

**Minutes  
Town of Skowhegan  
Regular Selectmen's Meeting  
5:30 P.M.  
Tuesday, March 23, 2021**

**\*\*Public wishing to see this meeting may do so from the  
Town of Skowhegan Facebook page\*\***

**Board of Selectmen:**

Paul York, Chairman  
Betty Austin, Vice Chairman  
Charles Robbins  
Todd Smith  
Roger Staples

**Town Manager:**

Christine Almand - Absent

**Executive Secretary:**

Cara L. Mason

Call Selectmen's Meeting to order.

Paul York called the meeting to order.

1. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. Town Manager's Report and Department & Committee Reports

No Town Manager's Report.

Greg Dore

We've begun spring cleanup. We have the mechanical sweeper cleaning the main thoroughfares and the crew has swept the intersections and driveways out to the curb line. The crew has finished the hand work and have begun repairing the damaged lawns from the winter plowing.

The gravel roads have been graded and raked preparing them for the summer months.

We are scheduling interviews for the two position open next week. The heat pumps have been installed. They are working very well!

3. Selectmen's Items

Todd Smith thanked the Highway Department for the sweeping.

A lot of our businesses are hiring.

Charles Robbins said that the weather is beautiful, they were sweeping sidewalks downtown this morning.

Gifford's opened this past weekend. That is a sure sign of better weather to come. Shop local.

Roger Staples said that Dirigo Stitching has been commissioned by the State to manufacture all of the flags for the Bicentennial. They make other products there too.

Betty Austin said that they did a grant or a loan when they started with Dog Not Gone. They have gone out-of-state to Walmart. She gave her friend a hat from there, and he loves it. The hat has an insignia of the 1901 flag on it. They also sell hats and clothing that repels bugs. They have a store right at the factory.

Betty gave a shout out to RFGH for their handling of the COVID vaccines.

Paul York said the weather is turning and it is nice to see people out. Many exciting things will be happening here this summer.

Betty Austin said that Somerset County had a budget meeting last night. It doesn't look like it will be a large rise.

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Approve the Minutes from the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting – March 9, 2021

2. Sign Quit Claim Deeds for the following foreclosure sales:

Kelly Rossignol and Matt Smith – 6 Edward Court – Map 29, Lot 107

Becke Hand – 10 Butler Street (Mobile Home only) – Map 21, Lot 14-6-ON4

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Consent Agenda as written.**

**Vote: 5/0**

**Regular Agenda:**

1. Discussion and decision to appoint Steven Govoni as a member of the Public Safety Building Committee with a term expiring June 30, 2021.

**A motion was made by Todd Smith and seconded by Charles Robbins to appoint Steven Govoni as a member of the Public Safety Building Committee with a term expiring June 30, 2021.**

Paul York said he was part of a Zoom meeting last Thursday. He thinks that he will be a great asset to that project.

**Vote: 5/0**

2. Discussion and decision to appoint the following to the Voter Registration Appeals Board:

Christopher Perkins – Republican Party, term expiring March 23, 2024  
Linda Smith – Democratic Party, term expiring March 23, 2024

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the appointments to the Voter Registration Appeals Board as written.**

**Vote: 5/0**

3. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$12.00 from the RLF Reserve Account to pay for additional recording fees for the Unwined LLC loan.

**A motion was made by Todd Smith and seconded by Charles Robbins to expend an amount not to exceed \$12.00 from the RLF Reserve Account to pay for additional recording fees for the Unwined LLC loan.**

**Vote: 5/0**

Recording Time: 10:20

4. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$3,500.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Training Designation to purchase a 20' portable cargo container.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to expend an amount not to exceed \$3,500.00 from the Police Department Reserve Account, Training Designation to purchase a 20' portable cargo container.**

Chief Bucknam said that the cargo container will hold six rather large, expensive desks that he was able to obtain from Somerset County Emergency Management for free. These will be utilized at the new Public Safety Building. These desks cost in excess of \$30,000.00 if purchased new. They need to be out by April 15<sup>th</sup>. We do not have the storage facilities to store this equipment. Once the building is built, he intends to use this as additional storage. If that doesn't work out, he would donate it to the Transfer Station for their use.

