

**Town of Pownal**  
**Select Board Minutes**  
**Monday, July 22, 2024**  
**6:30 pm Regular Meeting**

**I. Call to Order** by Chair Morris at 6:31 pm

Members Present: Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien, Kate Day (6:34 arrival)

Town Administrator: Becky Taylor-Chase

Road Commissioner: Matt Nielsen

Code Enforcement Officer: Ginifir Giddinge

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Accounts Payable Warrant & Payroll Journal**

- FY24 AP Warrant #3 in the amount of \$17,911.65.

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve FY24 AP Warrant #3 in the amount of \$17,911.65. Chair Morris seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 2; No 0**

- FY25 AP Warrant #4 in the amount of \$368,317.69.

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve FY25 AP Warrant #4 in the amount of \$368,317.69. Chair Morris seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 2; No 0**

- Payroll Journal #31 in the amount of \$14,813.15.

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve Payroll Journal #31 in the amount of \$14,813.15. Chair Morris seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 2; No 0**

**IV. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

- **Executive Session & Regular Meeting July 8, 2024**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve the minutes of the executive session and regular meeting of July 8, 2024 as written. Chair Morris seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 2; No 0**

**V. Public Comment – Non- Agenda Items**

None

## **VI. Department Head Reports**

(Department head reports can be viewed on their respective website page(s))

- Select Board

Chair Morris attended the recent Planning Board meeting and reported that they approved the Bradbury Mountain Campground project with conditions, and they approved the amended site plan for Estabrooks.

## **VII. New Business**

- **Tax Commitment**

Donna Hays, Assessing Agent, stated over the last year values were increased by 20% and we are at a 77% ratio. We prepared 3 options for the Select Board to review. Option 1 uses \$300,000 from the unassigned fund balance. The mil rate is \$17 with an overlay of \$14,077.55. Option 2 uses \$150,000 from the unassigned fund balance. The mil rate is \$17.50 with an overlay of \$24,140.74. And option 3 uses nothing from the unassigned fund balance. The mil rate is \$18 with an overlay of \$26,203.93. She explained that on a house that was assessed at \$300,000 the previous year is now assessed at \$360,000 and option 1 would have an increase of about \$500 in taxes. Selectperson Day asked for further explanation on the statement in the report that said: "keep in mind the 117 people that took advantage of the State's stabilization program will see a much higher increase than the above." Ms. Hays explained that the state had a program that ran for just one year which stabilized taxes for those that applied for it. The program is now over so the residents that participated did not get an increase last year like the rest of the tax base so they will see a higher increase due to the program from the previous year. Chair Morris asked for thoughts from the Select Board. Selectperson O'Brien stated he favored option 1 because it is giving the taxpayers money back. Selectperson Day recommends option 1 as well. Chair Morris asked Ms. Hays if she was comfortable with the overlay amount. She stated yes. Selectperson O'Brien motioned to accept option 1 for our mil rate for the 2025/2026 tax year, \$17 per thousand using \$300,000 from the unassigned fund balance with an overlay of \$14,077.55. Selectperson Day seconded the motion.

Discussion: The Town Administrator clarified the tax year was for 2024/2025. The motion was amended to state tax year 2024/2025. Selectperson Day seconded the amended motion. No further discussion.

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

The Select Board thanked Ms. Hays for her work and attendance at the meeting.

- **Jordan Smith**

Jordan Smith contacted the Office of Cannabis Policy to ask questions. He spoke to them on the phone and received a follow up email. The Select Board had just received this communication earlier in the day and had not had time to review prior to the meeting. The State stated the letter from Alan Hill satisfies the state requirements. Selectperson O'Brien read a portion of Mr. Hill's letter where it only stated he was grandfathered for cultivation of medical cannabis. Mr. Smith commented that the letter is not well written, but the State's comment was it meets the requirements. Selectperson O'Brien stated that Mr. Hill had no authority to approve the IHS; the letter only states cultivation. We don't have an ordinance that allows it. Mr. Smith commented that you do not need an ordinance according to the

state. Chair Morris read section 3B of the authorization form (see attached). Mr. Smith stated it was the reason he called the Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP). Chair Morris suggests that our town attorney call and speak to them. He also stated that would mean Mr. Smith has been operating without a home occupation permit, is in violation of the hazardous materials ordinance and in a zone that does not allow manufacturing. Mr. Smith commented that he doesn't understand why the form is being picked apart and feels like the Select Board is looking for anything to not allow his operation. Selectperson Day stated that one concern is there is no town meeting vote or ordinance. She feels she does not have the authority without town meeting vote. Her second concern is if we just check the box, it goes against the Board of Appeals ruling. She feels she does not have the historical knowledge to make a fair assessment. Mr. Smith stated again that no ordinance is needed and it does not need town meeting vote. OCP has acknowledged his grandfathering. It's just a couple of check boxes. This affects Pownal family livelihoods. Chair Morris stated we will need advice from our town attorney. This is a new letter from OCP and we will need it reviewed. If the town attorney okays it, it will open other violations since inception. Selectperson Day agrees to send the OCP email to the town attorney. Selectperson O'Brien agrees. The Town Administrator reminded Mr. Smith to copy the Select Board email on his correspondence so the information gets to them quicker.

