

WISCASSET SELECTBOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
JULY 18, 2023
IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM

Preliminary Minutes

Present: Pam Dunning, Terry Heller, Bill Maloney, Chair Sarah Whitfield, and Town Manager
Dennis Simmons
Absent: James Andretta

Chair Sarah Whitfield called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Treasurer's Report

a. **Terry Heller moved to approve the payroll warrants of June 23 and 30, FY 23, and July 7, FY 24. Vote 4-0-0.**

b. **Terry Heller moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of June 27 and June 29, FY 23, and July 5 and 11, FY 24. Vote 4-0-0.**

3. Approval of Minutes

Terry Heller moved to approve the minutes of June 20, 2023. Vote 4-0-0.

4. Special Presentations or Awards – none

5. Committee Appointments

a. **Pam Dunning moved to appoint Jefferson Slack and Daniel Averill to the Wiscasset Water District. Vote 4-0-0.**

b. **Terry Heller moved to appoint Allen Cohen to the Ordinance Review Committee. Vote 4-0-0.**

c. **Terry Heller moved to appoint Heather Jones and Robert Nesbitt to the Budget Committee. Vote 4-0-0.**

d. **Terry Heller moved to appoint Heather Jones, Peter Eaton, and Mary Finn to the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Vote 4-0-0.**

6. Public Hearing

a. **Proposed Sewer Rate Increase:** The chair clarified that the discussion would cover only sewer, not water rates. **Pam Dunning moved to open the public hearing at 6:06 p.m. Vote 4-0-0.** Rob Lalli, Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor, said unlike the past, this year's income came close to the budgeted amount. He described the sludge problem the sewer plant is experiencing and the cost to

truck the sludge to Canada. He said the department had received four new backup generators and expects four more in November which are needed to prevent sewer overloads. A fourth employee had been hired as required by the DEP. He said last year's expenses were \$846,000, this year's will be \$919,000 and he asked for approval of the 8.6% increase. This would mean an increase for households from \$114 per quarter to \$123 per quarter. He recommended lowering the camper dumping fee to \$15 or \$20, as the current fee of \$38 had discouraged campers.

Mike Riley asked why the town didn't use propane and was informed that engineers had advised the town to use fuel oil, and in a prolonged power outage, the town would have a reserve that could be used which would not be the case with propane.

Pam Dunning moved to close the public hearing at 6:23 p.m. Vote 4-0-0. The board will vote on the increase at the next meeting. Camper rates will also be considered.

7. Public Comment

Heather Jones said she had seen the letter from the town responding to ugly behavior that had taken place and said those actions did not reflect her experiences in town.

Malcolm Springer asked why the town was mowing state property on Routes 1 and 27. Road Commissioner Ted Snowden said mowing the area between the sidewalk and the road was the town's responsibility.

8. Department Head or Committee Chair

Pam Dunning said, "Good job."

9. Unfinished Business

a. Johnson Controls-Preliminary Study Results: Dean Angelese and Tim Fair of Johnson Controls, who have been working with Wiscasset on recommendations to save energy, presented a proposal which would provide upgrades to the entire town without costing the taxpayers. A preliminary survey has been conducted to determine where savings could be made. The company will provide a guaranteed energy savings program, the cost of which will be offset by the energy savings; the program is budget neutral. Estimated savings with the program are \$120,000 in energy costs. Johnson Controls works closely with Efficiency Maine. Federally funded incentives for solar will be investigated as well as tax credits. The project would be fully funded and guaranteed by Johnson Controls. A contract for the program will be available in September or October. Work will begin when the contract has been signed. The schools would have to agree to the program. **Pam Dunning moved to authorize the Town Manager to work with Johnson Controls on a plan project agreement. Vote 4-0-0.**

10. New Business

a. Bid Opening, Paving Bid: The sole bid received was from P&B Paving for \$421,750. **Pam Dunning moved to authorize the Town Manager to award the bid to the lowest qualified bidder. Vote 4-0-0.**

b. Bid Opening Front End Loader: The following bids were received:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Norplan JCB | \$180,000 less \$35,000 trade = \$145,000 |
| Caterpillar | \$165,000 less \$30,000 trade = \$135,000 |