He did look for rental storage space. The cost was close to the same as purchasing the container. He felt that this was a better use of those funds.

Roger Staples asked what the furniture is made out of.

Chief Bucknam said that it is a mixture of wood and metal. They are extremely heavy duty. You can rise and lower them. They adjust to the individual. Each tabletop as they are now is holding 8 monitors at the dispatch center. He showed pictures to the Selectmen on his cell phone.

Roger Staples asked if the container is vented.

Chief Bucknam said that it is not. It is sealed.

Roger Staples said that the temperature changes would have an effect on wood.

Chief Bucknam said that he lived in a container in Iraq for a year. It stays pretty cool and dark inside.

**Vote: 5/0**

5. Discussion and decision to allow Greg Dore to participate in the joint purchase/bids with KVCOG for the purchase of winter salt, calcium chloride and culverts.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to allow Greg Dore to participate in the joint purchase/bids with KVCOG for the purchase of winter salt, calcium chloride and culverts.**

**Vote: 5/0**

6. Discussion and decision to accept the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant in the amount of \$1,967.50. There is a 50% match for this grant.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to accept the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant in the amount of \$1,967.50. There is a 50% match for this grant.**

**Vote: 5/0**

7. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$1,967.50 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, Protective Equipment Designation as the 50% match to purchase 9 sets of protective equipment (total price \$3,935.00).

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to expend an amount not to exceed \$1,967.50 from the Fire Department Reserve Account, Protective Equipment Designation as the 50% match to purchase 9 sets of protective equipment (total price \$3,935.00).**

**Vote: 4/0/1 (Todd Smith abstained)**

8. Discussion and decision to waive the bid process in order to add 2022 paving onto the 2021 contract that we have with Pike Industries.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to waive the bid process in order to add 2022 paving onto the 2021 contract that we have with Pike Industries.**

Todd Smith said he was lost after the last meeting. After talking with Greg Dore it now makes more sense to him.

Paul York said he is still confused. He said he is not a big fan of waiving the bid process. He knows that we do it to befit the Town.

Betty Austin said that it is going to save money.

Todd Smith said that another positive is that we know our costs. He doesn't like to waive a bid process either...but in this instance this might be a benefit to the Town.

Paul York asked about grinding Beech Street and Hanover Street. Why are we grinding those versus Eaton Mountain Road, which is horrible?

Greg Dore said that on Beech Street and Hanover Street, if we put another layer on top, it will cause problems with peoples' driveways. We grind it down so that it doesn't change the elevation. On Eaton Mountain Road we are shimming and paving.

Charles Robbins said he sat down with Greg this afternoon. As much of a numbers guys as he is, he was completely walked in a circle last week with this. He did a good job of explaining the escalation clause. This is a good deal for Skowhegan. He, also, is not a fan of waiving bid processes.

Roger Staples said that at the last meeting we asked for a letter of commitment from Pike, and we received it. He said he is good with it.

**Vote: 5/0**

Recording Time: 22:12

9. Discussion and decision to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for 2022 paving. (This item only necessary if Item #8 fails.)

This item was not necessary since Item #8 passed.

10. Discussion and decision to approve the 2021 Ballfield Use Agreement, the COVID-19 Guidelines and the waiver form.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to approve the 2021 Ballfield Use Agreement, the COVID-19 Guidelines and the waiver form.**

Paul York said that some of the issues we have had in the past are covered in this agreement.

Todd Smith said that it says that they will maintain a six-foot social distance. He is assuming that if the State Guidelines change, that this would also change.

Paul York said that what is happening, even before, the Guidelines are posted and they police themselves.

**Vote: 5/0**

11. Discussion and decision to allow KVCAP to place pinwheels in front of the Municipal Building for the month of April.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to allow KVCAP to place pinwheels in front of the Municipal Building for the month of April.**

Todd Smith asked if there is an event.