- **August Meeting Dates**

The Town Administrator stated that in the past we have chosen to cancel one of the August meeting dates to give everyone some time off. Chair Morris suggests we cancel the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in August. Selectperson O'Brien motioned to cancel the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting date in August. Selectperson Day seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

- **Town Office Closure – September 11, 2024**

The Town Administrator stated there was a voter registration and election training that the Deputy Clerk needs to attend and I need to attend the voter registration training which means the office will need to be closed on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Selectperson Day motioned to close the Town Office on September 11<sup>th</sup> for training. Selectperson O'Brien seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

- **Revaluation**

Chair Morris stated the time has come to do a reevaluation of the town. Selectperson O'Brien motioned to send out an RFP for a reevaluation process for 2028. Selectperson Day seconded the motion.

Discussion: Chair Morris gave a summary of the reevaluation process. Selectperson O'Brien stated we will have a warrant article for the funds. Chair Morris stated the assessing agent suggested we put aside \$150,000. We will set aside money during the warrant development.

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

- **Future Facilities Committee**

Selectperson O'Brien stated the committee is nearing the end of their responsibilities and should have a final report by September. The committee is looking to disband at that time. Chair Morris asked if they will have a recommendation? Selectperson O'Brien stated yes. Selectperson Day thanked them for their time.

- **Merrill Bridge-Poland Range Road**

Matt Nielsen, Road Commissioner, gave a brief history of the bridge. The town maintains the road (Poland Range Road) but the state maintains the bridge. Last year they dropped the weight limit to 10 tons (20,000 pounds). This changed both school bus routes and public works routes. The state did a 6-month inspection and has now dropped the bridge to 3 tons (6,000 pounds). This is the weight of a regular passenger car and/or light weight pick up truck. Their next step would be to shut the bridge down. Work is scheduled in 2027 but we are hoping to work with the state to get it fixed sooner. Selectperson O'Brien stated he had called both representatives Galetta and Daughtry but had not heard back from either of them. He will follow up with them. Road Commissioner Nielsen has talked to the school. Last year turn arounds were put in.

- **Economic Development & Sustainability Temporary Oaths**

Selectperson O'Brien stated they are finishing the final report so they need to meet one or two more times. Chair Morris motioned to appoint Susan Briggs Peters term 7/1/24-10/31/24, Paul Schumann term 7/1/24-10/31/24 and Pat Hodgdon term 7/1/24-10/31/24. Selectperson O'Brien seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

Chair Morris asked for an electronic sign update. The Town Administrator stated the deposit was being made and the company was doing a site visit the next day.

Chair Morris asked for a renovation update. The Town Administrator stated she had a meeting on August 5<sup>th</sup> with the heating and cooling company to go over those details and that would be scheduled soon. Wall repair has been in progress. Once the heat/cool pumps are installed, the painting and floors can be done. We just need to line up an electrician to put in the internet line and some more outlets. The printer is scheduled to deliver in September.

Selectperson O'Brien stated he met with the PCWA board. They are researching joining MMA (Maine Municipal Association) to get insurance through them. This will open grant opportunities.

- **Trash**

Chair Morris stated this Friday is the first week of the new automated service. We should have responses ready and have compassion and patience. We will want to consider a warrant article next year for exploration of alternatives.

VIII. Old Business

IX. Correspondence

The Town Administrator stated she received notification that we did not get the recycling grant. She read the second paragraph that stated Pownal recycles at a rate higher than the national average and that should be celebrated. They need to put their money in places that need assistance with recycling.

X. Any Other Business

XI. Adjournment


Selectperson O'Brien motioned to adjourn the meeting. Selectperson Day seconded the motion.

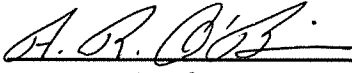
Discussion: None

**Vote: Yes 3; No 0**

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Taylor-Chase  
Town Administrator

  
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Jon Morris

  
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Andy O'Brien

  
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Kate Day

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