

**Minutes  
Town of Skowhegan  
Regular Selectmen's Meeting  
5:30 P.M.  
Tuesday, January 11, 2022  
Municipal Building – Council Room**

**\*\*Anyone wishing to view this meeting may also do so from the  
Town of Skowhegan Facebook page\*\***

**Board of Selectmen:**

Todd Smith, Chairman  
Charles Robbins, Vice Chairman  
Harold Bigelow  
Steven Govoni  
Paul York

**Town Manager:**

Christine Almand

**Executive Secretary:**

Cara L. Mason

Call Selectmen's Meeting to order.

Todd Smith called the meeting to order.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Town Manager's Report

Christine Almand said that the Clerk's Office sent out foreclosure notices last Thursday. For 2020 taxes, those payment must be made by February 7<sup>th</sup>, in order to avoid foreclosure. Notices were sent on 71 accounts, down from 97 last year.

3. Items by the Public

There were no Items by the Public.

4. Selectmen's Items

Steven Govoni said there are now some maps up on the walls in the Council Room. They include proposed bridges, proposed schools, sidewalks. The point of this is we have a lot going on in the town, he felt it was time that we got it on a map so we can really start master planning. He said he feels like we solve one problem and create two more. He is excited to be on the committees and to look at it from a big picture standpoint.

Charles Robbins thanked the highway crew for keeping everything sanded. He said he likes Steven Govoni's idea.

Todd Smith said that he supports this. We have many projects going on with little communication on how they are all going to work together.

5. Department and Committee Reports

Chief Bucknam said that the new cruiser is in. It will be going to be upfitted.

Letters have been delivered to all of the downtown businesses...to make sure they are keeping their sidewalks clear of snow.

Steven Govoni asked about the places where it is town on town property.

Jeff Hewett said that we maintain the section in front of the building. The section of sidewalk in front of our parking lot is maintained by the highway department. They come through with the sidewalk machine.

Chief Bucknam said that they would monitor that to make sure that they are being taken care of. He personally spoke to the Charter School.

If you are going off the road because of ice, you are going too fast for the conditions. You need to slow down. He did meet a young woman, he advised her to not pass his cruiser again.

Jeff Hewett said he has had two showings for the Mechanic Street School.

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Approve the Minutes from the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting – December 14, 2021

Regular Selectmen's Meeting – December 28, 2021

2. Approve a Taxi Driver Permit for:

Jeffrey Alan Gordon

3. Approve a Taxi Vehicle Permit for:

Jeffrey Alan Gordon Taxi – 2007 Chevy Impala – VIN 2G1WT58N379251649

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Consent Agenda as written.**

**Vote: 5/0**

**Regular Agenda:**

1. Discussion regarding the Guaranteed Maximum Price Agreement with Benchmark for the Public Safety Building.

Steven Govoni said that the Public Safety Building Committee voted 8/0 in favor of moving forward with the contract for guaranteed maximum price. A lot of questions were asked at that meeting. Hopefully they answered the questions that the Selectmen would have.

Harold Bigelow said there's a lot of things that are not on there. There are a lot of things that the Town is going to have to pick up the tab for. He thinks it is going to be a big-ticket item. Security – Paul said there is someone staying at the police department...fire department all the time. Harold said he doesn't call that security. He feels that is a very secure area. Somebody could do some havoc in there. There ought to be a fence.

Chief Bucknam said that originally, he was approached by numerous vendors about key card security, doors, gates...security cameras. That all came from a big company with a very big price. Currently he and his IT group handle the security...purchase the security cameras for this building, as well as downtown. He is constantly making sure they are updated with the best equipment possible. When we have the new building, those lines will be run through with the electrical. Those security cameras will already have their place. It is plug and play.

As far as fencing goes...he would love to have that fence there. He knows that he can find grants to help get gates and fences.

Chief Bucknam said that Shawn's exhaust system went from \$40,000.00 to a possible \$14,000.00 move for him. We are constantly working with people. The evidence room had roll cabinets in there to store evidence at almost \$175,000.00. He called the locker guy and got a price for an eight-set locker at \$50,000.00. We are looking to drop the price on as many things as possible.

The security system is not a problem. He deals with the security system now, and he will continue to deal with the security system. He will do it and have it set up the way that he wants it set up.

Harold Bigelow said that was the best answer to all of his questions.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Steven Govoni to authorize Christine Almand to sign the Guaranteed Maximum Price Agreement with Benchmark for an amount not to exceed \$8.25 million and to utilize the \$1.1 million that is in the reserve account.**

Charles Robbins said that he met with Chief Howard and Chief Bucknam. In Benchmark's proposal there were over 50 exclusions from the original plan. He had a list that he went through with the Chiefs. He is confident that this project can happen.

