

**Town of Pownal
Select Board Minutes**

Monday, March 28, 2022 6:30 PM

I. Call to Order-In Person Meeting by Chair Morris at 6:29 pm

Select Board Members: Jon Morris, Andy O'Brien, Heidi Cushman Curry

Town Administrator: Becky Taylor-Chase

Road Commissioner: Dick Clarke

Fire Chief: Jesse Peters

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrant

AP Warrant #52 in the amount of \$362,792.14

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve AP Warrant #52 in the amount of \$362,792.14.

Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

Payroll Journal #279 in the amount of \$8,814.16

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve Payroll Journal #279 in the amount of \$8,814.16.

Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

IV. Minutes of Previous Meetings

- **Minutes of Regular Meeting March 14, 2022**

Selectperson Curry motioned to approve the minutes for the regular meeting March 14, 2022 as written. Selectperson O'Brien seconded

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

- **Minutes of Executive Session March 21, 2022**

Selectperson O'Brien motioned to approve the minutes for the Executive Session March 21, 2022 as written. Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

IV. Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items

Andy Wyatt stated that the CIP committee has voted to add the Fire Station to the capital plan and would like the Select Board's consideration. Chair Morris explained to the public attending that the CIP committee would like to add this to the spreadsheet they use in their budgetary visioning. Selectperson Curry feels this is a long overdue step. Chair Morris asked if the CIP committee is just putting it on the spreadsheet with a zero balance? Mr. Wyatt stated they are just putting a place holder so it is visible in the spreadsheet. Dick Hogue asked if it was just the Fire Station? Chair Morris stated in the Comprehensive Plan it's an and/or regarding the Fire Station and Public Works buildings. What are the committee's thoughts? Why just the Fire Station and not both? Mr. Wyatt stated the Fire Station is in the Comprehensive Plan and he feels they are separate efforts; maybe separate facilities. Chair Morris is wondering why prioritize the Fire Station. Paul Schumann stated there have been several discussions about the Fire Station but it has never been on the schedule of assets. The Town has a responsibility to

decide. We know when we buy engines, we have to narrow it down to ones that that will fit inside the current station which limits our selection. We've had to put in exhaust facilities. If the Town deems a different project that is fine. This will allow the CIP to look at the need. Chair Morris we don't know what the capital is. Is there a replacement schedule for those 2 buildings? Mr. Schumann stated the Select Board has not approved adding the Public Works, Fire Station or Mallett Hall to the schedule. Selectperson Curry feels there should be a second placeholder. Mr. Schumann asked if anyone had thought about replacing Mallett Hall? Probably not so why put it on the schedule? If we are looking into the foreseeable future replacing that asset then it should be put on. Selectperson Curry asked if we were discussing Mallet Hall now? Mr. Schumann responded no; he was using it as an example. If we are not thinking of doing it why put it on? Selectperson Curry feels we are going to talk about Public Works. Susan Briggs Peters wanted to clarify the goals from the Comprehensive Plan and read the goals for Infrastructure and Fire and Safety. Chair Morris stated the goals are similar. Mr. Schumann felt the goals are separate. Chair Morris is just asking why we are not adding Public Works to the asset schedule. Shouldn't the Town decide which one to prioritize. CIP is suggesting we prioritize the Fire Station. Mrs. Peters believes the goals are separate and open to interpretation. She re-read the goals and strategies. Chair Morris agrees to put the Fire Station on the plan. Mr. Wyatt asked if the Select Board would prefer to put both on the plan. Selectperson O'Brien would agree to put the Fire Station on along with Public Works.

Mr. Hogue asked if we were not going to talk about a combined building? It will make a difference in the plan. Selectperson Curry stated if there is another petitioner prior to the public hearing at the end of April she would like to see it added. It's a great first step to add the Fire Station. We should have a second place holder to be determined at a later date. Mr. Hogue asked what is the bigger picture? Selectperson Curry stated is it a separate project, combined etc. There are multiple options to lay on the table to the public. Chair Morris suggests they add a second place holder. Selectperson Curry agrees. Chair Morris suggests they take the feedback back to the committee and report back.

