

MINUTES OF MEETING

Town of Dixfield

Board of Selectmen/Assessors/Overseers of the Poor

Monday, January 11, 2010

5:00 p.m., Town Office

Board Members Present: Bettina M. Martin (Chair), Raymond E. Carlton, Norine H. Clarke, James L. Desjardins and Stephen G. Donahue

Board Members Absent:

Administration Present: Eugene R. Skibitsky (Town Manager), Charlotte M. Collins (Minutes), David Phair (Public Works), Jim White (Water Dept.)

Press Present: Eileen Adams (Sun Journal) and Cherri Crockett (RFT)

Citizens Present: Katy Chiasson, Len Greany, Freemont Tibbetts, Dan McKay, Kelly Sastamoine, Tom Powell, Matthew Eddy (Eaton Peabody) and others

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. **Letter of Engagement:** Matthew Eddy of Eaton Peabody was present to explain to the Board the Letter of Engagement from his company that contracts with the town to analyze various aspects of the tax base, etc. that will be impacted should the town vote approval of the Patriots Renewables wind power project.

Phase I will cover the following:

- TIF program and how it works
- An analysis of the tax shift
- Financial analysis issues
- Help Board make good decisions for the town

Mr. Eddy explained that his company would be working only for the Town of Dixfield, although the payment for services will be funded by Patriots Renewables.

Town Manager Skibitsky stated that by doing the analysis, we will also be much better informed with reliable figures and how they will impact the town and RSU #10 budgets. Mr. Eddy answered several questions from the audience and stated that the report will be completed in approximately three (3) months or less.

On a motion from Mr. Desjardins and a second from Mr. Donahue, the Board voted unanimously to sign the Letter of Engagement with Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, LLC (see attachment).

3. **Approval of Minutes:** On a motion from Mr. Carlton and a second from Mr. Donahue, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of December 14, 2009 with the following correction:

It was stated in the minutes that Norine Clarke held the food drive in December. It was not she who did it—it was Barbara Lane who generously gave of her time and money to collect food for the Common Road Baptist Church Food Pantry.

4. **Approval of Warrants and Payroll:** On a motion from Mr. Carlton and a second from Mr. Donahue, the Board voted unanimously to approve the warrants and payroll as listed on the agenda.

5. **Department Head Reports:**

a. **Water Department, Jim White Superintendent:** Mr. White presented the Board with the annual production report for the Water Department as well as reporting as follows:

- Dixfield's water audit showed water loss at 14.07% which is well below the industry standards
- Christmas Eve was spent repairing an old main on Rowe Street
- Computers show a power spike a short while after Christmas
- Now charting call-ins which will be reported annually
- A new chlorine monitoring system is badly needed at the plant as it measures the amount of chlorine pumped into the system. It also alerts the operator when too high or too low an amount has been pumped. It is a very important piece of the water department monitoring system.

On a motion from Mr. Desjardins and a second from Mr. Donahue, the Board voted unanimously to purchase a new 3100 Hawk Unit for \$2,790 plus shipping and handling that comes with a one-year warranty.

Mr. White also mentioned that a new Scada System (Phase II) was budgeted for (\$4,000) and he would like to get both Phase I and Phase II installed at the same time. On a motion from Mrs. Clarke and a second from Mr. Desjardins, the Board voted unanimously to purchase Scada System Phase II and install it at the same time as the new 3100 Hawk Unit and SCADA Phase I.

b. **Public Works Department, David Phair:**

- Mr. Phair requested permission to sell the Holder snowplow with all attachments except the brush. All money received will be turned in to the Public Works Equipment Reserve account. On a motion from Mr. Donahue and a second from Mr. Desjardins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the sale by Mr. Phair.
- The new Kabota snowblower is working very well, blowing 70+ truck loads of snow in one night's work
- Will be entering data into the road computer program in the near future
- Passed out a spreadsheet of snowstorm data; the town averages 23-24 snow events

- The handicapped parking ice buildup problem will be addressed by raking the Town Office roof and then treating the ice with salt

Mrs. Clarke stated that there are several areas with snow around the poles on the sidewalks that need to be shoveled. Mr. Phair said it would be taken care of soon.

Public Comment:

Danny McKay asked which fund will be used to pay for the Eaton Peabody analysis. He felt that with the moratorium in place, there should be no contracting done with an analysis firm.

Town Manager Skibitsky explained that the money (\$10,000) received from Patriots Renewables will be placed in a special revenue fund and all invoices will be paid from that account by the town. He also stated that the analysis provided by the firm will be used as an educational and planning tool by the Board so that good decisions will be made in the future.

