

**Minutes
Town of Skowhegan
Regular Selectmen's Meeting
5:30 P.M.
Tuesday, February 9, 2016
Municipal Building – Council Room**

Board of Selectmen:

Donald Skillings, Chairman
Paul York, Vice Chairman
Betty Austin
Darla Pickett
Soren Siren

Town Manager:

Christine Almand

Executive Secretary:

Cara L. Mason

Call Selectmen's Meeting to order.

Donald Skillings called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited.

1. Town Manager's Report

I would like to remind downtown business and property owners that we have an ordinance outlining their duty to remove snow and ice from the sidewalks.

Reminder: There is a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee scheduled for Thursday night at 6:00 pm.

The next Southern Somerset Regional Broadband Meeting is scheduled for February 18th at 6:00 pm at the Old Point Avenue School in Madison.

The Revaluation Bid Opening is on February 16th at 3:30 pm. The Foreclosure Sale Bid Opening is on February 17th at 1:00 pm.

The Town has a 1990 Arial Fire Truck for sale. For more information, visit our website or contact Chief Howard.

The Town offices will be closed on February 15th in observation of Presidents Day.

The FAB Fair is being held at the Skowhegan Area High School on February 20th from 10:00 to 3:00. For more information, contact the Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce.

Bob Marley will be performing in the Opera House on March 5th at 7:00 pm. Tickets are \$24 and are available in the Town Manager's Office and at www.bmarley.com

The Main Street Skowhegan Savings Entrepreneur Challenge winner was announced last night. Amanda Clark, owner of The Maine Barkery has won a \$20,000 incentive package and will soon expand her business to a storefront on Water Street.

2. Items by the Public

Steve Govoni talked about concerns regarding wind power projects. He asked about possibly having a Moratorium in place regarding towers and power lines in Skowhegan.

Randy Gray said that this could be discussed at any Planning Board Meeting. They meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

3. Selectmen's Items

Betty Austin said that the event for the Entrepreneur Challenge was great. There are many exciting things happening here.

She went to see part of the wind power project and the lines, and would be happy to talk about that after the meeting.

Darla Pickett thanked Steve Govoni for his interest in this.

She said she was happy about all of the businesses coming together to help in the Entrepreneur Challenge.

Soren Siren thanked Steve Govoni for his interest in the wind power issues.

Donald Skillings thanked Steve Govoni for coming in.

He congratulated Amanda Clark as Entrepreneur Challenge winner.

He said that Dog Not Gone has expanded their business, and he congratulated them on that.

4. Department & Committee Reports

Greg Dore said that he is still working on the cost of the repairs on the International truck. The truck has 7,200 hours on it. Typically you wouldn't be looking at a rebuild until 10,000 to 12,000 hours on a truck like this.

Chief Bolduc said that Officers Blakeney and Gordon are in week five at the academy and are doing well.

We just finished up the hiring process for two officers.

The RFGH contract should be ready for review in the next week or two.

We are going to complete the Narcan training and review the policy. Then we will be ready to start using it.

Chief Bolduc said he would be asking for permission to apply for the speed grant at the next meeting.

Randy Gray said that the painting is completed in the Police Department. There is just a little bit of flooring that needs to be finished.

Gail Pelotte said that the auditors were here last week. She was happy to report that nothing was missed on the fixed assets report.

She will be working on monthly reconciliations, and she has been working with Tonja on the reports that go to the state.

Recording Time: 19:34

Public Hearings:

1. Public Hearing regarding the proposed Parades & Gatherings Ordinance and the Controlled Substance Facilities Ordinance.

Donald Skillings opened the Public Hearing.

There was no discussion.

Donald Skillings closed the Public Hearing.

2. Public Hearing: Discussion and decision to approve the Special Amusement Permits for:

Bigelow Brewing Company
473 Bigelow Hill Road

Washburn Enterprises LLC d/b/a Central Maine Family Fun Bowling Center
414 Madison Avenue

Donald Skillings opened the Public Hearing.

Donald Skillings closed the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Soren Siren to approve the Special Amusement Permit for Washburn Enterprises LLC and to approve a Temporary Special Amusement Permit through April 14, 2016 for Bigelow Brewing Company.

Vote: 5/0

3. Public Hearing: Discussion and decision to approve the Applications for Malt, Spirituous, Vinous License; Victualer License; and Special Amusement Permit for:

KVI Group d/b/a Kennebec Valley Inn
24 Court Street

Donald Skillings opened the Public Hearing.

