

Town of Pownal
SELECT BOARD MINUTES
May 8, 2023

Present: Andy O'Brien, Jon Morris, Heidi Cushman Curry, Becky Taylor-Chase, Ginifir Giddinge, Kathi Levesque
Public: Dick Hogue, Bo Chesney, Marcia Bowen, Bill Schmidt, Russ Schmidt, Todd Mellin, Matt Altieri, Tim Giddinge Notetaker: Kathy Hogue

PUBLIC HEARING

- I. Chair Morris called the Public Hearing to order, 5:30pm.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Hearings
 - a. Planning Board / Land Use Ordinance for Town Warrant articles #3 - #10 – Chair Morris asked if there were any questions/comments?
 - Becky Taylor-Chase explained that Article #9 has 2 Exhibits instead of 1 as presented at the last public hearing. These are regarding Home Occupation and Space and Dimensional Standards.
 - Russ Schmidt asked if LD2003 was used for guidance? Matt Altieri replied that the Planning Board is still working on this and haven't made any changes yet, but will be looking at ways to align and/or modify.
 - Bill Schmidt asked for clarification regarding Article #3 / Property Tax Assistance Program. He wasn't familiar with this ordinance and eligibility – Becky explained that the change in this article dealt with procedures which would allow her to apply a direct payment to the tax bill rather than sending a check to the tax payer who would then send it back to be applied to their tax bill - a way to streamline and eliminate a few steps in the process. She also noted to Bill that eligibility hinged on applying for and being approved for the Property Tax Fairness Credit.
 - b. Chair Morris continued to review Town Meeting Warrant asking if there any questions for Articles #11-15?

Q: Article #14, Town Planner: What are the needs/drivers for this position?
Andy O'Brien responded that the Town has been using North Star Planning as consultants, but they are not actually meeting the needs of the Town and committees. Heidi Curry added that an in-house planner would broadly assist in many aspects of the Town – would look at immediate needs as well as strategic long-term planning. North Star is not able to meet these additional needs. This position would be a Level 2 employee at

a rate of \$32/hour – this is at the high end of the hourly range in order to be competitive to attract interested applicants.

- c. Articles #11 - #23 – no questions.
- d. Article #26 – 3 RFP’s were received regarding Future Facilities and an up to amount for the Town Warrant will be \$87,066. The FF Committee will have a recommendation as to what company they would like to go with by Town Meeting.
- e. Articles #27 - #40 - no questions.

NOTE: Article #37 regarding the potential sale of Map 8 Lot 9 is a placeholder until a decision is made at the regular Select Board meeting.

SELECT BOARD MEETING – 6:05PM

- IV. Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrant
 - AP Warrant #25 in the amount of \$32,182.52 was approved.
 - Payroll Journal #331 in the amount of \$7,369.58 was approved.
- V. Minutes of previous meetings
 - Minutes of April 11, 2023 Executive Session were approved as written.
 - Minutes of April 23, 2023 were approved as written.

- VI. Public Comment
 - Tim Giddinge asked about the State Grant that is available for help to eliminate Brown Tail Moths. He noted that Bradbury Mountain State Park will be spraying at the park along with the Route 9 corridor. Municipalities can apply for this grant, deadline is May 18, through the Department of Conservation. Becky will look in to this.
 - Marcia Bowen asked about the Efficiency Maine grant for efficient heating/lighting for municipalities. Becky forwarded the information to Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest, Chair of the Mallett Hall Building & Grounds Committee and hasn’t heard back from him.
- VII. Department Head reports can be found on line. Andy O’Brien reported that Clean Energy Connect does not have any plans to build a substation in Pownal.

VIII. New Business

a. Town owned property sale request / May 8 Lot 9:

In response to the Real Estate Request Form, 2 committees responded with opinions/comments: Recreation Committee recommended leasing; Conservation Commission also recommended leasing. Fire Chief had no objections to selling the land but recommended an easement as it is a possible site for a communication tower. One abutter "objected to selling". Another abutter believes he is the rightful owner of said property. The Board noted that this abutter has not paid property taxes on this parcel over the years; and the statute of limitations on contesting a lien ended in 1997. The Town attorney's decision/opinion on this matter stands. The Board suggests that we have our attorney send a letter to the Edgerly's to re-clarify the Town's position in this matter.

Chair Morris reiterated that from Town Meeting vote in 1972, no tax acquired property should be sold. Is this binding forever? Town Attorney says a Town Meeting vote can change this decision. Do we agree? Do we want to revise our policy? We could address this question at Town Meeting – add to the narrative.

Heidi Curry stated that this property is land-locked and therefore doesn't have any real value to the Town. She recommends selling.

Other comments included "if you sell, then the property is gone forever". "If we lease, we could ask for the amount taxes would be on the property – bringing revenue to the Town." It was noted that our Town Attorney did not recommend the Town getting in to leasing agreements. It wasn't clear what the reasons/concerns were regarding leasing and that we should clarify this further.

MOTION: Andy O'Brien moved to strike Article #37 from the Town Meeting Warrant in order to examine leasing options further. Jon 2nd.

VOTE: 2 = yes, 1 = no.

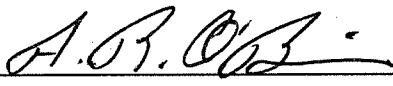
b. Amendments to Town Meeting Warrant – none.


c. Laptop purchase for the Communication Center: Becky noted that a laptop was not included in the grant but she would like to purchase one from ION Networking – who will also do all the set up. MOTION: It was moved and 2nd to allow Town Administrator to purchase a laptop through ION Networking to be used for the Communication Center. All voted in favor.

- d. Jenna Shue completed a Volunteer Form for CIP and/or Budget Committee. She also would like to help with the Communication Center: MOTION: It was moved and 2nd for Jenna Shue to be a member of the Budget Committee. All voted in favor.
- e. Spirit of America Award – Andy noted that he keeps receiving emails asking for Pownal’s nomination. The Select Board will forward some communication to Becky for her to send that would state that we have our own way of recognizing community members.
- IX. Old Business – none.
- X. Correspondence: Becky noted that a Leighton Road resident has been by Town Hall several times complaining of potholes in the road. Jon noted that he has received at least 4 phone calls from same resident. Dick Hogue noted that he has been by at least 3 times recently to talk with that same resident regarding continued ACO complaints.
- XI. Other Business – none.
- XII. Meeting adjourned, 6:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen A. Hogue / Deputy Town Clerk

Jon Morris


Andy O'Brien


Heidi Cushman Curry