Betty Austin said that it is for Family Violence prevention.

Roger Stapples said that they do this every year.

**Vote: 5/0**

12. Discussion and decision to rescind a previous motion allowing Victualer License Public Hearing Notices to be placed in the local newspaper for one day, and to instead require that the notices be posted seven days prior to the Public Hearing per our Ordinance and State Statute.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded y Roger Staples to rescind a previous motion allowing Victualer License Public Hearing Notices to be placed in the local newspaper for one day, and to instead require that the notices be posted seven days prior to the Public Hearing per our Ordinance and State Statute.**

Todd Smith said that it made reference to the applicant being responsible for advertising costs. It doesn't state that in the Ordinance or the Statute. It only mentions the \$30 filing fee. He is not in favor of making our restaurants or inns pay additional costs if they are not needed. He doesn't know that the newspaper is necessarily the way to go, as opposed to an electronic sign or a Facebook message that they can do for free.

Cara Mason said that this seven-day posting would absolve them of that advertising cost, because it would be posted by the Constable. Anytime there is a newspaper ad, they are quite pricy. The last time a liquor license was advertised it was about \$500.00 for a three-day ad. Liquor licenses it is required that it be paid by the applicant. Obviously, we don't want the Town to eat those costs. I the past we also did three days in the newspaper for Victualer Licenses. That changed several years ago, maybe 5 to 8 years ago, we changed that to one day in the newspaper. When we researched the Ordinance and the Statute this time around, it says that it needs to be posted for seven days in public places. This change will take those fees away.

Paul York said that anytime we can make it easier...not making our businesses pay anymore than they have to, that is a good thing.

**Vote: 5/0**

13. Discussion and decision to permanently assign a patrol vehicle to the Chief of Police.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to permanently assign a patrol vehicle to the Chief of Police.**

Paul York said the memo doesn't tell us a whole lot. He would like to know how many cruisers we have and in what condition.

Chief Bucknam said that we currently have seven cruisers. Two of the oldest ones are five and six years old. There is approximately 130,000 plus miles on each of them. One is assigned to the school and one to the hospital. The remaining vehicles are used by the patrol officers for patrol, training, court DMV hearings, etc.

Chief Bucknam said that when he first applied to this position, there was no vehicle permanently assigned to the Police Chief. There were seven applicants that had applied. For every one of them, part of the issue was not having an assigned vehicle. At the time, he decided he had to get to work anyway...so whatever. What he has found, over the years, things have evolved just in four years. Everything is bigger and faster. He finds himself responding to more emergency type situations near and around this town than he would have ever thought. His schedule is 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday...that is just verbiage. His real job is 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If that phone rings, he is coming to work...no matter what is happening. Coming in without a vehicle he is not able to carry the things that he needs...Incident command structure stuff. He needs to be able to set up a command post and direct emergency responders to different locations. It is a complex system. Since he has been chief, he has had three school closings, multiple bomb threats, shootings, stabbings, etc. It just doesn't seem to be getting any slower. We had an incident a week and a half ago where we had an armed standoff. His officers were on scene. He yelled for the deputy chief...when they stepped outside, they had no cars. They left in the sedan. He had to take one of his officer's vehicles when he got there, because he needed to be on the other side. There were officers from every agency in the area. They really needed that centralized area set up to organize. Who's there, where are they at, where are they located...the State came in with a tactical team about an hour later and everything was taken care of. He is very grateful. That town line was 50 feet in front of that truck. 51 feet and it would have been in Skowhegan, and he would have been running that situation. He had no equipment to do it. He had a notebook and a pen. He called Paul York to talk about it. With everything happening these days, he needs to be able to get there and be able to take control and make decisions to ensure the safety of the officers and the public. We have approximately 9,000 to 10,000 people that he is responsible for whether he is here or not here. Those people expect to have a safe night's sleep. If something happens, they are expecting to have something take place to ensure their safety. This is why we need to reassess this vehicle. He needs a vehicle that is permanently assigned, with command equipment in the back...so that no matter what time, day or night, he can respond directly to the scene and be able to take control.

