

BOARD OF SELECTMEN, TOWN OF GEORGETOWN

Minutes for Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 7:00 pm

Call to order: The Meeting was called to order @ 7:01 p.m. by Chairman Collins. Ms. Tudor was in attendance, as were the Town Administrator, Finance Director and Code Enforcement Officer. One member of the public attended in person. Six members of the public attended virtually, by Zoom.

Public comment: There was no public comment provided prior to the start of Select Board Business.

Items to be added to agenda (if approved by chair and board): The Town Administrator noted that an item of "New Business," the request from the Fire Chief to purchase a new Squad truck, was pulled to allow for more time to gather some information. It was further noted that this item would be on the upcoming agenda.

Scheduled appointments:

- Harbormaster Hanstein re: Whisper (*see Old Business*) @ 7:15pm
- Lighthouse Farms LLC, Sarah Valencik re: Tier Two Cultivation License Renewal (*see New Business*) @ 7:30pm

Minutes: It was moved by Ms. Tudor, seconded by Mr. Collins, to approve the Minutes of July 25th Meeting as amended. The motion carried, 2-0.

Review: The Board was provided with an updated listing of the Sagadahoc County Dispatch Numbers for July.

Assessing items: The Board was informed that Pat Dow is still working in Town on pre-commitment pickup work.

Correspondence:

- There was a letter from Dave Polito regarding First Church. A copy of his letter is attached, at his request, to these minutes.
- There was an invite to volunteer at Newman Sanctuary from Maine Audubon on August 29th from 9am to 12pm.
- There was a letter from the Dept. of Environmental Protection regarding agency rulemaking on the topic of Coastal Sand Dunes.
- There was a bulletin from the Georgetown Community Center regarding the Community Cupboard. It was noted that the GCC will be holding a monthly Food

Pantry open to all town residents, usually on the last Monday of the month, from 3-5pm. The Board was informed that the opening day would be August 28th.

- There was a Bulletin from the Age Friendly Communities of the Lower Kennebec regarding an opportunity for Free Cell Phones or Tablets, with internet access for a year.
- There was an email from LIHEAP requesting meeting space. It was noted that LIHEAP reached out to request meeting space, once a month, to help serve residents who would have tech and travel barriers. It was agreed that will be a good benefit to Georgetown residents.
- The Board was provided an agenda for the August 16th School Committee Meeting.

Other Correspondence: There was none.

Continuing Items:

Receipts for pumping: There were none.

Maine Waste Discharge License *renewal* / transfer applications: There were none.

Maine Waste Discharge License *approvals*: There were none.

PBR / NRPA : There were none.

Town Administrator Update: The Town Administrator noted that he had an enjoyable visit to the Newman Sanctuary with Noah from Maine Audubon, Bob, and Kathy Gravino check on the walking bridge. Discussion was had regarding the creation of some railings on the approach to said bridge. He further discussed some highlights from his attendance at the New England Management Institute.

Finance Director Update: The Finance Director updated the Board on the status of the 2021-2022 Annual Audit, it is complete. She is now preparing for the 2022-23 Audit, which begins in September.

Committee Updates:

Minutes:

- The Board was provided with a copy of the July 6 Recreation Committee Meeting.

Membership:

- On a motion from Ms. Tudor, seconded by Mr. Collins, the Board voted to reappoint Franklin McDonald to the Recreation Committee. The motion carried, 2-0.

Liaison Updates:

- Mr. Collins reported on the Recreation Committee.

- Ms. Tudor reported on the Conservation Commission and the Solid Waste Committee. She noted that Solid Waste Committee discussed congestion at the Transfer Station at considerable length and agreed on several steps staff could take to alleviate it but they did not feel extending the hours would improve the situation. They would like to install a series of Jersey Barriers around the metal pile to keep it from spreading out into vegetated areas where it can't be picked up. They are taking temporary measures now but anticipate including a substantial amount in next year's budget for the more permanent improvement. She further noted that the Conservation Commissions' August pot-luck was cancelled due to unforeseen volunteer constraints and other numerous community events. Commission Members had expressed the desire for a community calendar to facilitate community event planning. The Coastal Clean-up will take place in September.

Board Member Updates:

Mr. Donaldson: Mr. Donaldson was absent.

Mr. Collins: Mr. Collins had no additional updates.

Ms. Tudor: Ms. Tudor had no additional updates.

Old Business:

- S/V Whisper update – Email from Harbormaster: The Harbormaster arrived for a scheduled appointment to update the Board on the status of S/V Whisper. It was reported by the Harbormaster that the previous plan to have the vessel removed fell through and that it would cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000 to do so. He had consulted with the Coast Guard and they did not require its removal. He has also contacted Bath Iron Works in hopes that they may want to dispose of the vessel. The Board thanked the Harbormaster for his update.
- Code Enforcement Officer Update: The Code Enforcement Officer noted that 13 CEO permits, 26 Planning Board permits, and 21 Plumbing Permits were issued year to date. He further updated the Board regarding the two outstanding LPI issues.
- Ordinances back from legal for review: The Town Administrator noted that there was nothing to report at the time of the Board Meeting. He did note that after a few reschedules, he would be meeting with Kristin Collins and Bob Trabona the following day, August 16, to discuss.
- FEMA Grant Update – The Town Administrator noted that FEMA kicked back our grant application for a few minor tweaks. The application, it was noted, would be resubmitted ahead of the new deadline.

- Gulf of Maine Research Lease Question – follow up discussion: Mr. Donaldson had requested this item be added to the agenda. The Board designated him, in absentia, to attend the early meetings on behalf of the Town.
- Ordinance Fee Schedule Discussion – The Town Administrator checked in with the Board on the status of previous work to create a master fee schedule for the town (and accompanying ordinance). Ms. Tudor reported that there had been some work done to analyze all current ordinances to identify current fees. She noted that there was some resistance from the TOPMB. The Board tasked the Town Administrator to work on a sample ordinance, to be completed prior to the start of the budget season.

