

**Minutes  
Town of Skowhegan  
Regular Selectmen's Meeting  
5:30 P.M.  
Tuesday, May 11, 2021  
Community Center – 39 Poulin Drive**

**\*\*Anyone wishing to see this meeting may also 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

**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

The Clerk's Office is temporarily closed due to a positive Covid-19 case. We expect to reopen on Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. If your transaction can wait until Monday, please do so. If it is urgent, please call 474-6900 for an appointment. Vehicle and boat registration renewals and fishing and hunting licenses may be done online. For more information, visit our website.

I have a request from Shelley's Toy Box at 66 Water Street to use the sidewalk on Water Street for a sidewalk sale May 21 – May 23 from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. I'd ask that the Selectmen consider approving this request.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to allow Shelley's Toy Box to hold a sidewalk sale at 66 Water Street May 21<sup>st</sup> through May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.**

**Vote: 5/0**

3. Selectmen's Items

Todd Smith said that the Lion's Club has a baked bean dinner on Saturday with curbside pickup next to the Chamber.

The last week has been National Nurses Week.

Maine Fire Equipment has a prize basket valued at over \$1,000.00. Sign up, you might win.

Charles Robbins mentioned a Facebook article recognizing Tom & Dick LaCasse as two of New England's remaining cobblers.

Roger Staples said he hopes that everyone affected by the recent positive COVID-19 case in the office are doing well.

He recommended checking out the tulips downtown. They are beautiful.

Betty Austin reminded people that the Rotary Club is selling tehri Vidalia onions.

Saturday at 10:00 a.m. there will be a summer fridge celebration at the Community Refrigerator by the Chamber.

4. Department & Committee Reports

Gail Pelotte said that absentee ballots are available. She has not had it put on the sign yet, with only two of them in the office. She hopes we will be back to normal on Monday. We won't have the school ballots until the 26<sup>th</sup>. She encouraged everyone to use the drop box and not to mail them back.

Chief Howard said that we do have a job listing. We will be joining Waterville in their hiring process for this position. We are hoping to have a list that we can pull from over the next year.

Chief Bucknam introduced Officer Willhoite.

He reminded everyone to wear their seatbelts.

More traffic enforcement requests are coming in. He has been coming in early to work on this.

**Public Hearing:**

1. Public Hearing. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for an On-Premises Malt, Wine and Spirits License for:

Unwined LLC  
151 Water Street

Paul York opened the Public Hearing at 5:39 p.m.

There was no discussion.

Paul York closed the Public Hearing at 5:40 p.m.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to approve the Application for an On-Premises Malt, Wine and Spirits License for Unwined LLC.**

**Vote: 5/0**

Recording Time: 12:01

**Presentation:**

1. Jon Moody will give an overview of the MSAD 54 proposed budget.

Jon Moody presented an overview of the MSAD 54 proposed budget.

Roger Staples asked if there are still large increases in special ed funding.

Jon Moody said that last year we had to pay for those out-of-district special ed students as if they were there every day. This increased our costs significantly. We have had some higher cost students move in as well. We hope to use Bloomfield, after the project, where we could bring students in from other districts and have a revenue source. He believes that the cost of special education will continue to go up.

Roger Staples asked if there is state and federal funding for special ed.

Jon Moody said that there is up to a threshold. The problem is that with higher poverty, you have higher special ed numbers.

Christine Almand said that we are anticipating higher revenue sharing than we initially anticipated. She asked if the school is in a similar situation.

Jon Moody said that they have heard nothing. If that were to happen, we couldn't use it to lower taxes this year. It would go into the fund balance and we would use it to lower taxes next year.

Todd Smith asked if the laptop program would continue after the federal funding stops.

Jon Moody said that the general answer is yes...but not in the same way. We have been using a five-year lease/purchase. We had gotten that ramped up so we had almost 1:1 at the high school. We were using Chrome Books. Their lifespan was about three to four years. We have since switched to Apple products. We have Apple products that we are still using eight years out. We are planning to build back up and have a long-term plan. Staffing is going to be the biggest challenge with that.

Recording Time: 36:47

**Consent Agenda:**

1. Approve the Minutes from the following:

Regular Selectmen's Meeting – April 13, 2021

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to approve the Consent agenda as written.**

**Vote: 5/0**

**Regular Agenda:**

1. Discussion and decision to appoint Zebulon Green and Kelly Merrill as members of the Opera House Committee with terms expiring June 30, 2021.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to appoint Zebulon Green and Kelly Merrill as members of the Opera House Committee with terms expiring June 30, 2021.**

**Vote: 5/0**

2. Discussion and decision to appoint Matt Keister as a member of the Conservation Commission with a term expiring June 30, 2025.