What he didn't want to do was increase any money for the taxpayers. One of his older vehicles is ready to be turned in, but also assigned permanently to the hospital. It's functions up there are running to court for mental health issues, transporting certain individuals, and being a beacon at the hospital to let the public know that we are there. His idea is that the car that is being upfitted right now will be turned over to the supervisors. The current supervisors' car is three years old with approximately 60,000 miles on it, which was going to be returned to the fleet. He would like to assign that vehicle to the Chief. That hospital vehicle will remain at the hospital for one more year. The three-year-old vehicle, with just one driver, will be good for another five or six years. This vehicle will be used for him to take to his residence. He lives

16 miles from the office, which is about 8 miles outside of town. As soon as he crossed that town line, he is back to work. The vehicle will be utilized for business purposes only. He has a rough draft of a policy on it. If he is on vacation the vehicle will be parked here and the Deputy Chief would take control of it.

Recording Time: 38:54

Betty Austin said that she appreciates the police departments connection with the community. People really enjoyed the speed details. She asked if more of those would happen.

Chief Bucknam said, absolutely. When he crossed that town line, he is back at work. There were 8,000 plus people that were following those posts. He got drug intel from them, because they would take the time to reach out to him. They contacted him regarding issues they had on the roads. It was really a good public connection. He was able to go out to areas that had been reported as problem areas, prior to his day starting at 8:00 a.m. He was working traffic control at 6:00 or 6:30 a.m. It was a good relationship builder with the community.

Roger Staples aid that he was surprised that a vehicle wasn't assigned when he was hired. Most other towns assign their Police Chief a vehicle.

Chief Bucknam said he isn't sure why Skowhegan hasn't done that. He was told when he took the job that that isn't how it is done here. We are twice as busy now as we were in 2017. He feels that he really needs to get ahead of this. It's not if something happens, it's when something happens. He needs to be prepared for it.

Paul York said that our cruisers have doubled from what we used to have. It was always that they are town vehicles, and they are here. They weren't take-home vehicles. We have never had a designated Chief's car. We are recognizing through the budget process we had gotten ourselves in a hole. We weren't rotating vehicles like we should have been. By not putting money in the budget each year...we then had to buy three vehicles in one year.

Right now we are in a rotation schedule for replacing vehicles. How is this going to affect that?

Chief Bucknam said that vehicle 5, which is the one that will be pushed forward for another year, will be the one that is traded in. By keeping that vehicle, it just increases his cars. Car 2 is already paid for. All of the equipment is paid for. There is no additional funding in order to make this happen. We are looking at gas and regular maintenance. He will utilize grants for the command center equipment that he needs.

Roger Staples said his concern is, who's next. Which department head is going to be next? Given the nature of the job, he thinks the request is warranted.

Charles Robbins said we currently have seven cars in the fleet. Is the one that is being outfitted, number eight?

Chief Bucknam answered, yes.

Charles Robbins asked if there was also a detective's sedan.

Chief Bucknam said that there is an unmarked sedan. That is not included in the eight cars.

Charles Robbins said he called around. Just about every neighboring town, the Chief has a take-home car. The one question he wanted to ask the Town Manager,,she is not here...why has Skowhegan never had a Chief's car.

Greg Dore said that in the past the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, Code Enforcement Officer and the Road Commissioner had the opportunity to have a dedicated vehicle or get paid mileage. The Police Chief, at the time, wanted to get paid mileage. The Fire Chief, at the time, also chose to be paid mileage. As Road Commissioner, he always took the Town truck home. The policy was then changed, that we couldn't take them home.

Paul York said that there are some things that might have to change, if we go through with this. We will need a policy in place to move forward with this. He isn't against this. He certainly understands why this is being asked for. He would like to have the Town Manager look over the draft policy first, to make sure there isn't anything she would like to add, before it comes to us to review and approve. We need to see if there is another policy that would need to be changed. We can't override a policy unless we change it. The Town Manager may want to weigh in on this.