It was brought up in the meeting about having our attorney review this contract before Christine signs it. Does this have to be signed tonight? Is there time for the attorney to review it?

Jason, from Benchmark said that there is time for it to be reviewed.

Steven Govoni said that he would like to see any reserve that is left at the end of the project, be put aside for building maintenance.

Christine Almand said that each time the voters voted it was for the Public Safety Building. The Selectmen do not have any authority to spend it on anything else. It would be for future spending on the building. The Selectmen have the ability to allocate separate sub-categories – for instance the Municipal Building has a separate sub-category for roofing. It can not be utilized for any other purpose without going back to the voters.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Steven Govoni to authorize Christine Almand to sign the Guaranteed Maximum Price Agreement with Benchmark for an amount not to exceed \$8.25 million and to utilize the \$1.1 million that is in the reserve account, contingent upon review and approval from the Town's attorney.**

Chief Howard said that he has only seen a draft contract. He wanted to make sure that the final contract gets in there.

Christine Almand said that the draft has been shared with the committee and the Selectmen. She expects a final version very soon for the attorney's review.

Jason, from Benchmark said that the attorney should review the draft. Then any changes will be made, reviewed again by the attorney, and the final provided for signature.

Don Skillings said that this should be tabled for two weeks. Get the attorney to review it, get it worked out and vote one time.

Paul York said that we will be voting only once. It will be voted contingent upon the attorney's review and any changes made. He doesn't think that we need to keep prolonging it. We need to move forward. This is what the taxpayers have asked for.

Christine Almand said that in addition, the AIA documents are standard documents. She doesn't anticipate any substantial comments from the attorney.

Recording Time: 21:35

Chief Howard said that the only issue he thinks we could run into...over that two-week timeframe if something came to light that could change the number. Right now, we have an opportunity...if we sign it and something changes, that's on Benchmark. If tomorrow there is a jump in a price, it costs them money...not us.

Jason, from Benchmark, said that is essentially correct. It is standard to have an attorney review it, on a project this size. If we do wait two more weeks, there is a potential risk that the building price could change. We have leaned pretty heavily on our building supplier already, to hold that price. The market does continuously keep changing. He said he is not trying to rush things. He wants to make sure that they deliver a quality product. He feels confident that they will. They assume the risk as soon as the document is signed.

Todd Smith said that he didn't believe that the intention of the Reserve Account was to be used as part of the ballot question. That said...an amount not to exceed \$8.9 million to build and equip a building. He thinks that an argument can be made for both sides...yes, it can be used for that or no, that this was the not to exceed price. The voters could argue that as well.

What are our options? We have this price in front of us and we have this reserve account funding that we could use. We can either spend the money to get this project off the ground. The Selectmen have the right to authorize reserve account spending for the intended purpose. It could be argued that that funding was for the purpose to help build this building. We have the option to not approve this tonight, and put this project back out to bid. There are pros and cons to each of those.

We will get a different but functional Public Safety Building. We can use the reserve account funding to help make that happen.

If we put it back out to bid, and the prices increase...as we expect they probably would. Equaling a smaller, less functional building.

For him it comes down to what is best for the Town. After talking to Chief Howard and attending the meeting tonight, he feels that it is time to put this behind us and utilize that funding to move forward with this project.

One of the things that eased his mind was the conversation he had with Chief Howard about equipping the building. You have a brand-new building; you want some brand-new things. Because of the pricing, this isn't going to happen. They will utilize some of what they have...desks, chairs, beds...all of this movable stuff. They will replace it as needed, no differently than they would do now. He knows that we can put this project in motion, utilizing that reserve account funding and giving us a little bit of cushion at the end.

Harold Bigelow said his concern has always been, if you max out your credit card...that's what we are doing. We won't ever have to worry about putting that into maintenance...after seeing what the prices are. They go up so much every day. It will be sucked up like feathers in a vacuum cleaner.

**Vote: 5/0**

Recording Time: 28:37

Todd Smith thanked everybody for their tireless work.

Steven Govoni thanked Beverly Fitzsimmons for her questions tonight.

