

**South Berwick
Town Council Meeting
September 13, 2022**

Chair Mallory Cook called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Councilors present included John James, John C. Kareckas, Jeff Minihan, and Jessica Cyr. Town Manager Tim Pellerin and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Janelle were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

1. Public Hearing 8-23-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.
2. Town Council 8-23-22: On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to adopt the minutes as written.

Treasurer's Warrant

1. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant dated September 8, 2022 in the amount of \$2,275,718.53. Note was made that this warrant includes bond payments for roads and the police station and a double payment to the school. (We had to reissue a check; we are not making two payments.)

Public Comment

1. Steve Bayse, Ogunquit Rd, thanked the Council for including the referendum questions on the November ballot for the Salmon Falls Project.

Mr. Bayse also expressed his concerns about the lack of information from the Town regarding a FOAA request. As a result of the discussion, it was determined that there had been two (2) requests. Mr. Bayse stated that he received the information for the first request, but has had no response for the second. Tim apologized for the error and stated that we would look into the matter.

2. Brett Cropp, Liberty St, asked the Council to look at the crosswalks on Main Street, especially those at Liberty Street and Park Street. He stated that because of the curve in the road, it is difficult to see people waiting at the crosswalks. Better signage would be helpful. Mrs. Cook noted that Sebago Technics will be looking at the crosswalks as part of their review of the downtown traffic analysis.

On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. Minihan, it was unanimously voted to hear the Manager's Report after New Business.

Unfinished Business

1. The owner of 10 Portland Street was not present to discuss the parking issue. The Council took no action.
2. The Council discussed the updated language for Medical Marijuana Registered Caregivers. Greg Zinser, Planning Board Chair, stated that the Board did review the zoning portion. It was agreed that some language needed amending including definitions, clarifying the licensing authority, review procedures, whether a public hearing would be required for applicants, and enforcement and penalties for non-compliance. Note was also made that this use needs to be added to Table A-Land Use.

Council consensus was to hold a workshop on Tuesday, November 1st at 6:30pm.

New Business

1. On a motion by Mr. Kareckas, seconded by Mr. James, it was unanimously voted to sign the warrant calling the Municipal Election for November 8th.
2. On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to approve the liquor license for the Stage House Inn.

3. The Council discussed the potential for selling the property at 22 Belle Marsh Rd.

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to allow the Manager to sell the property at 22 Belle Marsh Road as allowed in Chapter A158.2A(2) Tax Acquired Property.

4. It was agreed by unanimous consent of the Council to hold a public information meeting on Tuesday, October 18th at 6:30pm for Sebago Technics to gather community input on traffic and pedestrian issues, especially in the downtown. This workshop will be held on the 3rd floor of the Town Hall; it will not be available on Zoom.

Town Manager's Report

-Highway: Water main work continues on Spring & Front Streets. Continue to mow and repair basins. Sprinklers have been installed in the new facility, waiting for final hookup.

-Police: 11 Arrests, 4 accidents and 64 traffic stops, 22 on Portland St. A new psychologist is on retainer and is available for all staff. PD will be mandatory, annually. Also working on a similar program for the Fire Department. The Pumpkin Man Triathlon went very well. St Moore has been recertified as a Drug Recognition expert. Officer Aguilera will return from his military deployment in October.

-Fire: 35 calls, 287 year-to-date. Have several applications for new members. This will bring the staff up to 40. Trainings will begin this month.

-Code Enforcement: Have issued 2 building permits and 6 plumbing permits. Conducted 18 inspections. Still investigating violations. Continue to work on the Medical Marijuana Caregiver ordinance language.

-Planning: Currently working on revision 5 of the solar farm ordinance. The issue at 324 Main Street has been sent to an independent 3rd party for review. Review of ordinances continues. Will be conducting a site walk on October 5th on Great Hill Road in the morning and a public hearing in the evening.

-Library: Local author Mary Lou Bagley conducted a book discussion on September 6th and 7th. Will be holding a book sale in October. Have started planning for Halloween events. Signs for the native garden display are in. Preparing for any issues regarding the recent trend of banning books in some schools and libraries.

-Recreation: Have been dealing with several building issues, including odor/air filtration system and roof leak. The new Program Coordinator starts on the 19th. Had a great first week of soccer. The fields look great and have been remeasured and marked for next year. CPR training starts next week. 65 seniors attended the Wednesday lunch. 30 seniors will be going on the American Music Cities of Nashville and Memphis.

-Assessing: To date, we have received over 100 applications for the Property Tax Stabilization Program. Working on reports for the State Audit and Tree Growth Roster.

Town Clerk: Preparing for the November Election. We have already received 174 absentee requests.

-Transfer Station: The new rates went into effect September 1st. The "Resident only, no commercial dumping" sign is working great. Our attendant, Dan suffered a significant loss, several family members were killed in an accident on Route 4 in Rollinsford.

-Finance: Tax payments are rolling in. Working on year end and preparing for the audit.

-Administration: Denise Clavette started on the 12th. We will be installing 2 traffic control signals on Portland Street. Working on an email newsletter. Have been meeting with residents regarding tax assessments and billings. Have met with Code & Planning to review ordinances. Have met with Denise to discuss future goals for economic and community development. The monthly meetings with the school and Eliot will resume this month. Working on an emergency action plan.

LD290, Property Tax Stabilization Program: "This is a significant burden; we just don't have the staff." Mr. Pellerin explained the laborious process and staff time involved in processing the applications; which we have already received over 100. This is basically another unfunded mandate on the towns. Other towns are having the same issues. We have also been able to determine that our current software has no way to efficiently track the information and will create continual billing issues.

Mr. Kareckas stated that the towns should file for injunctive relief. This is onerous and unfair.

Councilor Comments

1. Mr. James:

-Has been asked that the Town look at adding a yellow center line on Hooper Sands Road. Mrs. Cook suggested looking at all the back roads.

2. Mr. Kareckas:

-Commented that the Comp Plan Committee is waiting for a response from Southern Maine Planning and Development regarding the data entry of the hard copy surveys. It appears that they did not budget for that process. Several Councilors expressed their displeasure at the lack of preparedness on SMPDC's part. We contracted with them to perform certain tasks; they need to follow through.

-Made note that he is still removing yard sale signs from the war memorial. They are not allowed, and will continue to be removed. It is disrespectful.

-Commented that he hoped that the Great Hill Road subdivision will be required to be on public water. Mr. Minihan noted that is the way the Planning Board is leaning. [This is in reference to the known contamination of the wells in the area.] Mrs. Cook commented that town water should be required.

3. Mr. Minihan:

-Commented that he would like to readdress downtown revitalization. No action was taken on the group's findings. Our ordinances need review and updating. Mrs. Cook clarified that the Council would have to formulate a charge for the Planning Board.

-Encouraged people to watch the Planning Board recordings. There is a lot going on.

4. Ms. Cyr:

-Commented that the Planning Board meetings have been well attended. Congratulated Greg Zinser for conducting well run meetings.

-Attended the last school board meeting and will attend the next collaborative meeting with the school board and Eliot.

Mr. Pellerin stated that the Council should consider setting a policy that would require Councilors and Planning Board members to attend the MMA training for elected officials and planning members, respectively.

5. Mrs. Cook:

-After confirming that executive sessions were not required, stated that future interviews for potential board and committee members will be conducted as part of the regular agenda item.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. James, seconded by Mr. Kareckas, it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm.

Attest:

Barbara Bennett, CCM