He wants to also make sure that if the vehicle is assigned to the Chief, that it isn't taken out by an officer and then the Chief is left without a vehicle.

Chief Bucknam said that moving forward with the vote will help build that policy. He is not sure what the point would be. If it comes back and then it is decided that you are not good with that. He has then spent time on this when he could be focusing his attention on something else. If it is voted on, he still has to draft the policy and get it to the Town Manager, fine tune it and get it to the Selectmen. Once the policy is approved, then we are good to go.

Paul York asked what would change if they voted it at the next meeting.

**An amended motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to permanently assign a patrol vehicle to the Chief of Police, once a policy has been reviewed by the Town Manager and approved by the Board of Selectmen.**

Todd Smith said that the way he understands it is that none of this is going to happen right now. The Chief can't have the car until the new car comes in. We have a given amount of time before this transition will take place.

He understands the importance of incident command. He does see the value in that in any number of situations. He also is concerned about the Town Manager having input in this. He checked with other towns, and they all said that the Chief has an assigned vehicle. Why is Skowhegan so behind the eight ball on this? He believes that we can move on this tonight and then have the Town Manager give input on the policy.

Charles Robbins said that if a policy needs to be changed, even if we vote on this...it is still null and void until we amend the policy.

Betty Austin said that this would be contingent upon Christine looking at the policy, and checking our other policies.

Paul York said that he wants the Town Manager to weigh in before this becomes gospel.

**Vote: 5/0**

Recording Time: 56:10

Paul York said that this has our support, he just wants to make sure that we cover all of our bases, before it actually moves forward. He said he appreciates all that the Chief has done for the Town of Skowhegan. This will make it so that he is better able to serve the Town.

Betty Austin said that a few years ago all of the Selectmen had to take emergency management classes. One of the biggest things she remembers from that is the chain of command. She learned a lot on those classes.

14. Discussion and decision to move forward with the changes to the Floodplain Management Ordinance and the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

**A motion was made by Todd Smith and seconded by Betty Austin to move forward with the changes to the Floodplain Management Ordinance and the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.**

**Vote: 5/0**

15. Discussion and decision to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow Consolidated Communications to place one pole on East River Road, 2,074 feet south east of Swain Hill Road.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow Consolidated Communications to place one pole on East River Road, 2,074 feet south east of Swain Hill Road.**

**Vote: 5/0**

16. Discussion regarding sludge disposal.

Paul York said if anybody has been following the news, there is a big issue in Fairfield. The State is trying to correct and figure it all out. Hopefully everybody read and understood the memo...it was a lot.

Roger Staples asked if any residential wells have been tested.

Brent Dickey said, none that he was aware of.

Paul York said that we don't even know if we have an issue here. The Town cannot pay for testing private wells. We all have gotten the emails and spoken to individuals who have concerns about our sludge disposal. For us to move forward, we need to know if we even have an issue. It is all regulated by the State and we are not doing anything illegal.

Roger Staples said he understands the concern. If it were him, he would get his well tested. He hasn't seen that anybody has had their wells tested.

Paul York said that the conversation he had with an individual was that he was going to have his well tested. He has had his well tested previously, but the testing didn't cover this.

Brent Dickey said that the cost is about \$450.00 per test.

Todd Smith asked if the decision is eventually made to have this hauled to the Crossroads Landfill, what would they do differently with it there than what we are doing?

Brent Dickey said that it would be completely different. Right now, it come off the belt, after being squeezed and dried, in a form that is stiff enough to handle. If it was decided that it was going to the landfill, it would just go into a truck and straight to Waste Management.

Right now, we are composting it. That is a lot of work, a lot of input, a lot of reports. There is a lot that goes into treating it and making sure it is safe for distribution. There is a lot to keeping up with the testing. It would be a huge difference.

Todd Smith asked if our compost is tested for these chemicals.

