

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2020
Harpwell Town Office
Approved October 1, 2020

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance: Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

Selectmen Present: Chairman Kevin E. Johnson, Selectman David I. Chipman, and Selectperson Jane Covey

Staff Present: Kristi Eiane, Town Administrator; Terri Sawyer, Deputy Town Administrator/Treasurer; and Rosalind Knight, Town Clerk.

Others Present: Tony Barrett, Cliff Trail Project Town Liaison

1. **Adoption of the Agenda:** The agenda was accepted after moving "5. Accept Plaque for Ewing Narrows Bridge" to topic 2.5.
2. **Public Comment:** Chris Coffin from Bailey Island commented about his extreme dissatisfaction with Comcast's customer service and unfair pricing policies.
- 2.5 **Accept Plaque for Ewing Narrows Bridge:** Former Selectman Ed Johnson reminisced about the historical process involved in the creation of the Ewing Narrows Bridge and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of Laddie Whidden to the Town of Harpswell. Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to accept the plaque for the Ewing Narrows Bridge. Motion passed, 3-0. [Note: the plaque will eventually be placed near the Bridge].
3. **Selectmen's Announcements:** Selectwoman Covey announced that the Select Board had received an email stating that political signs were being removed from personal property. Covey reminded the community that we should demonstrate tolerance and respect the first amendment rights of fellow neighbors. Selectman Chipman added that even if you don't agree with the message on the sign, the person has the right to display the sign. Chipman also added that all political signs should be removed after the election.
4. **Town Administrator's Report:** Administrator Eiane reported that the Town had four responses to the Request for Proposal for phase one of the improvements to the emergency communication tower located on the Orr's/Bailey Islands Fire Department property on Orr's Island. There are two phases in the plan, phase A will primarily be testing equipment and the least costly phase. Bids for phase A ranged from \$487-\$4100, with Dirigo being the lowest bid. Staff will proceed with Dirigo Wireless on Phase A and on Phase B, if the Board decides to proceed with Phase B.

The Board held an executive session on Monday with the Town Attorney to review the draft lease with Blue Sky for a communications tower at Mitchell Field. The draft lease will be released to the public and posted on our website next week. Eiane summarized the agreement, stating that the Town will be leasing a 100X100 foot area at Mitchell Field, for a tower no higher than 199 ft. This agreement would allow access for Blue Sky to the property, with

Town approved landscaping of the surrounding area. All costs associated with building the tower and permitting would be assumed by Blue Sky. Leasing agreements with Blue Sky will be renewed every 10 years, with renewed Town Meeting approval required after 40 years. Rental fees will commence when the tower is fully permitted and construction begins. Upon completion of the Facility, Town will receive capital construction of \$35,000. Each subsequent broadband sub lessee will generate \$35,000 in up front revenue sharing to the town. The Town has the option to use any space on the tower from 150 feet and below for emergency communications, without charge. Residents who would like to read the lease agreement should look for it on online next week.

~~5. Accept Plaque for Ewing Narrows Bridge~~

- 6. Consent Agenda: 1. Approval of the Minutes; 2. Committee Appointment and Resignation; 3. Maine Municipal Valuation (MVR) Return; 4. Accept Employee Resignation; 5. Cumberland County Tax Assessor's Bill; 6. Authorization of the Warrants.** Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to accept the consent agenda [9/3 minutes; accept Burr Taylor's resignation from the Harbor & Waterfront Committee, Conservation Commission and Planning Board (once a new member is found); appoint Samantha Whittaker to the Conservation Commission and Energy & Technology Committees; sign the MVR; accept John Warner Jr.'s resignation from the Recycling Center effective 1/1/21; sign [and pay] the Cumberland County Tax Assessor's bill in the amount of \$1,329,698; authorize warrant #38 in the amount of \$2,204,086.18 and payroll warrant #37 in the amount of \$21,491.13. Motion passed, 3-0.
- 7. Town Clerk Update:** Town Clerk Rosalind Knight stated that the Town Clerk's Office has accepted over 1300 absentee ballot applications, noting ballots will become available to voters 30 days before voting day, and any absentee ballot requests should be submitted by Thursday, October 29, 2020. There are many versions of absentee ballot applications being, voters are only required to fill out one application. The Town has installed an absentee ballot drop box. Once ballots are issued and voted, they can be put in the drop-box at any time or voters can hand their ballot directly to the Town Clerk's office during Town Office hours. The absentee ballot drop box will close at 8:00pm on Election Day. For the month preceding Election Day, there will be absentee voting booths in the Select Board meeting room. Absentee ballots will be counted after the close of the polls on Election Day. Knight reminded voters that polls have been consolidated to one location at the Harpswell Community School at 308 Harpswell Island Road.
- 8. Cooperative Agreement with Maine Conservation Corp RE: Cliff Trail Project:** Tony Barrett gave an update on the rehabilitation of the Cliff Trail (CT) project that was set to occur this fall. Due to the pandemic, the Maine Conservation Corp (MCC) had to slow all hiring, yet kept full time employees working on projects whose grants were due to expire. However, the MCC was able to squeeze in some time to work on the CT project. The CT project will be broken down into two phases, the first phase will be building the bridges, which will begin mid-October and phase 2 will occur next year. The Select Board was presented with a contract to begin phase 1, which totaled \$5,000, (2 weeks at \$2,500 each). Selectman Chipman moved,

seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to sign the contract with the Maine Conservation Corps. Motion passed, 3-0.

