

**TOWN OF DIXFIELD
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015 – 5:30 PM
LUDDEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

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

Town Employees present: Town Manager Carlo Puiia, Water Supt. White, Police Chief Howe, and Public Works Foreman Randy Glover

Citizens present: Mrs. Mitchell, Dan McKay, Walter Newman, Rick Davis, Grayson Child, Peter Holman, Angela and Silver Varnum, Royal Swan, Jeff Knight, and note taker Norine Clarke.

Non- Citizens: none

Press present: WVACTv

1. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance

In the absence of Chair Daley, Vice Chair Dana Whittemore opened the meeting at 5:30 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Agenda Adjustments

a. to item 4a add #56

b. to 4b add #55

c. to 8 add Irving Wood Gnats discussion

Mr. Skibitsky made a motion to accept all adjustments to the Agenda and Mr. Gill seconded. All present were in favor.

3. Minutes: After a clarification by TM Puiia, Mr. Skibitsky made a motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Gill seconded. All present were in favor.

4. Warrants: Mr. Gill made a motion to accept the Warrants as adjusted and Mr. Mitchell seconded. All present were in favor.

5. Department Head Reports:

a. Supt. White was present to discuss the Water Dept. budget for 2016. Income from metering is up due to more use. Two areas will be bored in 2016: Aunt Hanna Lane where the pipe goes under the road will change to copper pipe and a place on Brian St. where the pipe goes under a driveway. The important part of the budget to look at is page 1 and 2. Mr. Skibitsky moved to adopt the 2016 Water Budget. Mr. Gill seconded and all present were in favor. In other business, Dixfield no longer uses their water meter test bench and Rangeley has a need for one. Mr. Gill made a motion to allow Mr. White to sell the bench to Rangeley. It was seconded by Mr. Skibitsky and all present were in favor. Replacement water meters are usually ordered in December in a joint order with the Mexico Water Dept. They are delivered and invoiced in January. Cost for the meters will be about \$8700. Mr. Gill made a motion to allow Supt. White to order next year's meters and Mr. Mitchell seconded. All present were in favor.

b. Police Chief Howe reported that he had completed the speed surveys he has been doing

on High St. using a personal vehicle and a hand held radar gun. He was there on four different days during four different time periods: Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat and around school times. The Department has joined the Western Maine Addiction Task Force which includes the whole of Oxford County including the Sheriff's Dept. as well as citizens, churches, doctors, and attorneys. They have set up a Facebook page and all are volunteers. Vice Chair Whittemore commended the Officer on duty on Thanksgiving Day for noticing smoke in a garage and stopping to help resolve the problem. It was noted that two items in the budget are running high and the basic reasons given were the change in allotting patrolmen's wages due to the Union agreement concerning overtime and the need to keep the 2011 cruiser road worthy. (The 2005 cruiser was removed from the fleet). Bulk purchases have been made for replacement tires.

c. **Public Works:** Mr. Glover reported that the weather has been helping the Town to save money. There have been some ice issues but it has gone well. They have been running the chipper recently acquired from the DOT to remove branches from Averill Hill and will move on the Science Hill this week. Mr. Glover said that he has a very good working relationship with the Police Dept. who call him when there is rain or a temperature change. Because of this, they have been able to put the salt under, not on top of, the ice. There was the final walk-through of the construction areas on Pine, High and North Streets. Asphalt at High and North intersection needs to be replaced, a new catch basin is needed, one sidewalk is not wide enough which will require a wall to be moved. All of this will be at the Construction Company's expense. Engineer Al Hodsdon will be at an upcoming meeting with a report. Mr. Morgan's concrete company has made some corrections. TM Puiia said he would like to set up a Road Committee meeting and will contact members by email with dates.

d. Our representative from Ted Berry could not be at this meeting but will be present at the next meeting for a pump station update.

6. Old Business:

a. Wind Energy Facility Ordinance: There are three legal opinions, MMA, Kristin Collins, and Jennifer Kreckel. All agree that there should be just one question on the ballot which requires only a YES or NO vote. It needs to be made clear to the public what the body of the ordinance will be. Vice Chair Whittemore suggested that the decisions not be made until Chair Daley can be present. Mr. Skibitsky noted that at the last meeting there was a nodding agreement to use Kristen Collins' proposed wording. TM Puiia said that he had contacted Mike Rogers from the Maine Revenue Service today to provide an update on the tax and funding effects. Mr. McKay asked if the Planning Board will have time to present information at public hearings. Mr. Davis said they should have a recommendation within the next 2-3 weeks. Mr. Skibitsky said there needs to be a completion date in order to have it ready for the ballot. Mr. Gill said he would like to have it done soon. Mr. McKay asked what Vice Chair Whittemore's concern was about hearing Mike Rogers first. Vice Chair Whittemore said his concern was a fear of consequences and whether there was a better solution out there. TM Puiia said that the zoning portion of the original ordinance cannot be enforced because Dixfield does not have zoning but the remainder of the document is really good. Mr. Holman referred to the petition and Vice Chair Whittemore said personally, he sees a "gray area" there. Mr. Mitchell remarked that the problems with the Ordinance stemmed from earlier Boards

and Town Managers who were biased. Mr. Skibitsky said he would like to rebut those remarks as a previous town manager and believed there was no bias. Mr. Gill said he would also like to rebut those comments because he was on the board at the time. Mr. Mitchell stated that he had video tapes which proved that there was and he would make them available. Mr. Gill made a motion to table the discussion and Mr. Skibitsky seconded. All present were in favor.