Andy Wyatt stated the CIP Committee would like the Select Board to consider a transfer from undesignated fund balance to the capital plan. He recapped the previous vote of \$1 and the thin spot in the balance in a future year. Chair Morris asked if this was any different from last week when they presented their request. Mr. Wyatt stated he did not get a response for or against the request. Chair Morris stated it will be on the town warrant. The board has had no discussion since the initial request was submitted. Mr. Schumann asked what amount would go before the town? Based on questions at the budget committee meeting it came to light some benefits based on different amounts. The last time they presented the request was for a \$150,000 transfer. At the budget committee meeting it was asked what would it take to get the appropriation down to \$140,000. The CIP committee looked at it and each additional \$50,000 transfer would reduce the appropriation by \$10,000 for 5 years. Chair Morris asked if the committee wanted to change their initial request? Mr. Schumann answered yes. The committee would like to change the request to \$200,000 transferred from undesignated funds. This gives benefit back to the tax payer. Chair Morris confirmed the figure is now \$200,000. Selectperson Curry asked what is the appropriation. Mr. Wyatt answered \$142,000. Chair Morris stated we will need to determine what the balance to the undesignated fund balance is. Selectperson O'Brien said a conservative estimate is \$2,040,000 at the end of this fiscal year. This would give us approximately \$600,000. Chair Morris asked the board if they wanted to accept the recommendation to increase the transfer to \$200,000 as a warrant article at town

meeting. Selectperson O'Brien stated yes. Selectperson Curry asked if we had a good handle on the RSU5 budget impact? This is something we need to consider. Selectperson O'Brien felt we are given back to the tax payers indirectly with this transfer and saving on the appropriation. It will help mitigate some of the tax rate. Chair Morris stated hypothetically the RSU5 budget increases, tax bills increase. Selectperson O'Brien motions to agree to the CIP request of \$200,00 transfer from undesignated funds to be placed on the town warrant. Selectperson Curry seconded.

Discussion: Selectperson Curry asked if the transfer fails will you amend your request. Mr. Wyatt is planning on the assumption it may not pass so the second warrant article would be the original appropriation request. If the transfer passes, they will amend the amount on the town floor to the \$142,000. They will be prepared to make an amendment.

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

Selectperson O'Brien asked the committee to phrase the warrant articles and provide to the town clerk. Mr. Wyatt agreed to do that.

VI. Department Head Reports – Submitted Electronically

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

- **Select Board**

Nothing new to report.

VII. New Business

- **Budget Presentations: Public Safety, PCWA, Cemetery**

Jesse Peters presented the Public Safety budget. He spoke of increases in services and memberships. He decreased several lines including supplies, janitorial, rent, fit testing and equipment as historically they have been underspent. He used 3.5% as a place holder for the chief and deputy chief stipend and adjusted the EMS, maintenance and training lines by the increase in minimum wage. Also included was the break out of Employer FICA and Medicare from the General Government budget to the Public Safety budget for their payroll.

Selectperson O'Brien asked if he was sure in the reduction of the fuel line given the rise in costs. He stated yes as the budget has stayed steady but been underspent in previous years.

Selectperson O'Brien presented the PCWA budget. There is no increase to any line item. Looked hard at the electricity line. It has been underspent in previous years. With considering the current rate increase the current amount would be sufficient to cover the cost.

The Town Administrator presented the Cemetery budget. She spoke with Craig Vosmus and the decision was to keep the lines the same as the previous year. They are sufficient to cover the costs.

- **Comprehensive Plan Report/Updates**

Selectperson O'Brien stated there would be a meeting set up in April regarding shared police coverage. The new Town Manager will be handling the arrangements. Selectperson Curry noted they've had difficulties getting Cumberland County on the calendar.

Chair Morris has a meeting with the RSU to discuss reasonable assessment and being fiscally responsible. He will try to get projections for this year. He will need to figure out what appropriate education means. He has asked the school board members if they would attend Select Board meetings. They will think about it.

The Town Administrator and Andy Wyatt attended a meeting to discuss a regional trash collection with Gorham, Falmouth, Windham, North Yarmouth and Cumberland. Some key points taken was until the region is formed there is no idea of cost. They cannot put out to bid until that time. Pownal is unique as it is the one of two towns that have Town Meeting form of government and the others are councils. We would need town meeting approval where the other towns the council can approve. All 5 towns would need to agree on which option will be used. It may mean no more tipping fees or PAYT bags if the other towns choose a different option and it is approved as a region. All towns felt that EcoMaine would need to do the billing rather than the towns. There would be bins to purchase which have a microchip to record when it is picked up. The service would change to an automated service where no one is riding on the back of the truck. This would be an increase in safety. Trash collection has one of the highest accidental death rates compared to other industries. All the towns have differing years of when their current contracts end. EcoMaine anticipates it would take 2 years for the region to be up and running. Pownal's contract ends next year so what happens in that interim year. Can we negotiate a one-year contract? There may be an option in the future for residents to put there cans and bottles out and the amount collected could be applied directly to their bills. There will be another meeting on June 3, 2022. Chair Morris said in talking with the Town Administrator we discussed other options as we may need to consider a change. Do we consider buying our own truck and adding trash collection to the duties of Public Works? Or do we contract with Freeport for residents to take trash to the transfer station and residents could then have the option to hire a private contractor. Selectperson O'Brien felt we should explore all possibilities. Chair Morris felt it might be time to do collection ourself. Possibly add another day to Public Works or hire 1-2 people for trash collection.

