

Winthrop Town Council
Regular Meeting
Monday, April 2, 2007 at 7 p.m.
Winthrop Town Office

Attendance: Chair Patrice Putman, Linda Caprara (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Patricia Engdahl, Ken Buck, Kevin Cookson, William MacDonald, Cornell Knight (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary). Absent: Jim Norris

Chairman Putman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. announcing that the agenda will be taken out of order to allow the Superintendent of Schools, Mark LaRoach, to update the council members and the public attending on the consolidation of schools. The consolidation plan is likely to be passed this legislative session. Minimum size districts will be 2,500 students with no more than 80 school units statewide, and it will be implemented by July 1, 2008. School units must find a partner(s) or the state will assign the school unit to one. Elections of the new regional school board will be by March 31, 2008.

On Wednesday, April 4th, there will be a question and answer public meeting and on Thursday, April 5th, there will be an informal meeting at the high school which will not be public but will include board chairs, and vice chairs from Leeds, Greene, Turner, Maranacook, Wayne, Monmouth. Council Member MacDonald recommended that Hallowell be included as well. He asked that the superintendent should also determine the number of students that are in the Augusta Public School system.

Approval of Minutes for March 5, 2007:

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to approve the minutes of March 5, 2007 with the correction of two appointments. Vote 6-0.

Ordered that the Winthrop Town Council meet to consider the following items:

Item #33 Presentation from Bill Monagle, Cobbossee Watershed District and Bob Moore, Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed. An impressive power point presentation was held reviewing the programs and the projects that both agencies have been working on as well as a list of projects that will be accomplished in the coming year. Both agencies as well as the Board view the maintaining the quality of the lake waters as a priority.

After a question from the Chair as to what the community as a whole could do to protect the town's water quality, it was recommended that the street sweeping program be expanded.

Exciting opportunities for outdoor fun for school age children is also being offered by the Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed and this year will be offered during Spring Vacation Camp at the YMCA Camp of Maine on Cobbossee Lake in East Winthrop. Children will help celebrate Earth Day where campers will plant shrubs along the shoreline to lessen runoff in helping to protect water quality.

Item #34 Consider a Ball Fields Project proposal – Keith Morang, Lonney Steeves.

Enclosed was a description of the ball fields' project to move the little league fields off private property on the Stanley Road to the town owned fields. As part of this project, a request was made to use \$10,000 that the town set aside for grant funding to develop ball fields around the high school.

The proposed ball field budget for this project is approximately \$30,000 to do everything. The group has raised \$10,000. Council Member Norris, although not in attendance, messaged that he is in total support of this endeavor. Motion by MacDonald and seconded by Cookson to approve the Ball Fields Project proposal making \$10,000 available. Vote was unanimous.

Item #35 Consider proposals to the town's RFP for a property condition survey of the public safety buildings.

The town advertised for proposals to fully evaluate the condition of the existing fire station, police station and emergency medical service buildings. Three bids were received. Lewis and Malm Architecture of Bucksport, \$30,800; URS, bid \$35,500. Criterium Brown of Washburn bid \$23,350.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to approve \$30,800 awarded to Lewis and Malm Architecture of Bucksport for a property condition survey of the public safety buildings. Vote 6-0.

Item #36 Hear comments from residents regarding the Taxpayer Bill of Rights proposed law and cost savings opportunities within municipal government.

There were several residents in attendance with a unanimous voice telling the council that how the distribution of taxes and the whole budget process needs to be explained in a more thorough manner which will result in a more educated public. The town manager stated that he will start including some of the slides that were done for the audit that identify clearly where the money is being allocated.

Other suggestions from the group suggested that there was significant confusion between the budget formulation, process, tax base, reassessment and other what the other sources of revenue were. Basic education in this area and a better way to present the budget would go a long way to obtain public support and will eliminate the 'wizard behind the curtain' mentality.

The council was appreciative of these recommendations and will start implementing them. The council also suggested that this become an ongoing dialogue between the council members and the community so as to better serve the public that they represent.

At this time, the council took a five minute break.

Item #37 Consider a match for a Comprehensive Plan update grant program.

The town's goal is to update the comprehensive plan which is eleven years old. A grant program from the State Planning Office for 50% of the costs estimated to be \$20,000. There is \$10,000 in the 2007-08 budget. Applications are due by April 20th.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to match funds for a Comprehensive Plan update grant program. Vote was unanimous.

Tabled Item #29 from 3/5/07 - Discuss the Council's Economic Development goal.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to remove this item from the table. The vote was unanimous.

The WRDC, Winthrop Chamber and the town are planning an economic development forum in a month to discuss what type of program would suit this region. Area towns will be invited. A planning meeting is scheduled for next week.

Chairman Putman and Councilor Cookson stated that they hope to attend the planning session.

Item #38 Council Appointments

Councilor MacDonald stated that there were no recommendations at this time.

Chairman Putman announced that Councilors MacDonald and Engdahl were asked to be co representatives for Winthrop Unites.

Item #39 Presentation of the 2007-08 Municipal Budget

The town manager informed the council that the 2007-08 budget is up by 4.5% and is covered by additional revenues. The town has accomplished its goal of tax equalization. Next Monday and Wednesday will be sessions reviewing the proposed \$4.9 million municipal budget by the town council beginning at 5:30 at the town office.

The school budget will be presented to the council May 7th. The council plans to complete budget work in May, and a public hearing on the financial package is set for June 4th.

Manager's Report

MACTEC, the engineering company that was responsible for decontaminating a Superfund site in the town is ready to dismantle and remove the equipment and donate the buildings to the town. The buildings are on town owned land. Superfund is a 1980 federal program set up to clean toxic dumps nationwide Nathan Hagelin from MACTEC will show us the buildings on Wednesday April 11 at 9:00 a.m. and the council is invited.

The town has learned it is on track for a post office, one that is accessible to the handicapped. The U.S. Postal Service official will be present at the May 7th council meeting to explain the proposals...renovating the space, or the new construction of a 3000 square foot building which is smaller than the original plans presented. There is a 45 day window to accept proposals.

Councilor MacDonald informed the town manager to alert the postal representative that will be attending the May meeting that he will have some pointed questions about the status of this long awaited project and the input from the architect who informed the town that a ramp could not be built on the present building that would meet code requirements.

Other Business

Tabled from 3/5/07 Item #32 Executive Session - Title 1 Section 4-05 (A) - Town Manager's Contract renewal. The council went into executive session at 9:15 p.m. by a motion from Cookson and seconded by Caprara to take Item #32 off the table.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to return to regular session at 9:20 p.m. Vote was unanimous

Motion by Cookson and seconded by MacDonald to approve the three-year contract with the town manager. The vote was unanimous.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara to adjourn at 9:21 p.m. Vote was unanimous.