokens but people who still have tokens can continue to use them. The proposal is to reintroduce the 7 day visitors' parking pass for \$120 available at the meters. The residents' pass would increase from \$30 to \$35. The daily rate would increase from \$16 to \$20, with the half day rate increasing from \$8 to \$12. The hourly meter rates for the lots on Mile Road and Gold Ribbon Drive would increase from \$2.50 to \$3. The rate for motorcycles and 2 and 3 wheel vehicles would increase from \$5 to \$8. The afternoon charge would be discontinued due to lack of use during those hours.

Several residents spoke about the difficulty of running a tourist-oriented business when the operating expenses are increasing. The State lodging tax went from 7% to 9%, the sales tax recently increased and now the parking fees are increasing. Long time customers are cancelling reservations because of the higher fees. Condos, time shares and other facilities that are rented over the internet do not pay the lodging tax. Mr. Carter said that the rates in other towns were researched when our fee increases were being developed. Selectmen were urged to reconsider the increases because of the impact on the tourist economy. Mr. Ekstedt said the Town has to balance the fees with the services provided such as paving the parking lots, cleaning the beaches and restrooms and paying lifeguards. Mrs. Chase said the people who use the facilities buy the parking passes, otherwise Town taxes would have to cover the beach costs. Mr. Chase said some people are renting out beach properties and not paying the Town business license. The Code Office should increase the enforcement.

Mr. Roche asked if businesses such as campgrounds could buy passes at a discounted rate and sell them to their customers. The Town would get the money up front and it would save work for the Town Hall staff. Mr. Chase asked if a prepaid key swipe card could be used instead of the tokens, and people could add money to refill the cards as needed. Mr. Carter said the staff is working with the meter company to provide the lot attendants with a card reader, and people who bought passes would be registered in a data base. The software may be ready by next year, and tokens seem to be the easiest method for this season. The meters are set up to accept tokens, Visa and MasterCard. Mr. Chase asked if they could be set to accept a “Town of Wells gift card” and deduct the fee each time the card is used. Mr. Carter said our credit card company handles that type of card.

Motion by Mr. Roche, seconded by Mr. Clark, to close the public hearing. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Clark recommended tabling this topic for two weeks to give it more thought and obtain input from Town staff. Mr. Chase noted that 3 wheel vehicles take up as much room as a car and should be charged the same rate. Usually two motorcycles can fit in one parking space. Mr. Roche noted the number of people who are listing rentals on the internet and avoiding the lodging license. We should help the legitimate businesses that are following the rules.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to table this to the next meeting and have staff calculate the impact of a \$2 discount for facilities holding valid lodging licenses. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to schedule a public hearing for 7 PM February 2 to consider the beach parking rates for 2016. Passed unanimously.

3. *Good News*

~The ribbon cutting ceremony at the high school was held last Thursday. There will be two open houses for the public on February 4th and 9th from 6:30-7:30. Mr. Roche said the project involved a lot of hard work and the residents should be pleased with the results.

~We have been awarded the FLAP grant from the federal DOT for the Harbor Road Marsh Trail. The grant is \$600,000 and the Town will provide \$150,000.

~Congratulations to Firefighter Dave Torbeck and his wife on the birth of their son.

~Call Firefighter Rick Clark at the Branch Station is a teacher and girls’ basketball coach with the York School system. He is retiring with 500 wins and 3 Class B state championships.

~Mr. Roche recognized the girls’ basketball team for last Saturday’s “Shootin’ for a Cure”. In the past 7 years, the girls have raised \$194,000 for York Hospital’s cancer center. This year the girls raised \$33,758.

4. *Open to the Public*

~The Needlework Group at the Library has been asked to add evening sessions for people who work during the day. Meetings are Fridays 10:30-12 noon and the second and fourth Thursdays from 6:00-7:30 PM (the library is open until 8 PM Thursdays). . Members are working on a variety of projects including knitting, crocheting, crewel embroidery, Swedish embroidery and counted cross stitch. There is no charge to attend and reservations are not required

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS***1. Review and action on Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants.******a. Discussion and action on approving the Warrants dated January 19, 2016.***

There is a Warrant dated January 19, 2016 for expenses of \$418,174.15, school payment of \$1,511,461.00, net payroll for the week ending 1/7/2016 in the amount of \$69,477.01, net payroll for the week ending 1/14/16 in the amount of \$75,020.55, and state and federal withholding taxes, plus FICA, Medicare and federal taxes filed electronically in the amount of \$66,604.64 for total expenses of \$2,140,737.35.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to approve and sign the Warrant dated January 19, 2016 in the amount of \$2,140,737.35. Passed unanimously.

There is a General Assistance Warrant dated January 19, 2016 in the amount of \$565.76.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to approve and sign the General Assistance Warrant dated January 19, 2016 in the amount of \$565.76. Passed unanimously.