Brent Dickey said that it is tested. That testing for PFAS just began in 2019, and is done twice a year. The straight sludge is tested once per year.

Todd Smith said that we could eliminate the testing and the extra work just by trucking it to Norridgewock.

Brent Dickey answered, correct.

Paul York asked cost-wise, is it going to save us money.

Brent Dickey said that it is pretty close to the same cost. It comes down to what is best for Skowhegan, long-term...and what the environmental implications would be. People had issues when we used to spread raw sludge. It was a very strong, nutrient rich material. Over the years that had changed, and we are not spreading that raw material anymore. By composting you are basically taking the nutrients out of it. Is it best for the Town and the environment to utilize it or to bury it in a landfill? He hates to take something that has value and put it in a hole in the ground in Norridgewock. He wrote this memo, basically as what if we can no longer spread composted sludge.

Paul York said that if we decided to have it trucked, we are basically at their mercy. If they decide to increase their fees.

Brent Dickey said that we would be locked into a contract with them for whatever the future cost is.

Todd Smith asked about the testing, and if the numbers have been at an acceptable level.

Brent Dickey said that the numbers are above the standards that DEP set. He assumes that they realized that we weren't going to be able to meet the values that they gave. 2.5 parts per billion. We have to test for three different compounds...PFDS, PFOA and PFAS. 97% of facilities have failed on the PFOA and PFAS numbers. We are significantly above that. He doesn't know why they set that at a number that he believes they knew we couldn't meet. We meet that number by reducing the application rate. That is how we can continue to do what we are doing.

Todd Smith said that these chemicals are not just in sludge. These chemicals are everywhere in our everyday life. We are not land-spreading them...so they are not as likely to seep into the water table. As opposed to being in a pair of gloves or boots or in a frying pan.

Brent Dickey said he doesn't think that people realize that we don't generate PFAS...we receive it. Whatever is being put into the system is what we get. Our facility was never intended to treat this type of waste. We are a biological wastewater facility. We take out solids and organics.

Roger Staples asked if composting mitigates any of this chemical material.

Brent Dickey said that numbers of the one test that has been done on the raw material passed all of the parameters. Our compost has significantly higher PFOA and PFAS numbers. This is very unusual. He can't imagine that there is anything in the sawdust that would cause this. We have done four or five tests on the finished compost...all of them had elevated numbers.

Roger Staples said he would be interested to know how that happens.

Brent Dickey said that they use a bucket loader...and they blow air into the piles. The compost piles get up to 155 degrees. Seems very odd that we are getting elevated numbers from that.

Roger Staples said that should be presented to the DEP.

Brent Dickey said that the DEP is so busy. He put in a minor revision to our permit for composting last August. He has a draft that was written in September and he is still waiting for somebody to sign it. They are right out straight and have their hands full.

Paul York said that moving forward, we don't even know if we have an issue. He doesn't think that the answer is taking our sludge and moving it to another community. If we are having an issue, we don't want people getting sick because we are spreading sludge either. Moving forward we should monitor the situation closely...which we are. If we see changes or issues then we can address doing something different if we have to. The Town Manager is following this and the State is still trying to figure it out. He isn't really sure what else we can do.

Todd Smith said we just need to keep monitoring the numbers and doing what we are doing.

Betty Austin said that Brent Dickey does a great job. If you haven't been, you should take a tour of the facility. It is very educational.

Roger Staples said he doesn't see how we could act on this without seeing some proof that there is any kind of contamination.

Brent Dickey said that Skowhegan isn't a manufacturing community, like Waterville or Fairfield. It is likely that there will be some, but less likely that it will be elevated.

The Selectmen thanked Brent Dickey for coming in.

17. Discussion regarding a Moratorium for solar development.

Betty Austin asked if we were just discussing this.

Paul York said it is up for discussion. It is becoming a hot item. The Planning Board is asking for a Moratorium. These are popping up fast. The State is starting to realize that it could be a problem. They are trying to figure out how to address it and how to make it more beneficial for municipalities. It is a work in progress...it hit them fast too.