**A motion was made by Roger Staples and seconded by Todd Smith to appoint Matt Keister as a member of the Conservation Commission with a term expiring June 30, 2025.**

Todd Smith wanted to emphasize the importance of allowing non-residents to be part of our committees. This is an example of how valuable that can be.

**Vote: 5/0**

3. Discussion and decision to approve the Application for License for Incorporated Civic Organization in order for the Skowhegan Regional Chamber to serve alcohol from 2:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. from June 18, 2021 through June 20, 2021 as part of the Central Maine BBQ Cookoff at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Betty Austin to approve the Application for License for Incorporated Civic Organization in order for the Skowhegan Regional Chamber to serve alcohol from 2:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. from June 18, 2021 through June 20, 2021 as part of the Central Maine BBQ Cookoff at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds.**

**Vote: 5/0**

4. Discussion and decision to approve the renewal Applications for On-Premise Malt, Wine and Spirits Licenses for:

The Miller's Table, LLC  
42 Court Street

Bloomfield's Tavern  
40 Water Street

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to approve the renewal Applications for On-Premise Malt, Wine and Spirits Licenses for The Miller's Table, LLC and Bloomfield's Tavern.**

Todd Smith said that the Miller's Table had listed Bloomfield Elementary as the nearest school. They also listed the Charter School which makes more sense...but Bloomfield is across the river.

Cara Mason said that they should also be listed in actual distances, not in blocks.

**Vote: 5/0**

5. Discussion and decision to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for the engineering and design work for the Jewett Street MPI Project.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger Staples to allow Greg Dore to go out to bid for the engineering and design work for the Jewett Street MPI Project.**

Todd Smith asked if this was brought to us by the State, or is this something we went to the State with.

Greg Dore said that it is both. In the Second Bridge Committee meetings it had come up. The pole had been hit several times on that corner, and her approached the State about doing something to fix that problem.

Todd Smith said that trucks that are turning right there are doing so to get to Route 150. They should be going left at the post office coming from the bridges. Coming west, they should be taking 150.

Greg Dore said that he believes that most of these are local trucks...not trucks traveling through.

Paul York asked if there was a reason why...what are we going to disturb and what impact will it have on businesses. He does not disagree that that intersection has been an issue over the years. We semi-corrected that by moving the pole.

Recording Time: 43:44

Paul York asked why we have any trucks turning onto Jewett from Madison Avenue. If we intend to widen that corner, that is going to affect a business on that corner.

Greg Dore said that is why we are going out to bid for design. He envisions not taking any more property than what we have in the right of way. He wants to work with the business owner to find something that we can do that will allow for the largest turning radius possible. We won't know until we get the design, exactly how much that is going to affect that business owner. If the design is not acceptable to us, then the project will fail. We need to do something there. He believes that it will enhance that business. People won't be cutting that corner. You can't park a vehicle there as it is. We shouldn't not do it, because of the unknowns. Let's get the design done, so that it is acceptable to the State with the turning radius. This is phase 1 of a big project.

Listening to Jon Moody tonight talk about a bus garage going in on Jewett Street. That is going to be a tough corner for busses to make. We need to do something about widening it. It doesn't all have to come out of that one corner. We can move the sidewalk over...move the center-line over.

Roger Staples said that the lane and a half coming off of Jewett Street is so tight.

Greg Dore said that is not supposed to be two lanes. It is one lane.

Roger Staples said there are two lights there.

Greg Dore said that there are two lights everywhere in case one fails. People try to use it as two lanes, but it is not intended to be that way. Moving that center-line over will narrow that lane down, so it won't be able to be used that way.

Betty Austin asked if the bid would specify to take over the least or no property.

Greg Dore said that our direction to the engineer is to work with that land owner.

Don Skillings said he has 20 years at that corner. He has seen the pole get hit a few times over the course of 20 years. He doesn't know what local traffic that Greg Dore is referring to...40-foot box trucks. Steve's Snacks uses tractor trailers and they come from the other directions and back into his property. There is a known truck route.