2. Discussion and decision to approve the renewal Application for an On-Premises Malt, Wine License for:

MEEPLANG Inc. d/b/a M. Thai Restaurant  
105 Water Street

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the renewal Application for an On-Premises Malt, Wine License for MEEPLANG Inc. d/b/a M. Thai Restaurant.**

**Vote: 5/0**

3. Discussion and decision to approve the renewal Application for an On-Premises Malt, Wine, Spirits License for:

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

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Paul York to approve the renewal Application for an On-Premises Malt, Wine, Spirits License for Washburn Enterprises, LLC d/b/a Central Maine Family Fun Bowling Center.**

**Vote: 5/0**

4. Discussion and decision to approve the Request for Extension of License On-Premise for outside seating for:

Unwined, LLC  
151 Water Street

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Request for Extension of License On-Premise for outside seating for Unwined, LLC.**

**Vote: 5/0**

5. Discussion and decision to approve the Games of Chance License Application to allow the Fraternal Order of Eagles to hold a Texas Hold'em Tournament at 2:00 p.m. on January 29, 2022.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Games of Chance License Application to allow the Fraternal Order of Eagles to hold a Texas Hold'em Tournament at 2:00 p.m. on January 29, 2022.**

**Vote: 5/0**

6. Discussion and decision to accept criminal forfeiture funds in the amount of \$1,880.00 and deposit those funds into the Police Department Reserve Account, Drug Forfeiture Designation.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to accept criminal forfeiture funds in the amount of \$1,880.00 and deposit those funds into the Police Department Reserve Account, Drug Forfeiture Designation.**

**Vote: 5/0**

7. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$8,864.85 from the Capacity Reserve Account for the relocation and reconnection of Ronald and Melony Hull's sewer line, located at 17 Bush Street. This is to be reimbursed by the Hulls per court order.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to expend an amount not to exceed \$8,864.85 from the Capacity Reserve Account for the relocation and reconnection of Ronald and Melony Hull's sewer line, located at 17 Bush Street.**

**Vote: 5/0**

8. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$1,500.00 from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Survey Designation for boundary line agreements for North Cemetery.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to expend an amount not to exceed \$1,500.00 from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Survey Designation for boundary line agreements for North Cemetery.**

Paul York said that the Cemetery Committee decided to cut some trees, so they don't fall and cause damage. They also decided that they should survey the cemeteries, so that we know where the lines are...so we don't run into an issue. Some boundary issues were found at North Cemetery. We were maintaining land, and there are bodies buried on land, that we do not own. It creates a problem. Moving forward, the committee is trying to correct this. These pieces of land have been being maintained for a long time...maybe 100 years. He isn't sure why it wasn't caught before now. This property isn't usable by the landowner. We ant to come up with agreements to correct the issue and get us back on track.

**Vote: 5/0**

9. Discussion and decision to change the name of the project and the committee from Run of River to Skowhegan River Park. The Run of River Committee recommends this.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Paul York to change the name of the project and the committee from Run of River to Skowhegan River Park.**

**Vote: 5/0**

10. Discussion and decision to designate \$400,000.00 from the Run of River Reserve Account to be utilized for construction design and permitting. This will also be used as match for the \$200,000.00 from Somerset County. This was originally designated for construction only.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Paul York to designate \$400,000.00 from the Run of River Reserve Account to be utilized for construction design and permitting. This will also be used as match for the \$200,000.00 from Somerset County.**

Paul York said if we use this money now, we won't have any for construction.

Christine Almand said that further fundraising was always part of this plan...whether it be grants or other fundraising efforts.

Paul York said that these funds were previously dedicated for construction. There is a big price tag every step of the way...permitting, design, the other stuff they are doing.

Steven Govoni said that technically these costs are soft costs to construction...permitting, licensing, etc. all fall under soft costs of construction.

Paul Yor said he isn't 100% aboard when it comes to this river park. His concern is that at some point...he hopes it is successful...once it comes to fruition, it is going to cost the taxpayers a lot of money. He has been told that they will continue fundraising and all these efforts. They have done a phenomenal job, fundraising and allocating monies. They say here that they will be able to complete phase one construction without allocating other taxpayer dollars. At some point in time, we are going to be allocating taxpayer dollars. This concerns him.

A big issue in Skowhegan is that we do projects...and they are great projects...but we don't think ahead to figure out who is going to maintain it and where that money will come from.

Harold Bigelow said that this is a bladder system that works off a low-pressure compressor. You need to have a drier system that works all the time. You need...there is a lot to it. You are not going to have a bake sale to take care of this. You are going to have to have someone right there. The maintenance...those bladders are of the highest quality. There is maintenance...and there is a drier system that has to be maintained there. Before we bite off on this stuff, we ought to be looking ahead. You can't handle it with a bake sale. It is going to come back on the taxpayers.

Todd Smith said that the features are only a part of the park. There is more to it than what Harold is describing. Skowhegan River Park will still have features of the Run of River. Christine's license plate will still be valid.