Todd Smith said they did too many. He is in favor of this moratorium, so we can put our ducks in a row. Skowhegan is really caught behind the eight ball on this. These projects are really beneficial to the landowner, but not to the town. Under a certain megawatt project, no personal property taxes are paid to the town on any of the equipment that is installed. Some of these projects are exceeding the multi-million-dollar price range.

He said he doesn't want anyone to tell him what he can and cannot do with his land, but our job here is to figure out what is best for the Town. Eliminating these smaller projects might be what is best for the Town. We are losing developable land that will never become a housing project, or a strip mall or something of that nature.

The downfall is that if we encourage the larger solar projects, it takes up more land...but at least there is a financial benefit to the Town with property taxes. This isn't necessarily happening in southern Maine. They are targeting areas like Skowhegan, going and knocking on landowners' doors. In Canaan and Norridgewock where they already have something in place...those lands may be off limits.

We are being flooded with these. He just got notification today of another site plan visit on West Front Street. Todd said that he would be in favor of having a moratorium until we have had time to put together a plan to slow this game down a bit.

Charles Robbins asked if putting this in place would stop any of the projects that have already started the process.

Todd Smith said that he believes that it may unless the site plan application has already been submitted.

Charles Robbins said that this is obviously an issue of the Planning Board is bringing it to us.

Paul York said that this is becoming the new cash crop. It isn't necessarily going to stop future development. Just because Charles has 100 acres...he may allow somebody to put a solar farm there and lease his land to them. But other wise he may not do anything with it, because he doesn't want to sell the land. He has a hard time telling people what they can't do with their land.

Todd Smith said he struggles with that too.

Paul York said it isn't any different than somebody deciding to cut their land.

Charles Robbins said he isn't a fan of anybody telling him what he can do with his land. However, if he decides to develop that land with a building...he would be taxed on that. Right now, if he decided to do a solar farm, he would not be taxed on that.

Roger Staples asked who decides that we can't tax at under 5 meg.

Todd Smith said the State decided that. The one out on the Steven's Road right now comes in a 4.99 meg. There is a reason for that. They know that there is more money in their pocket if it's under 5.

Roger Staples said he had talked to Bryan about this today. He doesn't begrudge an ex dairy farmer who has been pushed out of business and wants to use his land this way.

Todd Smith said he would do it too.

Paul York said it isn't fair if this would put a stop to projects that are already in the process. Now we want to change the rules.

Bryan Belliveau said it would only apply retroactively if that is how the Selectmen chose to handle it.

Recording Time: 01:29:54

Bryan Belliveau said that a State Representative is proposing a 90-day moratorium at the state level that they will vote on next month. We definitely need some language in our Site Plan Review Ordinance that references renewable energy sources. The Planning Board has nothing to make these decisions and how they impact abutters.

Betty Austin said that the State moratorium wouldn't take place until 90 days after they adjourn in June, unless they did it as an emergency.

Paul York said that the State is realizing that there is an issue here...that is why they are talking about it as well. He thinks maybe we need some language, but he doesn't think that we should, be constantly telling people what they can do with their property. He doesn't care for that.

Todd Smith said if we were to give the Planning Board some guidance...either a subsection in the Site Plan Review or a straight up ordinance...we look at it...kick it back or pass it through...and then it goes to the voters. He thinks in 90 days the Planning Board could come up with something for us to review.

Maybe the notification for abutters is extended. Although we followed the notification process, many people were upset that they were not notified.

Roger Staples said that the Town Manager said that abutters were notified.

Todd Smith said that they absolutely were.

Paul York said it was other people that are close by, but not abutters, that complained about not being notified.

Paul York said he doesn't mind if we slow it down...it may not change anything...so we can get a handle on it, and figure out what the people want.

Todd Smith said if we wait until the Legislature acts, we could get 15 more applications next week. We could be waiting until August before the State moratorium starts.

Recording Time: 01:36:13

Charles Robbins asked if there was anything from the public on Facebook.

Cara Mason read "the ordinance being used doesn't even contain the word solar".