9. Communication Tower at Mitchell Field Matters

- **Authorization for Blue Sky to Submit To Planning Board.** Administrator Eiane stated that by signing the authorization, the Select Board allows Blue Sky to begin submitting materials to the Planning Board for the October 21 meeting. Assuming a lease is signed before the October 21 meeting, Blue Sky would be on the Planning Board agenda. Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to sign the authorization. Motion passed, 3-0.
- **Draft 40-year Lease:** Administrator Eiane reiterated the draft lease will be posted on the Town's website next week prior to the Board's consideration on October 1. (See Administrator's Report for details).

10. Shellfish Matters RE: Resident Licenses: A request had been made to the Select Board to waive the residency requirements for all shellfish harvesters until March 2022. The pandemic has crippled the wholesale market making it very difficult for harvesters to keep and maintain residency in the Town of Harpswell. Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to accept the waiver, pending approval from the Maine Department of Marine Resources. Motion passed, 3-0.

11. Extension with Comcast: Administrator Eiane has worked with the re-franchising committee examining a possible extension with Comcast. The group is analyzing community feedback from a survey sent out with the 2020 tax bill and seeks more time to determine what the Town's and Community's needs are/will be over the next 10-year cable franchise period. Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to extend the contract with Comcast for one year, or sooner if an agreement is made to protect the rights of all parties. Motion passed, 3-0.

12. Extension with Harpswell Community Broadcasting Corp. Selectwoman Covey moved, seconded by Selectman Chipman, to authorize a fifth extension to the agreement with Harpswell Community Broadcasting Corporation. Motion passed, 3-0.

13. Consider Creation of Technology/Communications Task Force: Selectwoman Covey discussed the need for an update in technology at the Town level. The pandemic has highlighted the demand for change in the hardware, software, systems and personnel. This will require the development of a vision and plan to determine the future priorities and funding demands. The group would consist of someone from the Energy & Technology Committee and four residents/people at large. The Task Force would be supported by staff and potentially a consultant. It has been requested to include tele-health and tele-medicine services. Selectwoman Covey moved, seconded by Selectman Chipman, to create a Technology/Communications Planning Task Force. Motion passed, 3-0.

14. IRT Grant Application RE: Orr's Island Communication Tower: Administrator Eiane explained that she and Emergency Management Agent Howe, have been looking into how the

IRT grant could provide assistance with erecting a new tower at the Orr's Island Fire Department. The Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training Program, has an application due at the end of September. The application, if approved, provides assistance with constructing a tower to improve emergency communications. Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to approve submitting the application. Motion passed, 3-0. The application could be withdrawn if the tower needs replacement prior to the IRT's schedule of 2022.

- 15. Donation of Two Marine Float Bags:** Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to accept the donation of marine float bags from Running Tide. Motion passed 3-0.
- 16. Tire and Reclaim Prices:** Deputy Town Administrator Terri Sawyer stated the Board received a request from the Recycling Center/Transfer Station Manager regarding tires and reclaim. Sawyer explained that the residents appreciate coming to the Town to get reclaim, but since our former reclaim partner isn't offering the service of making reclaim from our shingles, Manager Perow can get it from Crooker as an alternative. The sale of compost and reclaim is a convenience for residents rather than a money-making option. Sawyer finds that the minimal cost to taxpayers makes both items a worthwhile program. The Manager indicates the change in tire pricing is to simply the tire size categories and minimally adjusts the pricing. Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to adjust reclaim and tire prices effective October 1 as detailed in the memo. Motion passed, 3-0.
- 17. Proclamation of Constitution Week September 17-23:** Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to accept the Proclamation of Constitution Week September 17-23. Motion passed, 3-0.
- 18. Set Public Hearing: General Assistance Ordinance Maximums:** Selectman Chipman moved, seconded by Selectwoman Covey, to schedule the hearing for October 1, 2020 at 6:30pm. Motion passed, 3-0.
- 19. Public Comment:** None.
- 20. Other Business:** Administrator Eiane stated that the plaque for the Ewing Narrows Bridge will be set up in the Town Office lobby for viewing and donations are greatly appreciated. The Town will be working with Maine Department of Transportation on where to locate the plaque on the bridge.
- 21. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:09pm without objection.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kayla Matthews
Recording Secretary