b. Traffic Light Agreement: In 2013, three loops were replaced under the street. They are valued at about \$1100 per loop. The agreement would cover loops, lights, control box and handicap lights. Mr. Mitchell asked if it would include moving the pole from the middle of the sidewalk. TM Puiia said that the replacement would possibly take place in 2016-2017. Mr. Skibitsky suggested that a reserve account be opened for this expense. TM Puiia said that the agreement should probably be signed by him after a vote of authorization by the Board. Mr. McKay asked if the Town is responsible for the current system. Mr. Gill said they had approached the Board to see if they wanted cameras added. TM Puiia said we are not currently responsible. Mr. Skibitsky made a motion to table this discussion and it was seconded by Mr. Gill. All present were in favor. TM Puiia will email a copy of the maintenance agreement to all Board members.

7. New Business:

a. Discussion was held about the Budget Schedule. On April 11, the Warrant should be signed. Budget workbooks will be ready and the first meeting may be held the first week of February.

8. Other Business: Mrs. Alice Clark had represented the residents of First Avenue about the subject of wood gnats at the last meeting. TM Puiia met with Irving to discuss the problem and will meet with the residents to report on the meeting. The dialogue is open.

9. Public Comment:

a. Mr Holman presented to the Board a letter from Don Lutick (see attached) who had been called away from the meeting. Mr. Lutick referred to Carthage' Municipal Budget and a withdrawal from the "Saddleback Ridge Wind Community Benefits Fund". He asked that each Selectman respond to the question "Would the Town of Dixfield benefit from a similar Wind Community Benefits Fund?" Responses follow:

Vice Chair Whittemore—It would depend at what cost to the Town the money was gotten.

Mr. Mitchell----It is not a similar project. They have 13 windmills and Dixfield would have only 6, it is like comparing apples and oranges.

Mr. Skibitsky----The article says it takes an amount from a fund which would be great. They can vote to take an amount they wish, based on the size of the fund.

Mr. Gill---It would be a wonderful opportunity to help Seniors pay sewer, water, heat, etc.. It would be beneficial to the Town.

b. Mr. Child asked about the issue of Dixfield's income being too high to help the proposed Bottling Plant. Why couldn't Dixfield have worked on a proposal? TM Puiia said they did mention a TIF but were very anxious to participate in "new market tax credits" which were being lobbied for in Augusta. TM Puiia was there for the meeting. Mr. Child commented that Dixfield needs some new businesses to survive. Mr. Holman noted that jobs have been lost, and paper mills are closing. Dixfield must increase its income or no one will be able to afford to live here.

c. Mr. McKay asked when the next Planning Board Meeting was and was told it was Dec. 17. He referred again to the ownership of the Power Lines from Carthage to Canton. TM Puiia said that CMP owns them and there will be a 100% assessment next year. He noted that the value did help lower the taxes.

10. Board Questions and Comments:

Mr. Gill asked for an update on the SAD withdrawal talks. Vice Chair Whittemore said they were on schedule and doing well. Negotiations will begin in Jan. They have prepared a “mock budget” which is about the same but would give local control. Mr. Skibitsky asked if all the other towns were on track and he said yes. Mr. McKay asked if there was an anticipated vote date on the RSU and was told June 2016. If agreed to, they would be on their own for the year 2017. Kristen Collins will negotiate with the RSU attorney. Mr. Holman asked what Carthage was paying now because they had been unable to pay their share earlier. Mr. Whittemore said he did not know.

Mr. Mitchell said that due diligence needs to be done about wind information

Mr. Gill said that Dixfield did get money from the Canton project and it is dedicated to McGouldrick Park.

Barbara Lane of Peru was commended for her two day food drive which netted over 600 food items and \$1200 each for the Dixfield and Peru food pantries.

11. FYI: As noted on Agenda

12. Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 at 5:30 pm at the Ludden Library.

13. Executive Session: Mr. Gill made a motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 MRS §405 (6)(F) discussion of confidential records. Mr. Mitchell seconded and all present were in favor. The Vice Chair declared the Board in executive session at 7:14 p.m. The Vice Chair declared the Board out of executive session at 7:36 p.m. No action was taken.

14. Adjournment:

Mr. Gill made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m. It was seconded by Mr. Mitchell, and all were in agreement.

Respectfully submitted,

Norine H. Clarke, secretary
nhc/nhc