He backed his truck up so that his trailer hitch was touching the existing ADA access to his building. He then measured from the bumper of his truck to the existing white line on Jewett Street...24 feet. If he takes the proposed corner, which he outlined...if he loses more than 4 feet, he will not be compliant with any parking lot guidelines. On a 90-degree angle you need 20 feet to back out of a space. He already can't do that with his truck. He lost two parking spots when they moved the pole. He asked at that emergency time, to not move the pole...to wait to see if we could put the pole on the other side of the intersection. He was told that it was too expensive and that they couldn't do it. Less than a year later we are back here revisiting the pole that was moved. It hasn't been hit since it was moved. He has been in business in this town since 1997. We were downtown, but had no parking. We moved to get parking. Now he is losing his parking to the Town. He has five employees, the salon has two

and he has a tenant upstairs. That is eight parking spaces. He has to manage his parking, so his customers have a place to park. He asked how he can do this if he keeps losing his parking lot. He is not seeing a business-friendly environment with this proposal. You should not be allowed to take a right hand turn off of Madison Avenue with a large truck. Moving the white line back would solve this, but that wasn't taken. That could have left the pole where it was. We have a truck route. He does not see the urgency...taking more of a very small property from a business in town.

With all of his years on that Board, he has yet to see us go out to bid for engineering and not do the project. Greg Dore referenced the turn by the hospital...we made it work for us. Making it work for the business owner is what is important in this scenario. He begged to please stop taking his parking lot. He said he knows that it is in the right-of-way. He can't lose another six feet. Is the Town going to accept responsibility if you shave that corner, and people back out of his parking lot and start causing accidents? It's a right-turning intersection. Someone backing out of his parking lot doesn't have a chance.

The bus problem can be solved by taking 150 to the bus garage.

Paul York said that the design may not be looking to take any of that. This is to find out what the engineered design would look like.

Don Skillings said that you cannot do that turning radius without taking his corner.

Paul York said that trucks have been turning there for years.

Don Skillings said that if they move that white line back two more feet, you can't back out of his parking lot without causing issues. They are going to take Walgreen's land as well.

Paul York said if you move the center-line over...because that is not two lanes there...you have room to play with. That will stop people from using that as two lanes and create more room for right hand turns onto Jewett Street.

Don Skillings said that we are fixing a problem that doesn't exist, if trucks are taking 150 from downtown. If that is enforced, then we don't have a problem there. Maybe move the line so people don't treat it like it's two lanes.

Paul York said that this project is more than just right-hand turns. It is replacing and moving street lights. When this is designed, they may not take anything, because you now have the space. He understands the limited space on that corner. The Selectmen have the authority to not do this project if the design is not what we want.

Don Skillings said that the Selectmen also have the authority to say that it is not truly an issue.

Recording Time: 01:01:19

Don Skillings asked if there has been an incident since the pole has been moved, last summer. The issue is resolved.

Paul York said that we are also upgrading the street lights as part of this project.

Don Skillings said that they double stack employee vehicles in order to leave two or three spots for patrons.

Charles Robbins asked what happens if this plan would make his parking lot illegal.

Don Skillings said he knows it is the right-of-way and the Town has the right.

Paul York said that the Selectmen don't have to accept taking more of the parking lot.

Don Skillings said that he came to the Selectmen about the pole. He was told that they had the right and that it was going there. He said that he pleaded with them to not put the guidewire there. The guidewire is exactly where they wanted to put it. He lacks trust in the Selectmen's ability to do that.

Paul York said that the pole at that time needed to be moved. Knowing that the pole was going to be temporary...

Don Skillings said that he understands that Greg Dore thinks that he is helping him with that corner. In the original conversation he had planned on removing the curbing. Don Skillings told him that if he removed the curbing, people would come flying through the parking lot. Greg Dore said that he wouldn't remove the curbing. This is not helping his business.

Paul York said he hoped that an engineer would look at the whole situation, and not make it a dangerous situation for people backing out of that parking lot.

Betty Austin said that getting rid of that pole may mean that there is more space. We should see what they come up with. It is more public, so people know. There will be opportunity to vote on it, once we have the engineered design.

Don Skillings asked that he be copied on anything.

Paul York said that we are trying to keep people informed with any project that we do. If we are failing there, then that is something that we need to work on. Whether or not there is another way to do it is something we need to figure out. We certainly don't want to take anymore of the parking lot.