New Business:

- On a motion from Ms. Tudor, seconded by Mr. Collins, the Board voted to renew the Tier Two Cannabis Cultivation License for Lighthouse Farms LLC.
- Proposal From Fire Chief Whalen to Purchase Squad Truck – At the meeting’s outset, at the request of the Finance Director, this item was removed from the agenda pending additional information.
- Zoom Proposal from Town Administrator: On a motion from Ms. Tudor, seconded by Mr. Collins, it was voted unanimously to approve the creation of a Town of Georgetown Youtube Account for the purposes of posting Select Board Meetings and other relevant Town events. On a second motion from Ms. Tudor, seconded by Mr. Collins, it was voted unanimously to approve up to \$150 for the purchase of a quality, external, hard drive.

Items For Signature:

Certificate of Appointment – Franklin McDonald
 Tier Two Cultivation License – Lighthouse Farms, LLC

Public comment: Alison Freeman noted that she did not believe an external hard drive was sufficient for storing the videos of Planning Board meetings. She offered to meet with the Town Administrator to discuss these concerns.

Executive Session: There was none.

Adjournment: On a motion from Ms. Tudor, seconded by Mr. Collins, the Board adjourned at 7:56pm.

8 August 2023

Selectboard
Town of Georgetown, Maine

To the Board:

Well, another year has rolled by, and we haven't made much progress on the First Church. As I understand it, the town has not landed any significant grant money for the project. I understand that there is money to spend on an energy audit on town buildings, including the First Church. From what I know about energy audits, all that will come out of an audit of the church will be unanswerable questions. Energy audits analyze heating and cooling systems, insulation, electrical systems, and doors and windows. The building has no heating or cooling system, minimal wiring, no insulation, and any existing doors and windows would be replaced, possibly in different configurations.

In local news sources, there are two projects not far from Georgetown which might shed some light on what the town is up against in any effort to significantly repair and remodel the church. In New Gloucester, the Shaker Village is in the midst of jacking up an old post and beam barn. It is currently up on cribbing, and they are working on the foundation. This barn was used to store hay, and to garage tractors and equipment. There is no infrastructure of plumbing or heating. It is simply being rebuilt to function as a barn. The budget for the project stands at 1.3 million. It may likely go over budget. Admittedly, the building is twice as long as the First Church, but it is on a much friendlier site, flat, where equipment can freely encircle it on level ground; whereas, the First Church is set into a steep hillside. And, more importantly, what plans have been discussed for the Church involve developing it as a public building, not a hay barn. It is unlikely that the Shaker Village folks have mold and mildew problems which would affect their hay or tractors.

Meanwhile, over in Bowdoinham, the townspeople just voted down a proposal to raise one million dollars for repairs to the old town hall. This hall is not currently in use for town meetings.

There seems to be reasonable agreement here, that the Church will need to be jacked up, and have a new concrete foundation placed under it. We all know that it would be a huge project. My educated guess is that the completed budget would be between 1.5-2 million dollars at minimum.

Grant money is generally allocated based on a perception of need. Georgetown has in its possession a relatively modern school/town office structure. The school was designed for up to three times the number of students we currently serve. There are 9 classrooms, a beautiful library, a kitchen, a huge gymnasium with an art/music facility behind the big stage. The art/music room alone is probably 3 times the area that was "lost" for committee meetings due to the recent remodeling of the town office.

We put something like 8000 gallons of fuel oil through the complex annually. We spend large amounts of money to keep it maintained. It sits empty much of the time. In the 80's, when the town voted on mosquito control, the town meeting was held in one double classroom, with the partition drawn back. About 300 votes were cast in the decision to not go forward with mosquito control. Surely there is space in the school for the needs of the town government. It might require a bit of remodeling, and some cooperation.

There is always talk of the possibility that the town will lose the school if we can't maintain the student population. Should that happen, imagine what it would look like to have spent huge taxpayer dollars on the Church, and to look across the street at an enormous, empty building.

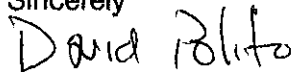
We don't NEED another public meeting space. In addition to the school, we have the Historical Society, the Community Center, and the Fire Department. Our resourceful neighbors in Arrowsic remove the trucks from their fire hall, and have their town meeting in it. Numerous towns use their schools.

As many townspeople have come to understand, what we NEED is affordable housing for young families with children, and other individuals and groups with limited income. Without young families, our stream of schoolchildren will dry up. I believe that the land under the church, with or without the existing structure, would be best used to develop affordable housing. The location is ideal, as it is within walking distance of the school, store, post office, Historical Society, and Transfer Station. The town could retain some of the parking area. I feel strongly that, were the town to be a part of that endeavor, interest and grant money would be available.

A couple of years ago, the Selectboard established a "First Church Steering Committee". In my opinion, as a former member of said committee, the focus of that committee was quite narrow and restricted to repurposing the existing structure for town public meeting space and storage. I would strongly recommend that you reform that committee, and allow it to research a broader realm of possibilities, including a directive to investigate the use of the space, with or without the existing building, as a site for affordable housing.

When I was approached to be a member of the First Church Steering Committee, I was told that the Board wanted someone experienced in buildings and construction. As a member, I spent many hours in and around the building, talking with State of Maine officials, and attending committee meetings. I believe I have spent more time in the building, in all its corners and at all its levels, than any other town official. Perhaps, in consideration of this time and effort, you would be willing to not only include this letter in the public record, but read it aloud at your next meeting.

Sincerely



David Polito
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