Paul York said that it is more than that...he doesn't disagree. That means that much more maintenance.

Todd Smith said he has been to one meeting. The name change...there has been some resistance in big donor money because of the Run of River name. It was deemed that that was one demographic, and not encompassing the whole town. Locally we knew what the intent was, but now to the money that is outside of the downtown, they can invest in the Skowhegan River Park.

Christine Almand said that Kristina Cannon was unable to be here, but she is watching. She wanted to add that maintenance is part of the final design phase. We have been talking about it all along.

Steven Govoni said, going to the maps on the wall, this has been an area of discussion from the Main Street Design Committee...looking at the whole big picture. One thing that has been talked about is Mill Street, which runs along the New Balance building. That is not utilized for anything now. If that becomes vendor space...these are ways that we can bring in income. We have this dead space that we own, that is not taxable, that can be rental spaces for things that go on throughout the summer. That's not Run of River, but it is certainly Skowhegan River Park. The expansion of the ideas of what else we are doing around the river on both sides...to get tourists to hit this downtown hard and heavy.

Todd Smith said we are being asked to allocate this money, that was designated for construction only. We are being asked now to allocate it for construction design and permitting. This is a two-part benefit. We can't partake in construction unless we have the design and permitting in place. That gets us to the next phase. It also works towards match for the \$200,000.00 from the County. If we can't raise this match, then we will lose the \$200,000.00. We get the design and permitting done and we get the money from the County. Maintenance certainly needs to be addressed.

Jason Gayne said if you recommit the \$400,000.00...all of the easements haven't been signed yet. He has several members and businesses downtown that are not planning to sign them. He has been told this in conversations all week long. His understanding is that you will need easements, especially towards the top, for the construction phase. Are we jumping too fast? The \$200,000.00 came from CMP TIF dollars. Should we have one done before the other...as far as getting easements signed...or not signed. Then look at going into the next phases.

Jeff Hewett said that to go forward with the permitting, they have to have those easements in place. DEP is going to need those up front.

Charles Robbins asked if all of the easements don't get signed...does that mean it can't go to the next step?

Jeff Hewett said they have to have those easements in place.

Christine Almand said she spoke with Kristina over the phone this afternoon. We are still having conversations and answering questions. We have also discussed modifying some of the language in the easements, to put people's minds at ease. We would still be able to do the project that we want to do.

Charles Robbins asked if this \$400,000.00 is something that is just a number in order to get the \$200,000.00...or is this money that is spent immediately.

Jeff Hewett said he believes that is the estimate from the contractor. It has to be done to apply for the permits.

Charles Robbins asked if there is a timeline. Did this come to the meeting tonight with the \$400,000.00 just so we can capture the \$200,000.00 from the County? Are we going to lose it if we don't?

Todd Smith said that there is a deadline on that County money. He doesn't know the date.

Christine Almand said that some of this is also in preparation for the EDA grant application. That is being worked on as we speak.

Don Skillings said that he made the motion for the \$1 million for Run of River. He was on the Board of Selectmen at that time. It was never the intent, just for construction. He feels that this project has the potential to differentiate Skowhegan from any other community in Maine. He doesn't now what it will do economically. Kristina has done an incredible job with her business planning. He is as conservative as they come. This is the one area that he feels we can differentiate ourselves beyond almost any other town in New England...certainly in Maine. He would advocate...we spent \$10 million tonight...equally, this is an investment in us. It was in 2016 and it still is. We need to trust this process. Our Town Manager, Kristina Cannon, Greg Dore and many others have done a great job. TIF any new building and have it go to the maintenance of this park. The you have income to battle the expenses.

Christine Almand said that the deadline is six months and it is also important for EDA.

Paul York asked how many easements we are looking at.

Christine Almand said she isn't sure what that number is. We have multiple people working on it.

Steven Govoni said we have three things in play...the design and permitting; the easements; and the grant application. All of those can happen concurrent. It will all come to a screeching halt if we don't get the easements done.

**Vote: 5/0**

11. Discussion and decision to allow Jeff Hewett to apply for the Economic Development Administration, Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Grant in the amount of \$4,889,600.00 for Run of River (Skowhegan River Park) construction. The remaining \$1,021,161.00 from the Run of River Reserve Account and \$201,240.00 from Main Street will be used as match.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to allow Jeff Hewett to apply for the Economic Development Administration, Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Grant in the amount of \$4,889,600.00 for Run of River (Skowhegan River Park) construction. The remaining \$1,021,161.00 from the Run of River Reserve Account and \$201,240.00 from Main Street will be used as match.**

**Vote: 5/0**

Recording Time: 54:44

12. Discussion and decision to approve the amended Purchasing Policy.

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the amended Purchasing Policy.**

**Vote: 5/0**

13. Discussion regarding the DEP PFAS investigation.

Todd Smith said that he asked that this item be included on the Agenda. Mr. Quinn came forward at a previous meeting with this concern. This is intended to be an update on the status of the PFAS investigation by DEP.