Todd Smith said that the memo states that the engineering firm will meet with the owner of State Farm Insurance to ensure minimal disruption of his property. He is glad that this is in there. That will give Don Skilling first hand input. Todd Smith asked if we could move the center line as a temporary measure, instead of moving on this right now.

Greg Dore said he didn't think we should do that until after we have the design. In this design we want to make this intersection better, with minimal destruction of his property. This corner is a small piece of this whole project. Moving the light, gives us a single mast that hangs out over Madison Avenue. It also gives us the ability to put a light on the pole for Park Street.



There is no light there now, and there should be. We don't know how much this will affect Walgreens until we get the design done. Whomever is doing the work for us, is going to want to make us happy, so that we go on with the project. He is confident in saying that it is going to be acceptable.

**Vote: 4/1 (Charles Robbins opposed)**

Recording Time: 01:13:43

Christine Almand said that she has spoken to Greg Dore and all correspondence regarding this will be forwarded to Don Skillings.

6. Discussion and decision to allow Chief Bucknam to apply for the Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2021 Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant in the amount of \$2,400.00. There is a 50% match for this grant.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Charles Robbins to allow Chief Bucknam to apply for the Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2021 Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant in the amount of \$2,400.00. There is a 50% match for this grant.**

**Vote: 5/0**

7. Discussion and decision to accept the U.S. Department of Justice, 2019 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant in the amount of \$7,304.00. There is no match for this grant.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger staples to accept the U.S. Department of Justice, 2019 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant in the amount of \$7,304.00. There is no match for this grant.**

**Vote: 5/0**

8. Discussion and decision to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow CMP and Consolidated Communications of Northern New England to install 2 poles on St James Street, 152 feet east of the intersection of St James Street and Parlin Street.

**A motion was made by Charles Robbins and seconded by Roger staples to approve the Pole Location Permit to allow CMP and Consolidated Communications of Northern New England to install 2 poles on St James Street, 152 feet east of the intersection of St James Street and Parlin Street.**

**Vote: 5/0**

9. Discussion and decision to expend an amount not to exceed \$500.00 from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Cemetery Maintenance Designation to close the well at the East Skowhegan Cemetery.

**A motion was made by Todd Smith and seconded by Charles Robins to expend an amount not to exceed \$500.00 from the Cemetery Reserve Account, Cemetery Maintenance Designation to close the well at the East Skowhegan Cemetery.**

Paul York said that it is old and crumbling and is not safe.

**Vote: 5/0**

10. Discussion and decision to place the following article on the Town Meeting Warrant:

To see if the Town will vote to accept the gift of a twenty-foot-wide sewer easement from Joey P. Joseph (Map 4, Lot 8) to transport sewage from the East Madison Road to the Town's sewer line located under Madison Avenue/Route 201 with the understanding that the Town of Skowhegan will maintain and repair any pipes, lines and equipment installed by the Town of Skowhegan.

Tabled from the last meeting with updated language, approved by the Town's attorney. Darrell Blodgett also submitted a proposal for the Town to purchase an easement from him for \$19,500.00.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Roger staples to place the following article on the Town Meeting Warrant:**

**To see if the Town will vote to accept the gift of a twenty-foot-wide sewer easement from Joey P. Joseph (Map 4, Lot 8) to transport sewage from the East Madison Road to the Town's sewer line located under Madison Avenue/Route 201 with the understanding that the Town of Skowhegan will maintain and repair any pipes, lines and equipment installed by the Town of Skowhegan.**

Todd Smith said he reviewed the information. He found some discrepancies in Chief Howard's memo. The options now are much closer in price. He still questions a couple of the costs. The Joey Joseph option is less money, but he is not convinced that that is the best option. The mobility costs are different. The site is the same, the mobilization would be the same, but the costs are different. It was explained to him that perhaps the equipment is going to be bigger. We know that that is not the case. That brings the cost even closer. One of the other questions is about pavement. If we are not digging up across the roads, why are the pavement costs as high for the Darrell Blodgett option? There was a difference in cost of pipes, due to the estimates being written on different days, so the cost of materials changed. These are just projections. We don't have any drawings.

