

**TOWN OF DIXFIELD
HEARING and MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2015 – 5:30 PM
DIRIGO HIGH SCHOOL MEETING ROOM**

Present: Board of Selectmen, Hart Daley, Malcolm Gill, Norman Mitchell, Dana Whittemore, and Eugene Skibitsky.

Town Employees present: Town Manager Carlo Puiia, Water Supt. White, Police Chief Howe, Randy Glover, and Leo Jolin

Citizens present: Mrs. Mitchell, Dan McKay, Walter Newman, Rick Davis, Grayson Child, Peter Holman, Silver Varnum, Steve Ellis, Ken Ellis, Scott Dennett, Norman Towle, Don Lutick, Gunner Bradbury, Scott Belskis and lady, Royal Swan, and note taker Norine Clarke.

Non- Citizens: none

Press present: Matt Daigle of the Lewiston Sun and WVACTv

1. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Daley opened the meeting at 5:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. The Public Hearing on the Safe Routes to School Project was opened. Chair Daley read the text of number 2 on the Agenda. TM Puiia said that the earlier hearing had asked for money to go ahead with the project, however, the match for the grant kept going up. The town will still need to pay for the engineering done by Wright Pierce Co. and some to the DOT. The DOT contacted the Town and felt that now was an opportune time to put this project out for bid and if the costs came back higher, the Town could appeal. The Board made the decision to have another hearing on the subject. The project cost is the same as the original but does not include Nash St. as the original proposal did. The Reserve account formed for this project has \$68,991 in it and the Town would have to raise enough money to make \$72,058. An earlier request to see if the State would pave the shoulders of the road was turned down. Historically these shoulders get used as a passing lane around turning vehicles which puts pedestrians and bicyclists in danger. At the last hearing, snow removal from the sidewalks was a concern. The project would be safe but expensive to maintain. Peter Holman remarked that if we decide to do this project on our own, we will have the plans. Royal Swan asked if it would take \$40,000 more to do Nash St. The answer was that the current project would only take about \$4000 more, but would not include Nash St. Mr. Whittemore noted that we would not get the full project. Mr. Belskis noted that the Board was given authority to do the original project which included Nash St. TM Puiia said that if the Bid went ahead and required more money and the Town did not get a favorable appeal, they could back out. Mr. Bradbury said that it was voted down at the last hearing because of snow removal issues. Mr. Towle said that if the project did not go through, the Town would be “throwing away” about \$35,000. Mr. Swan asked if we could do the project at a later time using

these plans and was told yes, but the price would probably be higher and this project included grant money which might or might not be available later. Mr. McKay said that this originally came up at Town Meeting in 2013 and \$83,123 was voted. Mr. Whittemore said that he had inquired to other towns and the estimate for plowing costs was about \$1.00 per foot per storm. Chair Daley asked for a non-binding vote concerning whether to proceed with the project. About 12 indicated not to continue and about 3 said yes. The Public Hearing was concluded.

3. Agenda Adjustments

a. to item 5a add #49

b. to 5b add #48

c. Mrs. Alice Clark has asked to speak under 9. Other Business concerning a wood gnat problem on her street.

Mr. Whittemore made a motion to accept all adjustments to the Agenda and Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor.

4. Minutes: Mr. Whittemore asked that the minutes be corrected to reflect the vote on 8 a as being 3 in favor, 1 opposed and Mr. Gill abstaining. He followed with a motion to accept the minutes as corrected and Mr. Skibitsky seconded. All were in favor.

5. Warrants: Mr. Skibitsky made a motion to accept the Warrants as adjusted and Mr. Whittemore seconded. All were in favor.

6. Department Head Reports:

a. Supt. White reported on the Water Dept. The work on River Lane which was given a budget of \$34,000 came in at \$27,000. The Robbins Ave. project came in \$500 under the expected \$12,290. He presented the budget for the coming year which has a new line item. The item is a Capital Expense Carry over to do a project in the coming year. Mr. Skibitsky asked about a \$12,000 increase in the revenue line and Mr. White said that the accounting with the new system is a little more accurate. There is one other new item on the budget which is a communications upgrade on the connections to the pumping stations. At the time of installation, the internet connections required both Fairpoint and Time Warner which has worked but gives a very slow response time and causes downtime. It also requires a test costing about \$500. He wants to change to Verizon which will all be on one line. Mexico uses this and their 4 stations total cost only \$55 per month. When asked about the building, he said that the foundation is in.

The town Auditor will not be available until Jan. 11, 2016.

b. Police Chief Howe reported that the delivery of the cruiser will be soon and may be on the road soon without the decal. The decal is being re-designed to be more “bare bones”, basic design which will be \$300 to \$400 cheaper. The Chief has been doing a “survey” of sorts on the speed issue on High St. using a hand held radar unit. He noted the statistics for different times of day and said that only small numbers were going 25-30 while most were well under the limit and none were over 30. The Halloween Walk went well except for one “belly-ache” but he thought the numbers were down.

c. **Public Works:** Mr. Glover reported that the Porter Rd. shoulder has been repaired. The “sink hole” on Holt Hill has been repaired for \$4200 well under the projected price of \$10,000. The storm drains have been cleared. One truck needs to have its springs replaced. They are still collecting used oil to be used for heating the garage, and they have 1400 gals so far. There will be one more pumping out of Irving when there is a

warm day. Mr. Holman asked about some trees on the Common Rd. He said one was broken half off and needed to come down. He asked what the town road width limit was and Mr. Glover said he thought it was 33 feet from the center line. Mr. Glover will look at the trees. Mr. Gill asked about the North St. and High St. water puddle problem. Mr. Glover said the grades were changed but there was still an issue of the water running down North St. which might have to wait until spring to be addressed. Mr. Skibitsky made the point that this was an engineering issue and should be up to them to fix it. Mr. Glover said there would be a walk-through.