Christine Almand said that she made a request to have a DEP representative here to answer questions. The State had put \$30 million towards PFAS investigation. Another \$68 million is coming from the feds for that. With the large number of communities that they have put into tier one, they have no plans right now for any sort of outreach. She finds that somewhat unacceptable. She reached out to them prior to vacation. She has spoken to two individuals from DEP. At this time, there are no plans for outreach. Tracey Kelly called and talked to Cara Mason. She is meeting with the communications manager later this week. Christine Almand said that Tracey Kelly knew that she wanted an answer about them coming to a meeting to answer questions...they are not doing any of that right now. She will be following up on this.

Paul York asked if there was anybody else that we could contact. There are a lot of communities that could be affected by this. It doesn't make sense that they have recognized that there is an issue but haven't come up with a plan of attack. Allocating money isn't doing anybody any good, if they are not doing anything with the money.

Christine Almand said that they have a plan. They have money and they are planning on testing this set of communities right now. They do not plan to come out to the individual towns for a presentation.

Paul York said if there is an issue out there, Garrett Qin isn't the only one that is going to be affected. They are going to want a timeframe.

Christine Almand read a couple sentences from the DEP letter, that is posted on our website:

“We understand that you and your constituents may have questions and concerns regarding our investigation. Any questions you have about the investigation by DEP, or that are being conveyed to you through your constituents or legislative aid, should be directed to David Madore, Deputy Commissioner and Communications Director. His email address is [David.madore@maine.gov](mailto:David.madore@maine.gov). Phone number (207) 287-5842.”

Christine Almand said that if you have questions, you should reach out to the State as they have stated in this letter.

Garrett Quinn thanked the Selectmen for taking this up tonight. He thinks it is great that the state and federal government has put this money up to investigate this. He asked Christine Almand if she was surprised that they don't have a plan. He has been talking with the DEP since last February. You get nowhere. A month ago, Tracey Kelly was interviewing applicants for the job of going out to start investigating these sites. They are so far behind the eight ball. We all know how slow the state and federal government moves. We are more agile at the municipality level. That is why he will continue to come to this board.

We spent \$10 million tonight, because we needed to. We need to spend some more money tonight. If this was an issue with our town water supply, it would have been dealt with a long time ago. We would have already tested the water. In talking to Mr. Dickey, we test the water every week...that we put back into the Kennebec. That's after we take the nastiest part of it out and spread it on the fields around these houses. We are putting the nastiest part of it in the fields to affect the ground water, but we are making sure what we put into the Kennebec is ok. We've got this backwards. We need to move this testing along and get this take care of.

He appreciates that this is on the website. He can't tell you how many emails, text messages and phone calls he got after he spoke a month ago. People said if he didn't get anywhere, they were going to come and help. Some people weren't even aware of it. He had to let them know that there was even an issue.

This issue is causing a lot of devastation 20 miles south of us. We have the opportunity to get ahead of this. If we wait for the State or Senator Collins, we are going to be waiting a long time.

Christine Almand said that she appreciates where he is coming from. She understands that we are better suited to handle things quickly. However, as she stated early on, we have legal advice that we cannot spend taxpayer funds to do testing on private wells. This is why we haven't. This is what was communicated several months ago. She has discussed this with two legal resources.

Garrett Quinn said that it is a much different environment now. Things have changed. We are talking about contaminants. We are talking about a situation where somebody was paid to take the sludge from the Town...the worst waste material that the Town makes...the farmers were paid to take it from the Town. They were permitted by the State. The Town could have stopped it a long time ago. The Town didn't do that. They made a decision 30 years ago to allow it. They permitted it up through 2018 or 2019. To sit here and say that we don't have the authority to test...he just doesn't buy that. He implored the Town to get a second opinion.

This is important and it affects a lot more people. People that don't realize that they are potentially affected by this. We need to get to the bottom of this. We spread contaminants for a long time. There are a lot of people that could be affected.

Recording Time: 01:06:03

We need to find out if the well water is good or not. We are dealing with the Town's waste.