Donald Skillings closed the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Paul York to approve the Applications for Malt, Spirituous, Vinous License; Victualer License; and Special Amusement Permit for KVI Group d/b/a Kennebec Valley Inn, contingent upon final occupancy inspection by the Code Enforcement Officer.

Vote: 5/0

Consent Agenda:

1. Approve and sign Minutes for the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting	January 26, 2016
Special Selectmen's Meeting	February 2, 2016
2. Approve and sign Quit Claim Deeds for:

Jeanine and Robert Jarvis (Map 24, Lot 9 – ON25)
Craig Chapman (Map 24, Lot 9 – ON11)
Karen Knight (Map 24, Lot 9 – ON9)
David Knowles and Andrea Strout (Map 13, Lot 19 – 1)

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Paul York to approve the Consent Agenda as written.

Vote: 5/0

Regular Agenda:

1. Discussion and decision to approve the Pool Tables License for:

Kennebec Valley Inn
24 Court Street

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Paul York to approve the Pool Table License for KVI Group d/b/a Kennebec Valley Inn, contingent upon final occupancy inspection by the Code Enforcement Officer.

Vote: 5/0

2. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, Building Improvements Designation for repairs to the Fire Station.

A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Soren Siren to expend an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, Building Improvements Designation for repairs to the Fire Station.

Chief Howard said that most of this work is being done by the firefighters, so the cost is just for materials. The estimates in the memo are an amount not to exceed and are higher than it is expected to cost.

Darla Pickett asked about the crack at the front of the fire station.

Chief Howard said that he would be bringing that to the Selectmen at some point. The engineer is supposed to look at that on Thursday. Randy Gray has looked at it. None of these repairs have anything to do with that.

Darla Pickett asked about the \$1,200.00 to fix a light.

Chief Howard said that is to fix all of the exterior lighting at the fire station. There are work lights across the front of the fire station that were installed five or six years ago. None of them work. As part of this we will need to run some conduit. We always run into problem whenever we need to attach something to the building. The bricks are so old that they have to be drilled and apply an epoxy so they don't fall apart.

Vote: 5/0

3. Discussion and decision to award the Protective Clothing Bid to Bergeron Protective Clothing with a total bid price of \$1,880.43 per set and to expend an amount not to exceed \$9,500.00 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, Protective Clothing Designation to purchase 5 sets.

A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Soren Siren to award the Protective Clothing Bid to Bergeron Protective Clothing with a total bid price of \$1,880.43 per set and to expend an amount not to exceed \$9,500.00 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, Protective Clothing Designation to purchase 5 sets.

Vote: 5/0

Recording Time: 27:08

4. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for Parades & Processions to allow Girl Scouts of Maine to sell cookies in the Municipal Parking Lot (next to Aubuchon) from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on March 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th, 19th 20th, and 26th.

A motion was made by Darla Pickett and seconded by Betty Austin to approve the Application for Parades & Processions to allow Girl Scouts of Maine to sell cookies in the Municipal Parking Lot (next to Aubuchon) from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on March 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th, 19th 20th, and 26th.

Vote: 5/0

5. Discussion and decision to hold Town Meeting on June 13, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Opera House and to hold Elections on June 14, 2016 from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. in the Council Room.

A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Soren Siren to hold Town Meeting on June 13, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Opera House and to hold Elections on June 14, 2016 from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. in the Council Room.

Vote: 5/0

6. Discussion and decision to approve the revised Cemetery Ordinance, and schedule a Public hearing for that ordinance on February 23, 2016 @ 5:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Darla Pickett to approve the revised Cemetery Ordinance, and schedule a Public hearing for that ordinance on February 23, 2016 @ 5:30 p.m.

Vote: 5/0

7. Discussion and decision to appoint one Selectman to participate in the union negotiations for the Police Department union.

A motion was made by Darla Pickett and seconded by Soren Siren to appoint Paul York to participate in the union negotiations for the Police Department union.

Vote: 5/0

8. Discussion and decision to appoint one Selectman to participate in the union negotiations for the AFSCME union.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Darla Pickett to appoint Paul York to participate in the union negotiations for the AFSCME union.

Vote: 5/0

9. Discussion regarding changing the positions of Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and Road Commissioner from elected to appointed.

Darla Pickett said she thinks that we have enough smart voters to decide how they want this handled.