Paul York asked Bryan Belliveau if he thought 90 days would be enough time for the Planning Board to come up with something.

Bryan Belliveau said that their next meeting is April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Cara Mason said we would be talking about a very short timeframe to get something on the Warrant for Town Meeting in June. Warrants go out in May, which would mean a Public Hearing on the ordinance in April. Or a special Town Meeting at some point later on.

Paul York said this isn't an issue that is going to go away anytime soon.

Roger Staples said that people talk about development...this is development. Not everybody likes certain types of development. Not everybody wants a strip mall next to their house. This reminds him of cell towers when that first came about.

Charles Robbins said that Planning Board brought this to us to act on it. He feels that we should do our due diligence.

Paul York said that if we are going to do something it needs to get to Town Meeting...we are pushing it to make it to this Town Meeting. Maybe it is enough of a hot topic that we do hold a special town meeting...he doesn't know. He still has an issue with telling people what they can do with their land. He doesn't have a problem with slowing it down and giving the Town a change to have some language that will help with these.

Charles Robbins said that it will stop it until we get the language in place to protect others.

Paul York asked who we are protecting and who are we not protecting.

Todd Smith said we are not against anybody's project. We just want some guidance to move forward with future projects.

Roger Staples asked why an ordinance couldn't be worked on without a moratorium.

Paul York asked at what point you cut it off, if you start changing the rules.

Roger Staples said he is against a moratorium.

**A motion was made by Todd Smith and seconded by Charles Robbins to enact a 90-day moratorium for solar development.**

Charles Robbins said it is not like we are doing something that the State isn't considering doing.

**Vote: 4/1 (Roger Staples opposed)**

Charles Robbins said that we are not stopping this. We are giving the Planning Board time.

Paul York said that we are stopping it for 90 days.

Bryan Belliveau asked if this would stop applications that were already in process.

Paul York said that it would not.

18. Discussion regarding the Purchasing Policy.

Todd Smith said that this was discussed at the last meeting. There was a purchase that ended up being an online purchase. The fire hose purchase. He would describe that purchase as an Amazon for fire departments. There is no representation...no brick and mortar. It is just a straight online purchase. That is fine, if that is what we choose to do. His request is that we have more information about where these purchases are coming from.

On this Agenda we approved two expenditures. The fire department did a good job of letting us know here the vendors are located. Chief Bucknam's request just stated a dollar amount/from. It would be very simple just to add a check box on the form with a description...online retailer...local retailer...or something to that nature. So that we know that we are spending money as close to home as possible. It seems like a pretty simple thing to do.

Paul York said he isn't sure that it changes anything in regards to our purchases. With anything, the more information that we have, the better. We voted because the price was what the price was...that is how we vote. It is nice to know where these companies are.

Charles Robbins said it only takes a second for them to jot down where the company is.

Todd Smith said we had a conversation with the highway department. We had a contractor and nobody knew where they were from.

Betty Austin said she didn't think that we needed to change the purchasing policy. We just need to let the department heads know that we would like to know this information.

The Selectmen decided to change the Purchasing Form to add a location for vendors.

19. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#71	\$	47,519.71 (Payroll #10)
#72	\$	46,951.22 (Payroll #11)
#73	\$	12,338.26 (State Payables)
#74	\$	1,432,910.15 (FY 2021 Accounts Payables)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,539,719.34</b>

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the Treasurer's Warrants as written.**

**Vote: 5/0**

20. Other Business

21. 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

Paul York - Public Safety Building – Solidifying materials for the walls and ceilings, soundproofing and some changes to the apparatus bays. Went with a more traditional fire station look. We are currently on schedule with the timeline. Putting in a roadway to get to the back acreage was discussed.

Roger Staples asked if it was posted. He didn't know about it.

Paul York said he should have gotten an email. Check with Chief Howard to make sure you are on the list.

Todd Smith said that Steve Govoni made some good points at that meeting.

22. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

**Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.**

Approved and signed on April 13, 2021.

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