Greg Dore said that with the Blodgett line, you are going to be in the road, anywhere from 5 to 8 feet of the travel lane. We can't put the pipe in the ditch. You are going to have to cut that asphalt from the Public Safety Building all the way down to Blodgett's. he can't answer for the engineer's inconsistencies. He said if he was bidding this job, he would want a higher contingency for the Blodgett line because there is ledge there. Once you hit ledge it is very expensive. In reality it is going to cost more money. With the Joey Joseph project, we are replacing a line. We don't have to worry about ledge. We are putting a pipe where there is already a pipe. The only thing he didn't see in the estimates was that when they get to

Madison Avenue, there will be a \$4,000.00 cost to install a manhole. It is going to be less expensive to go across than to cut out all of that asphalt and hitting ledge.

Charles Robbins asked where the Joey Joseph line is.

Greg Dore said that it is between the hotel and the garage.

Betty Austin said that we need to remember that this is on the Town Meeting Warrant. The Town will be voting on this.

Christine Almand said that the information in the packets was received just before we put out the Agenda. We had similar questions, so we got updated responses. That is why there is a new memo. The new memo does take into account putting the line through the right-of-way, not just up to the right-of-way. There is still a \$45,500.00 difference in the estimates. In reference to the difference in mobilization costs...mobilization is customarily based on the size of the project. The Blodgett project requires an additional 150' of pipe. There is an added cost to getting that on site. That is just an example of what they might consider when coming up with that price. We can't tell you that every bidder will look at it exactly the same. Some bidders in the past have had a large variance in their mobilization costs, one much higher than another. They make that up by putting those costs into labor or product acquisition costs. The engineer used what is customarily done. Even if you throw \$1,500.00 out of this estimate, we are still looking at a \$44,000.00 difference. Going through the Joseph easement we aren't going through that length of roadway. The additional costs for the Blodgett line include costs for pavement, \$13,000.00 for an additional 150' of pipe and \$19,500.00 for the easement.

Charles Robbins asked about the Joseph line...the church, the hotel and Coldbrook are all attached to this pipe?

Greg Dore answered, yes.

Charles Robbins asked, if we are going to be replacing that pipe with an eight-inch pipe, are we responsible for connecting all three of those businesses?

Greg Dore said that we would.

Charles Robbins asked if we would be replacing those lines, or just connecting them to our line.

We would break the pipe and hook it into our pipe, just like we do on any sewer project. We are going to be responsible for maintaining the main.

Christine Almand said that we had issues with the language from the last meeting. Cara Mason did a very good job of rewriting that language. The attorney approved it with no changes.

Darrell Blodgett said that he understands where everyone is coming from on their logistics of that. There is a lot of hot top in behind Joey Joseph's place. If you used a trench box properly, you wouldn't need to disturb any hot top on the Blodgett line. The numbers don't seem to be totally jiving. He doesn't believe it is apples to apples.

Paul York asked Greg Dore if the engineers had accounted for the paving in the Joseph lot.

Greg Dore said he doesn't know what they figured in for that. Putting a trench down the East Madison road, you are going to get into that pavement. That is a big difference in cost.

Christine Almand said that if she takes out the additional paving, and mobilization difference the Blodgett line is still \$30,000.00 more.

Charles Robbins said she needed to add \$4,000.00 for a manhole on the Joseph line.

Still a difference of \$26,000.00. Christine Almand said that we are using estimates from the engineer. We won't know for sure until we go out to bid.

Darrell Blodgett said that they never struck ledge when they put the sewer line through his property. Ledge is not the issue. What was the lineal footage difference between the two lines?

Christine Almand said it was 150'.

Darrell Blodgett said that his measurements were way closer than that.

Christine Almand said that the engineer came up with those measurements.

Darrell Blodgett said that something is off.

**Vote: 3/2 (Todd Smith and Charles Robbins opposed)**

11. Discussion and decision to approve the Town Meeting Warrant for Town Meeting on June 5, 2021.

**A motion was made by Betty Austin and seconded by Todd Smith to approve the Town Meeting Warrant for Town Meeting on June 5, 2021.**

**Vote: 5/0**

12. Treasurer's Warrants to be approved:

#85	\$	56,100.97 (Payroll #17)
#86	\$	46,349.53 (Payroll #18)
#87	\$	18,794.15 (State Payables)
#88	\$	334,066.14 (FY 2021 Accounts Payables)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>455,310.79</b>

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

Vote: 5/0

13. Other Business

Christine Almand said that the vehicle charging stations in the Municipal Parking Lot have had some use. She couldn't recall how many vehicles.

Cara Mason said that there were six uses.

14. 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

15. Sign Documents

The Selectmen signed documents.

**Adjourn Selectmen's Meeting.**

Approved and signed on June 8, 2021.

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