Ambrose McCarthy asked for the figures from the last time this question was put before the voters.

Gail Pelotte said that at the November 4, 2008 Presidential Election this was on the ballot. The votes were as follows:

Road Commissioner	1576 voting yes and 2574 voting no
Town Clerk	1488 voting yes and 2661 voting no
Town Treasurer	1490 voting yes and 2656 voting no

Ambrose McCarthy said he thinks they should stay as elected positions. If we had had appointed position a few years ago the Town Manager would have run the Road Commissioner out of town. 30 years ago we thought we wouldn't be able to replace Ray Brown, but we did. The current Road Commissioner is here a lot on his own time. He said he didn't think an appointed Road Commissioner would do that.

He also said that we have had appointed officials in town in the past that should not have been here.

Joan Farnsworth said she thinks we have a good system right now. She does not think that we need to worry about "what ifs". The voters like that they have some control over these positions. If they were all appointed you would have a lot more discontented voters.

Donald Skillings wanted to make it clear that the Selectmen would not be making this decision. This is just a discussion about putting this before the voters either at Town Meeting or on the ballot.

Ambrose McCarthy said there have been Special Town Meetings in the past. This should not be voted at a Special Town Meeting, where only a few people show up to vote.

Steve Govoni said he can see where there could be a potential issue in the future. Locally we have seen elected officials not showing up for work or refusing to do something. He thinks that Town Meeting is the place to ask this question. He feels that is where most of the informed voters are present.

Ambrose McCarthy said that there is no guarantee that the people in these positions would be appointed after the vote takes place.

Soren Siren said he has heard from people on both sides of this issue.

Soren Siren said that the Selectmen have been working on making things equitable, and working on pay scales. He feels that there is a risk of someone coming into one of these positions without the necessary skills to do the job.

Todd Smith said he educated himself in voting for the Selectmen. He feels that these positions should be appointed by the Selectmen. He would like to see this question of elected or appointed go to the voters at Town Meeting.

Trisha Austin said that she doesn't feel that it should be up to the Selectmen and it should not go before the voters at Town Meeting. People should be able to vote by secret ballot. Very few people come and vote at Town Meeting.

Betty Austin said that she has spoken to several people who have said that it should be voted in the privacy of a voting booth and not at Town Meeting.

Randy Gray said that it should be voted by ballot. People should be able to vote in private where they are not influenced by people around them.

Gail Pelotte agreed that it should be done by ballot. We have approximately 6000 registered voters in Skowhegan. The Opera House, where Town Meeting is held, only seats 843.

Beverly Fitzsimmons agreed that it should be asked on the ballot and not at Town Meeting.

Ambrose McCarthy said that there are not a lot of people who have the courage to get up and speak or vote publicly at Town Meeting. Intimidation is a big factor at these things.

Christine Almand said that traditionally these positions have been elected in small towns.

Darla Pickett said that she agrees that it should be voted by ballot.

Paul York said that other towns have changed this because they had their own issues. We are not looking to get rid of the people that we have, but their jobs are not guaranteed by election either.

Donald Skillings said that this is part of a restructuring of the Town and its workforce. We have been working on Job Classes/Pay Scales since June. We are very close to finishing that for non-union employees and managers. We are trying to make things equitable as the Selectmen see fit.

Donald Skillings said that it is easier for a Town Manager to manage an appointed employee than an elected employee.

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Darla Pickett to put the question of changing the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and Road Commissioner positions from elected to appointed before the voters on a ballot.

There was further discussion regarding which ballot it should be on...June or November.

More people typically vote in November. The cost is the same either way, as is the amount of work involved.

Gail Pelotte felt that the word would be out there better if it was voted in November.

Gene Rouse said that the workload would be less in November, since most of the ballots will be machine read instead of hand counted.

Betty Austin said if we waited until November, we may have time to get brochures out.

An amended motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Darla Pickett to put the question of changing the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and Road Commissioner positions from elected to appointed on the November Ballot in 2016.

Vote: 5/0

Recording Time: 01:08:29

10. Economic & Community Development Warrants to be approved:

#111	\$	23.00
Total	\$	23.00

A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Paul York to approve the Economic and Community Development Warrant as written.