The Town Administrator stated the office had passed out 5 welcome packets to new residents in the past 5 business days.

- **Unexpended Balances**

Selectperson O'Brien said he would like to see us get away from carry forward accounts and create a credit reserve capped at a certain amount for emergencies with checks and balances. No large amounts in the reserve. Mallet Hall could have a smaller one. Chair Morris asked how it would work? Selectperson O'Brien envisions a certain % of what is left over from each budget would be applied to the reserve account and remainder goes to undesignated funds. Chair Morris asked how do we pull the money? Selectperson O'Brien said the department head would need to go to the Select Board. This is similar to how Yarmouth does it. The department head has to solicit the council when there is a request. Chair Morris said the difference is Yarmouth is a council. Are we asking to administer funds from taxation without approval? Is it appropriate to approve for other expenditures? The complaint now is we are redirecting funds. Selectperson O'Brien stated the left-over money is already approved by voters to spend in that department so now it would go into a reserve account specifically for that department for emergencies. Chair Morris asked how are we focusing on transparency? The perception of the town is if we have as an example \$300,000 in undesignated funds the town says we need town approval to move it. We have a meeting now that department heads can request use of those funds to continue projects. Selectperson Curry asked how we are solving transparency. The Town Administrator stated that the department head would need to solicit the Select Board in a regular public meeting for use of funds. As an example, if the computers at the town office stopped working, she would go to the Select Board in a regular meeting and request a certain amount of funds to purchase new computers to keep operations going. The request and

decision would then be in the minutes. This is how the carry forward requests are done so it would be same procedure. She will call MMA for more information and reach out to other towns that have reserve accounts for their procedure. Item tabled until more information if available.

- **Merrill Rd Performance Bond/Letter of Credit**

Selectperson Curry suggested we receive for the Spruce Hollow Subdivision a Performance Bond and Letter of Irrevocable Credit. The Town required this with the Grey Ghost subdivision. The Planning Board is asking for guidance and I propose we do the same as we did with Grey Ghost. Selectperson O'Brien agrees. Chair Morris asked if this is an ordinance? The Planning Board can ask for this at the Town's discretion. Chair Morris agrees. Will it be the same % as was required for Grey Ghost and will the letter cover entire cost of infrastructure? Chief Peters commented that the letter states it's for the build of the entire infrastructure. The Select Board agrees and authorizes the Planning Board to request a performance bond and letter of irrevocable credit for the infrastructure.

Christine Watson needs a letter from the Select Board for the approved private road name. Selectperson O'Brien will write one.

- **Recreation Committee Appointments**

Two volunteer applications had been received for the Recreation Committee. The first one is Courtney Hardwick, 653 Hallowell Road and the second applicant is Ginifir Giddinge, 185 Hodsdon Road. Chair Morris asked if there was any conflict of interest with the deputy clerk position. The Town Administrator stated no.

Selectperson Curry motioned to approve the appointment of Courtney Hardwick to the Recreation Committee. Selectperson O'Brien seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

Selectperson Curry motioned to approve the appointment of Ginifir Giddinge to the Recreation Committee. Selectperson O'Brien seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: Yes 3; No 0

The Town Administrator stated in preparation for the appointments she went back to see if oaths needed to be prepared. According to the charge the committee members require and oath but only one member had an oath on file at the Town Office. Should we consider indefinite oaths or removing them? Chair Morris stated to prepare oaths for all members and at their next meeting we can get them taken care of.

- **Town Office Training April 5**

The Town Administrator will be in Augusta on April 5 for an all-day training and the Deputy Clerk has a ZOOM training in the morning. She is requesting that the office close until 1 pm so both can attend their training. A post will be put on the website and a sign on the door. The Select Board agreed to the closure.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. Correspondence

None

X. Any Other Business

None

XI. Enter Executive Session per 1 M.R.S.A 405 (6) (A) Personnel Matters


7:45 pm exit 8:15 pm

XII. Adjournment @ 8:15 pm

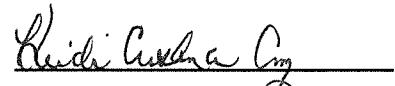
Respectfully Submitted,
Becky Taylor-Chase
Town Administrator



Jon Morris



Andy O'Brien



Heidi Cushman Curry