2. Update, discussion and action on Committees, Projects, Issues, Purchases and Personnel:***a. Discussion and update on items for the February 2nd Public Hearing on the proposed adjustments to the 2016 Harbor Fees.***

The recommendations are:

Transient mooring fee. Increase from \$15 per night to \$30.

Wait list. No fee currently. HAC recommended \$15 per year to get on the list; Selectmen recommended \$25. HAC is recommending a compromise of \$25 to get on the list and \$10 per year to stay on the list.

Mooring fee. This has not been raised in 15 years. HAC recommends increasing the base fee from \$250 to \$300, and maintain the \$15 per foot charge.

Motion by Mr. Chase, seconded by Mr. Clark, to schedule a public hearing for 7 PM on February 2, 2016 to discuss the harbor fees. Passed unanimously.

b. Discussion and action on adopting the new Federal IRS Reimbursement Mileage Rate.

We are currently paying \$.575 per mile as reimbursement for business miles driven. Effective January 1, 2016, the IRS is reducing the standard business mileage rate to \$.54.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to adopt the federal reimbursement rate of \$.54 per mile. Mr. Chase asked why the rate went down; Mr. Carter thought it may be due to the gas price decline. Mr. Chase said there are other expenses in connection with use of a car—oil, tires,

repairs, insurance, etc. that aren't decreasing and he wouldn't change the rate. The motion passed 3-2 with Mr. Chase and Mr. Ekstedt opposed. The change will become effective January 25.

c. Discussion and action on approving a request from Bike MS for the Bike MS Great Maine Getaway bicycle tour through Wells on August 13th and 14th, 2016.

This is an annual bike ride. The Police Chief has reviewed and approved it.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Chase, to authorize the Town Manager to notify the organizer that the request is approved. Passed unanimously.

d. Discussion and action on reviewing revised Credit Card Policy.

The policy hasn't been reviewed since it was adopted in 2004. There has been some recent interest and a FOIA request by the Press Herald. The Town has a maximum available credit of \$40,000 with \$13,000 dedicated to the Recreation Department because of their program expenses. The Town Manager and Finance Director have reviewed and updated the policy.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to adopt the revised policy as presented. Passed unanimously.

e. Discussion, update and review of the Public Safety Facility Public Awareness Campaign Informational Brochure.

A brochure has been drafted by a committee consisting of Mr. Clark, Mr. Ekstedt, representatives of the Police and Fire Departments, Town Planner, CEO, Town Manager and architect. More photos of the police station and the cost analysis will be added. The committee asked for feedback from the Selectmen prior to next Tuesday's meeting. This will be an informational mailer to all households in Town. Mr. Roche recommended more photos of the police station so the public will be aware of the working conditions, and said the pictures could be posted on the Police Department Facebook page. Chief Putnam said there will be open houses at the station, public presentations and a video.

f. Discussion and action to accept donations and bequests:

1. \$7,500.00 from Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and Forbes Family Foundation to the Town of Wells for the Fuel Assistance Program Fund.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Roche, to accept the generous donation and send the donors a letter of thanks. Passed unanimously.

2. \$25.00 from various library users to the Wells Public Library.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Roche, to accept the generous donation. Passed unanimously.

g. Discussion and action on approving minutes of the January 5, 2016 Selectmen's meeting.

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to accept the minutes as presented. Passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Open to the Public

Public comment was solicited and there was none.

2. Town Manager’s Report

1) Transfer Station Update-Construction and Operations

There is a meeting with the engineer and builder tomorrow. The building should be completed by the end of the month; it has been closed in and the power is about to be turned on. The scale will be connected tomorrow morning.

2) Employing Overseas Seasonal Workers as Lifeguards and housing them in Town property.

We are recruiting lifeguards through a Biddeford-based program to supplement the 15 who are returning. The students are trained as lifeguards in their home countries but need to be certified here. The program requires the Town to provide housing, and the Selectmen are being asked to approve using the house on Main Street. Concerns included having students living in the house unsupervised, and having no furnace in the house. There are other agencies that recruit student workers and provide housing. Mr. Chase suggested paying more and hiring local students, or hiring unemployed veterans. Mr. Ekstedt said that some of the restaurants and motels provide housing for their seasonal workers and those students may want an additional job as a lifeguard. It would eliminate the need for the Town to provide housing. Mr. Roche was concerned about students working several jobs and getting overtired. Mr. Carter said the benefit of this program is that the foreign students stay here longer and provide a stable group of workers; the American students go back to school earlier in the fall, especially if they are on sports teams.

3. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mrs. Chase, to adjourn. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Accepted by,

Cinndi Davidson,
Meeting Recorder