7. Old Business:

a. Safe Routes to School Sidewalk Project: Does the town want to participate? In order to start the discussion a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell to partner in the DOT project, and Mr. Whittemore seconded the motion. Mr. Skibitsky said he felt that this project had a great civic value for the town and for just an added \$4000 it was a good deal economically. He said that adding the care of the sidewalks should not add to the budget but would make it necessary to restructure time schedules. Mr. Gill noted that this project was not just sidewalk but also included storm drains. He remarked that he traveled that road going to teach for many years and there were always large numbers of students walking to school. He too said it would be a civic improvement and would not overwork the town crew. Mr. Daley said he had asked for the “straw vote” earlier in the evening to use as guidance. Both times the citizens have been asked the concerns have been about maintenance and the elimination of Nash St. from the project. The Board vote was taken and was 3 opposed and 2 in favor.

b. Wind Energy Petition: There are now three opinions about the Petition, one from Kristen Collins, one from the Maine Municipal Association, and one received on this day from town solicitor, Jennifer Kreckel. In a letter to TM Puiia read by Mr. Daley, Mrs. Kreckel said that she had read the other opinions and agreed that the petition language was vague. She noted that because the Town has no charter, they must follow State guidelines. The wording as it is now could be contested. The Board agreed to accept the petition and so should put a ballot question together which reflects the intent of the petition. Mr. Davis reported that the Planning Board will be having speakers on Real Estate and Sound. Mr. Daley noted that Mike Rogers from the Maine Revenue Service will possibly be at a meeting in January to provide an update on property tax impacts. Mr. McKay asked that one or more Public Hearings be held. He also asked who owned the power line between Carthage and Canton Wind Facilities. It was decided that the Selectmen will set the language for the ballot and it will be on the next agenda.

c. Code of Ethics: The latest version of the Code of Ethics was discussed. Amendments to include the words elected officials to be included along with appointed officials in the introduction were suggested. Mr. Skibitsky made a motion to adopt, with the inclusion of the words elected and appointed, the Policy to be effective immediately. It was seconded by Mr. Whittemore and accepted 5-0 and passed around to be signed.

d. Traffic Light Maintenance agreement. The State has contacted the Town and said that they would be installing a new traffic light system probably in 2016 and want the Town to sign a Maintenance Agreement. TM Puiia said that in spite of several bits of correspondence, it was still not clear exactly what the town was agreeing to maintain, does it include under the pavement installations for instance. The Selectmen asked that

there be a list in writing of what the Town will be responsible for. They were told that in the early years of the agreement repairs would be minor and probably budgeting \$500 would be sufficient.

8. New Business:

a. Discussion was held about what date to set for Town Meeting 2016. Mr. Whittemore made a motion to set April 28, 2016 as the date. Mr. Skibitsky seconded the motion and all were in agreement.

9. Other Business: Mrs. Alice Clark had agreed to represent the residents of First Avenue about the subject of wood gnats. Previously, Irving Mill had sprayed the breeding areas and had limited the infestation but currently they have refused to spray. The Code Enforcement Officer had been contacted and said he had no power over the problem. The Health Officer had tried but the gnats do not represent a health issue. They contacted Irving and the Manager came to the houses but said he would not spray. The DEP has determined that they are coming from the wood yard. Mr. Skibitsky moved that TM Puiia meet with Irving and try to work out a solution. Mr. Mitchell seconded. All were in favor.

11. Public Correspondence:

a. The Board received a letter from the Historical Society thanking them for their support and inviting them to plan to hold a Selectmen's meeting in their meeting room.

b. Announcement was made that Matt Timberlake of Ted Berry Company had delivered a \$250 donation the Halloween Walk.

c. TM Puiia announced that the Town had received a refund of \$1,446 from Worker's Comp.

d. Mention was made that the Catholic Church on Weld St. is still for sale if the Town could use it for a Police Station or the Town Office.

e. Grayson Child asked about how the fact that the proposed water facility would be in Rumford and the water would be hauled by truck to the bottling plant would affect Dixfield roadways and safety on Main St. Also there was the question of why it went to Rumford. TM Puiia said that the company was looking for tax credits and Dixfield's average income is too high to qualify. There will be a facility and roadways but no bottling done in Dixfield.

11. Public Comment: None.

12. Board Questions and Comments: The only question from the Board was Mr. Whittemore who asked about discussing the use of electronic voting machines for Town referendum votes.

13. FYI: As noted on Agenda

14. Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 at 5:30 pm at the Ludden Library.

15. Adjournment: Following an expression of Thanksgiving wishes to the town, Mr. Whittemore made a motion to adjourn at 7:50pm and Mr. Gill seconded. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Norine H. Clarke, secretary
nhc/nhc