

Town Council Minutes: November 7, 2016

Attending: Sarah Fuller, Chairperson; Richard Henry, Barbara Buck, David Bubier, Priscilla Jenkins, Linda MacDonald, Peter Nielsen, Meg Cook, Chris and Sharon Flaherty, Carl Swanson, Debbie Fitzpatrick, Greg Chabot, Ginny Geyer, Gary Rosenthal, Milt Hadley, Chief Frost, Rick O'Brien, Tom Heiss, Jana Diket, Joe Pietroski, Sean Goodwin, Russ Hazard, Garrett Corbin, Mark Arsenault, Melody Main, Kristin Shumway, Chief Brooks, Linda Huff, David Lee, LouAnn Parker

Business Meeting: Chairperson Fuller called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, led the Pledge of Allegiance, and began the meeting, to wit:

Item 124. The Council voted to approve the minutes of the meeting held October 3, 2016, and signed disbursement warrants (Jenkins/Henry, 6-0).

Item 125. The Chairperson opened a joint public hearing with the Planning Board at 7:02 PM on a proposed change to the Zoning Ordinance. Planning Board Chair Rick O'Brien explained that properties shown on Map 6 as Lots 67, 67A and 67B were recommended by the Planning Board for redesignation to the Shoreland Zoning District from the Resource Protection District. Rick said that upon Planning Board investigation, no records or institutional memory were found to justify the existing classification. Further conversation with the MEDEP revealed no concerns. CEO Mark Arsenault said the change, if voted, remains conditional on MEDEP approval. The public hearing ended at 7:05 PM. The Council voted to approve a redesignation to the Shoreland Zoning District from the Resource Protection District for three properties shown on Map 6 as Lots 67, 67A, and 67B (Henry/Jenkins, 6-0).

Item 126. The Chairperson opened a public hearing at 7:06 PM on a renewal of an Automobile Graveyard and/or Junkyard permit for 2016-2017 for Ernest and Sharon Flaherty, 67 Soper Rd. (Map 1 Lot 41). Mark Arsenault reported abutters had been notified of the meeting, and he was aware of no problems at the facility. The public hearing ended at 7:07 PM. The Council voted to approve the renewal (Henry/MacDonald, 6-0).

Item 127. Auditor Greg Chabot distributed a handout to help explain the 2015-2016 audit. He identified the town's low fund balance as the chief financial concern, resulting from underassessment of property taxes. Auditor Debbie Fitzpatrick recommended monthly reconciliations between town and school.

Item 128. Superintendent Rosenthal described progress with the 2016-2017 school budget implementation. He noted the October warrant totals were favorable, current remaining unexpended budget totals are 4% ahead of the benchmark. He noted a \$56,000 check was received last week to reimburse the shed. He addressed an email from Ellen O'Brien, and distributed his written response. He said the old shed is down. Councilor MacDonald said the \$56,000 two story garage is no shed. Gary said it will be a heated workshop eventually. Councilor Henry asked questions about paint removal, a BOE conference, and multiple busses were necessary expenses. The Superintendent spoke to each question. Councilor Henry asked if saving \$717,000 is likely over the fiscal year, and the Superintendent responded that he has a positive approach to the problem and a positive outlook.

Item 129. The Chairperson opened a public hearing at 7:40 PM on a liquor license application from Peppers Garden and Grill LLC. Police Chief Frost said there were no issues. Fire Chief Brooks said a fire code issue is in discussion. The public hearing ended at 7:41 PM. The Council voted to approve the application (Henry/Jenkins, 6-0).

Item 130. The Council voted to approve an amendment to the MainePERS service retirement plan for Police Officers, effective January 1, 2017. The Town agrees to: a.) Provide Special Plan 2C for Police Officers effective January 1, 2017. The plan change includes the upgrade of all service rendered with the town in the capacity of a Police Officer for current officers as of January 1, 2017. The change does not apply to past service of officers who are not members of the town's plan on January 1, 2017. b.) To authorize the Town Manager to sign a contract between the Town and the Maine Public Employee Retirement System (Henry/Buck, 6-0).

Councilor Henry thanked the Police and Ambulance Departments for their recent efforts facing tragedy in the community.

Item 131. Fire Chief Brooks explained the Kennebec County Revised Hazard Mitigation Plan. He introduced County EMA Director Sean Goodwin, who provided more detail. Sean said FEMA updates the plan every five years. Severe summer storms are a new emphasis in planning. Chief Brooks identified areas of town frequently struck by storms, and possible mitigation projects, as finances allow. The Council will give the plan further consideration.

Item 132. The Council voted for Jim Guerra as its representative to the Municipal Review Committee Board of Directors (Henry/MacDonald, 6-0).

Other Business: Chief Frost explained a regional substance abuse treatment grant for \$125,000 to assist 25 individuals referred by police for assistance through Crisis and Counseling. The City of Augusta will administer the program, and participating communities will monitor its success, and determine their capability and willingness to pay a share of its cost when grant funding ends. Local funding is likely to begin in 2018-2019. The Council, by consensus, expressed interest in the program.

Manager's Report:

1. Chief Brooks presented a month by month project schedule for the development of the new fire station. Architect Phil Locashio expects to present a building design for consideration at the December meeting. Chief Brooks is in communication with our major donor, as construction estimates are refined into actual construction specifications.
2. Paving summary. Packet materials detailed tonnages applied to the various roads. Matt Burnham worked every day with the paving contractor to guide the work and keep under budget. Councilor Jenkins noted we paved Annabessacook Drive, not Annabessacook Road as it was listed on the invoice.
3. Notice of MEDEP meeting 12/21/16 to discuss upcoming shoreland zoning changes the Council will be asked to approve.

4. Council approved a request from the Town Manager to teach a Spring Semester course at UMA on State and Local Government on Wednesday afternoons at 4:00 PM. The goal is to help prepare students to work in public service.

5. A private lender recently signed off on unpaid liens against a tax acquired property at 36 Bowdoin St. This removes the legal barrier to constructing a parking lot at the site, although funding is still undetermined.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.