Todd Smith asked if there was a payback from these state and federal funds. If we were to get a second legal opinion, and did spend a designated amount...could we get reimbursed for that? It seems that a lot has come to light in the last 12 months. Maybe a legal opinion would change at this point. The state like to push local control. Maybe they would allocate the funding directly to us.

Christine Almand said that based on all of the conversations that she has had...she has talked to Michelle in Fairfield, which is ground zero for this...she would not anticipate that the State would be in favor of us conducting this testing. She recently read an article about a community where some private groups did some testing of their own. The Maine DEP responded that perhaps the testing had not been done in accordance with their standards. She does not see that as being a likely solution.

She said she could certainly get an updated legal opinion. She doesn't see that changing based on...constitutionally, was what she was told. She received that opinion from MMA and the Town's attorney. She has been talking to Michelle in Fairfield for quite some time. That is also the legal opinion that she received. If the Selectmen want her to spend some more money and get another legal opinion, she can certainly do that.

Paul York said that we should pursue any avenue. He can't imagine that the State wants the situation in Fairfield to grow...now they are saying don't eat the deer and don't eat your chickens and don't eat the eggs. It may not be an issue...but if it is an issue. We have had conversations about different ways of getting rid of our waste. If we have an issue, we shouldn't keep doing what we are doing.

Christine Almand said that the State does have new guidelines. We have done no spreading since this came about.

Brent Dickey said that our product has changed somewhat. Since 2019, we stopped spreading raw class B sludge. From 1989 to 2019 we spread raw sludge that was mixed with lime. Lime was supposed to reduce the amount of pathogens. After 2019, everything has been compost. That is still tested. It is a different product, but we are still land applying that material.

Steven Govoni said that we are doing this under the DEP guidelines. The DEP's liability here is that they are the ones issuing the permits. In 1989 this was their standard for how we were going to dispose.

Brent Dickey said it was best practice according to EPA and DEP.

Steven Govoni said that changed in 2019, so we are still following best practice according to EPA and DEP.

Brent Dickey said he doesn't think there is hardly anyone in the state that is still applying class B sludge. Right now, it is primarily spreading compost or landfill.

Christine Almand said that there is much more rigorous testing involved now.

All of the action that has been taken in Fairfield, the State has done the testing. The State has identified the sites. The State has put in filtration systems in homes. The one thing that Fairfield is doing, is that they are having conversations about extending their water supply, to extend town water to the residents...instead of using their private wells. We haven't identified the contamination here. If that is the case, we will have to have similar conversations. For Fairfield it is private water supply, and it is here as well...it is Maine Water Company. The problem has not been identified here yet. We are waiting on the State to do the testing. We cannot spend taxpayer dollars on that.

Harold Bigelow asked if Fairfield spread it in the same way. He remembers people living right next to where they dumped it in a pit.

Brent Dickey said that we used to do field stacking. We would have piles, typically in corn fields. That was standard practice then. We would field stack it all winter and spread it in the springtime.

He said he is pretty confident that if the Town were to do any testing, even if we tested the field sites or tested well water, it wouldn't amount to much. DEP would not be coming out and putting in filtration systems based on our analysis. They will need their own analysis before they will come out and do anything to mitigate what they find.

Garrett Quinn said he spends \$50.00 per week on bottled water. It would be nice to know what is coming out of his tap. Can you drink it, can you cook with it, is it safe to shower with it? When they had the CN Brown issue with groundwater contamination, they told the residents not to shower with the water. He doesn't know what is coming out of his tap. He doesn't know how safe it is. Nobody can seem to tell him. Now that we know that there is potentially an issue, he thinks that might change the liability a little. These are not easy questions when we are dealing with public money. We are also dealing with public waste that belonged to the Town of Skowhegan. When it goes out to the fields, does it still belong to Skowhegan? Who owns this stuff now?

He understands that DEP may not install filtration systems based on testing, but it would make him feel a lot better about what is coming out of his tap.

Harold Bigelow said when he bought his property in the 80s, he had to have a water test for his closing. He had high nitrates...they said he either lived next to a chicken barn or a farm. He went through filtration...they were concerned. Three years ago, he is going with this same system. He happened to get it tested...zero.

Garrett Quinn said what Harold is talking about is a standard water test for a mortgage. He has already had that at his house. It's clear. The test for PFAS isn't conducted by the local labs. The closest one might be in Worcester Massachusetts. It's not a \$90.00 test. It's a \$500.00 test. The filtration system isn't like a water softener or an ultraviolet system. It is a much more in-depth capture system to take out the PFAS. This is a much more intricate scale.

Todd Smith asked how Fairfield identified their problem.