Vote: 5/0

11. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#117	\$	1,206.56 (FY 2015 Accounts Payables)
#63	\$	34,942.50 (Payroll #4)
#64	\$	35,713.40 (Payroll #5)
#65	\$	5,895.28 (State Payables)
#66	\$	1,099,689.56 (FY 2016 Accounts Payables)
Total	\$	1,177,447.30

A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Betty Austin to approve the Treasurer's Warrants as written.

Vote: 5/0

12. Other Business

There was no Other Business.

13. Unfinished Business

Job Classes/Pay Scale
Run of River/Economic Development
Utilizing Outside Services
Town Charter

Christine Almand handed out the pay scales based on the workshop discussion. Based on the 2.5% there would be a 4% increase.

Darla Pickett said that union pay gets discussed the employees have somebody representing them. Should the non-union employees have somebody representing them?

Christine Almand said that the Selectmen vote on the pay increases for the non-union employees. If the Selectmen want employee input, that is up to them.

Gene Rouse asked if this information was available to the public.

The answer was yes. These documents are public information.

Donald Skillings said that we would not be discussing individual's pay.

Cara Mason asked if pay was public information.

Christine Almand said that pay is public information.

Christine Almand said that with the pay scales, there would be three Department Heads that are paid higher than what the top of the scale would be. She asked if the Selectmen wanted to make adjustments for that.

Randy Gray said that with this pay scale in place and no cost of living increases...the people at the top of the scale are actually getting a decrease when the cost of living goes up. He asked if the employees' thoughts mattered. Nobody has visited him about this. He knows what his employees do.

Donald Skillings said that there was a public meeting on this, which was posted.

Randy Gray said that this is why people get discouraged. We don't seem to work together. We are reasonable department heads, but we want some input on what happens in our departments.

Donald Skillings said that we are here to have that discussion. We cannot have that discussion at 10:00 a.m. on Monday unless we call a meeting. No decision has been made yet.

Donald Skillings asked if there is no end to what somebody should make. Should people get a raise every year no matter what?

Randy Gray said that people base the household budget on what they make. If the cost of living goes up by 2%, giving a 2% raise is not a merit increase...it is to keep up with the cost of living. If the cost of living does not go up then, don't give a raise.

Jeff Hewett said that there have been years that we did not get an increase. The Selectmen say that we get a raise every year, and we do not always get it.

Chief Howard said he hasn't seen any of the information, so he doesn't know if he should be mad or not.

Betty Austin said that she was not prepared to make any decision of this tonight. This is just a discussion.

Chief Howard asked if this meant that potentially somebody could reach the top of the scale and not get a raise for the next 20 years.

Donald Skillings said that the answer to that is yes, unless something happened that changed the pay scale...like an overall scale increase.

Chief Howard said that he doesn't think that the Selectmen intend to hire stagnant employees that have reached the top. He intends to continue to become better at his job and does not want to be topped out at 38 years old.

Brent Dickey said that there used to be a pay scale, but that scale was increased whenever COLA was given. If you don't do that, you won't be able to get people to come here to work. It makes more sense to do that on an annual basis, then to have to make large adjustments every five years. If somebody is hired they should be making what the job is worth. It shouldn't take them 10 or 20 years to get there. COLA is not the same a rewarding people for staying here.

Paul York said that we are trying to take care of our employees. We have people who are underpaid and people that are at the top of the scale. Percentage increases are not equitable, because the lower paid person's 1% is a lot less than the higher paid person's 1%.

Brent Dickey said that the pay scale seems to be artificially keeping pay down.

Soren Siren said that the reality is that people in public jobs cap out. He caps out at 26 years in his job. It gets negotiated every three to five years and gets adjusted for cost of living.

Cara Mason handed out copies of all of the pay scale information.

Randy Gray said that he does believe that people should be capped, but they do need cost of living increases. If not, people are actually getting a decrease.

Trisha Austin said that by the time she divides out her pay by the actual hours she works, she makes less than that. People don't know what some of these jobs do. It is difficult to be compared to teachers. We are not teachers. We do not get months at a time off and we do not get the same benefits. Employees should have been encouraged to come to these meetings.

Greg Dore said that wages do need to be capped...but people should not be punished.

Greg Dore said that we used to base COLA on Social Security. He doesn't want to go anyplace else, but he doesn't want to have no COLA increases and end up going backwards.

Donald Skillings said that that is not the intension. There will be another workshop and all employees will be invited to attend.

14. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.

Approved and signed on February 23, 2016

A True Copy Attest: _____
Cara L. Mason, Executive Secretary