6. Old Business:

a. **Water and Sewer Departments Budgets:** Town Manager Skibitsky explained that some of the projected expense lines have been revised so that the Administrative Assistant's wages and benefits are reflected by thirds as follows:

- 1/3 Wages and Benefits Charged to the Water Department
- 1/3 Wages and Benefits Charged to the Sewer Department
- 1/3 Wages and Benefits Charged to the Public Works Department

The Board was shown the differences in the expense lines by the Town Manager. On a motion from Mrs. Clarke and a second from Mr. Carlton, the Board voted unanimously to approve the amended Water and Sewer Departments' budgets for 2010.

b. **Outcome of Poverty Abatement Appeal:** Town Manager Skibitsky explained that the Oxford County Commissioners do not get involved in poverty abatement requests. Also, the property is not the primary residence of the person who requested the appeal, so the request must be denied.

c. **Update on Junkyard Permits:** Two junkyard permit renewals have been questioned by the Code Enforcement Officer due to violations of state statutes. Both businesses have been sent a letter from the CEO advising them of the violations and a request for the owners to meet with Mr. Beaumier. These will be updated at the next meeting.

d. **Update on Jay Twitchell Easement:** The town received the signed easement from Mr. Twitchell giving his permission for the town to cross his property so that maintenance of the Packard Road can be done.

e. **Windpower:**

(1) Ordinance Committee: The Town Manager reported that the Windpower Ordinance Committee members have been meeting regularly and have made good progress in formulating the ordinance. The first twelve articles have been written, but the entire ordinance cannot be completed until all aspects of the ordinance have been integrated throughout the document.

(2) Forum: Linda Walbridge from the state economic development department will hold an informational windpower meeting on Thursday evening, February 4, 2010, at 6:00 p.m. at Dirigo High School. The format will be in the form of a debate: 3 speakers for wind; 3 speakers against wind.

7. **New Business:**

a. **MedCare Subsidy:** The Town Manager reported a \$5,200 increase in the MedCare subsidy to be included in the 2010/11 town budget.

b. **Sewer Abatement:** Joseph C. Norris who owns property located at 37 Main Street, identified on the town's tax maps as Map 14, Lot 119 has requested an abatement for sewer charges from the town. Mr. Norris did not know if his building was hooked to town sewer. Since the building was built, there has been there has been a large amount of sand in the connecting pipe. Once this was cleared, it was discovered that he was hooked to the sewer main. After a short discussion, the Board requested that Mr. Norris attend the next regular meeting so that they may discuss the matter further.

c. **State Budget Cuts:** Town Manager Skibitsky explained that by making large budget cuts at the state level, the Governor has in turn shifted the tax burden to the local level. All town departments will be asked to cut unnecessary spending so that a savings might be realized by the end of this year's budget.

Public Comment: None

8. **Town Manager's Report:**

- The auditor will be here to do the Water and Sewer audits in February
- The Road Committee will be meeting again on Friday, February 5th at 8:00 a.m., at the Town Office; mapping and a 5 to 7-year plan will be discussed
- The meeting with Dr. Ward to discuss the surplus is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. this Tuesday
- There is a possibility of two Planning Board openings in the very near future. The Board directed the Town Manager to advertise the openings.
- John Maloney will assist us on our Site Plan/Wind Ordinances and, if need be, assist us to strengthen our Comprehensive Plan.
- Bike safety in winter months was requested by a resident. The Town Manager will speak with the Police Chief and have information available at the next meeting.
- The MeDOT has offered their radar speed trailer for use by the town. The Town Manager was directed by the Board to respond by February 12, 2010.
- The Town Manager suggested using last year's budget schedule if all agreed. There were no problems experienced by anyone, so he was directed to develop the schedule.

Public Comment:

Ms. Kelly Sastamoine spoke against the use of Eaton Peabody without another lawyer involved to insure fairness.

9. **Board Questions/Comments:** None

10. **Executive Session:** 1 MRSA, §405 Personnel Matters; Town Manager Evaluation

On a motion from Mr. Donahue and a second from Mr. Desjardins, the Board voted to enter into executive session at 7:00 p.m.

The Board came out of executive session at 7:39 p.m.

11. **FYI:** So Noted.

12. **Next Meeting:** Monday, January 25, 2010, 5:00 p.m., Town Office

13. **Adjournment:** The Board adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte M. Collins
Secretary/Deputy Treasurer

/cmc

Attachments