Christine Almand said that there was an issue with milk that was coming from a farm. Some testing occurred and it was somewhat of a domino effect. Once the problem was identified at that site, they started testing further out. There is a map on the State's website that shows all of the sites that they have identified.

Recording Time: 01:20:25

Gail Pelotte asked if the ARP money could be used for this testing.

Christine Almand said she would have to ask that question. She would lean towards, no.

Gail Pelotte asked how Fairfield is paying for their testing.

Christine Almand said that they are not. The State is doing it. The State is paying for the testing. The State is collecting the samples and sending them to the lab in Massachusetts. The State is paying for the filtration systems.

Gail Pelotte asked if Garrett Quinn has a test done, the he would pay for it? If it was identified that there is a trickle-down effect...could his cost be reimbursed? If you have a nice house and a young family...she doesn't like lugging water...and she doesn't use \$50.00 worth of bottled water per month. She would invest that money in that test. She would want to know what is going on. Maybe if we can identify that there is a problem, maybe we could get help more quickly from the State. Maybe we just need that one proven case.

Christine Almand said in some other organizations, where private organizations have done some testing...she doesn't know if that is going to push them. We are in Tier 1. We are priority. She can't answer whether having a positive test here would make them move any faster than what they intend to do. She can't get someone here to answer that question.

Gail Pelotte said maybe some other people that live nearby might want to have the testing done. Maybe some people are still using their water.

Christine Almand said that she would ask them about reimbursement.

Don Skillings said that when he owned a body shop, he owned that hazardous waste indefinitely. He knows that the Town can be held harmless in most things. Does the Town own this hazardous waste forever? Does the State have a stance, where this has become an issue, that this now becomes a legal liability to a town, which would change how that is evaluated? Where the federal government has stepped in with this money, that is obviously to try to take that liability away from local municipalities. It might not change the legal

ramifications that the liability is with the town. They dumped, even though it was through protocols with the DEP. When you safely remove something from a body shop or any hazardous waste. If you do everything legally...double drums, send it through safe harbors...when it is in New Jersey, you still own that drum. If that drum has sprung a leak...you own it forever. Is that the same scenario for a town? We might have some reasoning as to why we might want to help Garrett Quinn.

Steven Govoni said he thinks we are seeing that right now by the reaction by the State and by Susan Collins. They recognize that it is not a town responsibility. They are using their best management practice...that is environmental code. When the State code says that the door pressure has to be set at five pounds, and somebody dies because they needed three pounds...the engineer is not responsible, because he met the requirements of the code. He thinks we are in the same boat here. The Town has done best management practices. The State wouldn't have reacted the way it is, if it wasn't on them for issuing the permits.

Don Skillings said that it is to try to protect the municipalities and the State DEP from legal liabilities.

Christine Almand said that she has her notes from when she spoke to the attorneys...she said "our plant, our sludge, our contract for spreading".

Don Skillings said that legal precedent changed a little bit in the last bit of time. It might be the same answer. Maybe it is a different question that needs to be asked in a different fashion.

Harold Bigelow said that we don't just spread it...we have to get a permit first. We have to get a written permit from somebody. We don't just go out in a field and spread it.

Don Skillings said if you are under the same constraints that a private entity is under, you still own it. Permitted or not, you still own it...cradle to grave. Does a public entity have the same legal liability that a private entity has? That needs to be answered legally. If you have that liability, now you have an incentive to assist to mitigate that exposure.

Charles Robbins said he is most confused about why we can't pay for a private well to be tested.

Christine Almand said that there are constitutional laws about expending public funds on private property.

Jason Gayne said that we know that this is an issue. What are the next steps going forward, if we continue hearing nothing from the State? We know that there is potentially a problem. There are potentially more landowners out there having the same issue. What does the Town do with information going forward?

Christine Almand said that according to the letter from the State, the sampling will begin in November of 2021 and extend into 2022, possibly 2023. That is their timeframe for these tier one communities. As far as communication, she is trying to get someone from DEP here.

Garrett Quinn urged the Town to start making this information...he knows some information is on the Town's website, we have talked about it and it is in the Minutes. It's not just around his house. We've got area by Hilton Hill, off 150 out by the transfer station...we potentially have scores of residents that are affected. We hold public meetings and take public comment over solar farms and doing this and that...but the Town hasn't taken it upon itself to notify residents that you may have a problem here. We know about this problem now...it is time to let the other residents know too. Maybe they are not watching on Facebook. Maybe they are just living their lives and drinking their water, not realizing that there is a problem. He has known since February or March, when he started emailing the Selectmen. It's time to start educating the public on this. We could have a serious problem...he hopes we don't.