Pam Dunning moved to authorize the Town Manager and Public Works Director to review the bids and award the bid to the lowest qualified bidder. Vote 4-0-0.

c. Business License for Down Yonder, LLC at 100 Main Street. **Terry Heller moved to approve the business license for Down Yonder, LLC, at 100 Main Street. Vote 4-0-0.**

d. Business License for Hand-E-Man Sidework & More, 285 Birch Point Road. **Terry Heller moved to approve the Business License for Hand-E-Man Sidework and More. Vote 4-0-0.**

e. Business License for Angelo Santo, 64 Main Street. **Terry Heller moved to approve the business license for Angelo Santo at 64 Main Street. Vote 4-0-0.**

f. Business License for Amistad, Inc., 12 Hodge Street. The chair clarified that the business license application was for Harbor Peer and Wellness Center office space, not housing. The chair also clarified that the planning board application for the office space was handled by the planner according to the guidelines that specify any application for 2500 sq. ft. or less is handled by the planner. The chair said Terry Heller would be recusing herself from any vote on the license because of her affiliation with St. Philip's.

Brian Townsend, Executive Director, confirmed that the premises would be used to host meetings, provide peer gathering, one-on-one meetings, recovery programs and support groups; there will be no needle exchanges. The center will provide vocational support, and track health and recovery. He assured the group there would be no people sleeping on lawns or other issues of that nature. The center will be community-based and will work with other organizations on referrals. The center will provide one-on-one support and outreach; it will not be a drop-in space.

Negative comments or questions about the application:

- > Amistad would invite problems into the neighborhood and is vague on safety qualifications.
- > How will enforcement be carried out?
- > Neighbors need more information and clarification.
- > The center could have negative impact on emergency services.
- > The center would cause a decline in property values – would taxes decrease?
- > What would be the effect of substance abuse on the neighborhood?
- > Town needs answers and guarantees.
- > The larger Amistad grant is linked to housing.
- > No consideration of neighbors.
- > Still no answers after two meetings.
- > Portland Amistad does needle exchange.
- > What are credentials of the professionals?
- > Secondary issues are criminality, assaults, drug deals, violence.
- > According to information they will be working with 51 people per week.
- > Moratorium is needed.

Tom Junkert, priest in charge, of St. Philip's, said the vestry after meeting with Brian Townsend voted to move ahead with the Amistad proposal. They have successfully held programs with AA for 40 years. Positive comments included:

- The program is not about homelessness.
- The planned resources are needed.
- First year there will be two or three meetings/week, dealing with 50 people per week for counseling, second year 50 to 80 per week.
- Clients not referred by court, referrals are from health care centers.
- It is not a drug treatment center.
- There will be no needle exchange.

Sarah Whitfield proposed that the discussion be tabled, and additional community meetings be held by St. Philip's or Amistad to answer questions in a timely manner. She urged communication and cooperation over the next months. Bill Maloney recommended tabling the matter until the last meeting in September. Pam Dunning agreed and asked for strong guidelines and restrictions. Dennis Simmons recommended obtaining a written detailed plan from Amistad. **Bill Maloney moved to table the issue until September 19 pending receipt of more detailed plans from Amistad. Voted 3-0-1.** (Heller abstained.)

g. Monthly Financials

- HM Payson Statement of Accounts
June Expense/Revenue of Accounts

Dennis Simmons reported that the only account that came in over budget (by \$26) was Animal Control. He added that revenues were running ahead of expectations.

11. Assessors Business – Abatement

a. Property Tax Abatement for Wiscasset Bait Co. Personal Property Account #34 in the amount of \$353.41. **Pam Dunning moved to approve the personal property tax abatement for Wiscasset Bait Company. Acct # 34 in the amount of \$353.41. Vote 4-0-0.**

12. Town Manager's Report

13. Other Board Business

Sarah Whitfield announced that July 26 is the date of the Future of the Schools committee, not the Comprehensive Plan Committee as noted on the agenda.

14. Adjournment

Bill Maloney moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:22 p.m. Vote 4-0-0.