Steven Govoni said maybe we draft a letter to the residents telling them to call DEP.

Christine Almand said that we have posted this. There are newspaper articles constantly. We put it not only on our website, but also our Facebook page. It's on our bulletin boards.

Garret Quinn said a map should be published with where this has been dumped. If people live within a half mile of this, your well water may be affected.

Charles Robbins asked if we could draft a letter to DEP, urging them to speed up the process.

Steven Govoni said may other people will start calling. If he starts getting bombarded by Skowhegan, maybe that is what triggers the reaction from the State...so someone at least calls the Town Manager back. They are not even responding to the Town Manager.

Harold Bigelow said isn't this all just waiting for a test? We don't know for sure until we have a test. Why can't we just get a test? Why can't we take it upon out dome to protect our taxpayers?

Paul York said that if we do the test, the State won't acknowledge the outcome of that test.

Christine Almand said that's he received legal advice that we can't constitutionally spend taxpayer dollars to test a private well.

Don Skillings was talking about taxpayer money and the police department...most of it was indiscernible as he was away from the microphone. Could we take money out of an account that is not taxpayer money?

Charles Robbins mentioned Sale of Town Property.

Paul York said if we do that, what have we gained? He doesn't know how we change it...it's not necessarily private. It could be a community issue. Does that change the fact that we are spending money? What does that gain us, except for the fact that...if the State doesn't acknowledge the fact that...our test means nothing to them.

Todd Smith said that the gain would be that we could show them that we have a positive test from the Worcester Lab. Maybe that would...

Harold. Bigelow said we would have proof whether it is or not.

Todd Smith said that we are already Tier 1. We aren't going to get moved up any higher than that.

Paul York said that we owe it to our citizens if there is an issue. We are bound by certain regulations and constitutions. If there is a way that we can do something...if we do have a community issue...

Harold Bigelow said maybe we could come up with some way to get the funding. Bake sale...there must be something confiscated with so many drug deals in town.

Garrett Quinn said that he feels like he is advocating for a lot of people that live near these sites that don't necessarily know about it. He is not just here to get a free test. He is here at a tremendous potential personal loss. If he finds out that his well is infected, think about what that does to his property value. This is about a lot of people in our community that live within a half mile of these spreading sites...finding out if what we are drinking is safe...knowing that when we do have this test, forever that has to be disclosed to people that want to buy. Potentially this could negatively impact the property that he lives at. It's not just risk to the town, he has personal risk here. This goes beyond dollars and cents when you have two kids living at home...we've taken waste from the Town for 30 years...it is in our backyard. Is this impacting the health of my 15-year-old and my 17-year-old...not to mention himself and his wife.

Recording Time: 01:38:38

Christine Almand said that she shared with him months ago, that if he were to pursue a test, both the Town and the DEP would be interested in those results one way or the other. It would be a good indicator of the potential.

Garrett Quinn said if he pays for the test, and realized that the Town has contaminated his drinking water...they are not going to do anything about it anyway...what benefit is it to him to share that information. If we aren't going to get any assistance, why share information with the Town.

Christine Almand said he could certainly take that stance. If we have that one positive case, she doesn't know that it will change the State's mind, but it is definitely something to give them to try to push them to move faster.

Garrett Quinn said he is not here to change the State's mind. He is here to try to change the Town's mind.

Paul York said let's try to pursue whatever avenues we can. We may not have any. This issue should be put on the Unfinished Business list, so it doesn't get kicked to the side. Their timeline does make a whole lot of sense. He is sure that they are overwhelmed by it as well.

Todd Smith said that if we get any information, we will add it to the Agenda so we can bring it forward again.

Charles Robbins asked that a letter be drafted to DEP.

14. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#55	\$	55,764.94 (Payroll #52)
#56	\$	7,934.36 (State Payables)
#57	\$	51,417.95 (Payroll #1)
#58	\$	419,487.97 (FY 2022 Accounts Payable)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>534,605.22</b>

**A motion was made by Paul York and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Treasurer's Warrants as written.**

**Vote: 5/0**

15. Unfinished Business

- Review Policies and Ordinances
- Run of River/Economic Development
- Utilizing Outside Services
- Marketing/Celebrating Skowhegan
- Public Safety Building
- Sidewalks and Bike Trails/Lanes
- Second Bridge
- Solar Power
- Current Fire Station
- Mechanic Street School

Adding PFAS Investigation to Unfinished Business. Leaving PSB on this list for a while longer. Current Fire Station will be brought to the forefront.

16. Other Business

No Other Business was discussed.

17. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

**Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.**

Approved and signed on February 8, 2022

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