

Town of Searsport, Maine
Select Board Meeting

February 4, 2025

1. Call to Order: 6:00pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance: Doug Norman, Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call: Doug Norman, Chair, Mark Bradstreet Vice Chair, Steve Tanguay, and Sandra Otis-Anderson are all present.
4. Announcements: None
5. Acceptance of Minutes: Motion: Sandra made a motion to accept the minutes for the January 21, 2025 select board meeting as written. Second by Mark Vote : 4-0-0
6. Acceptance of the agenda: James added one 11th hour item concerning the playground at Mosman Park. Sandra made a motion to accept the agenda with the additional item of the playground at Mosman Park added as 11th hour. Seconded by Mark Vote: 4-0-0
7. Public Comment: Rolf Olsen surprised Steve with Birthday wishes and delicious Morning Glory muffins which he graciously shared with everyone. He also presented the board with an aluminum bottle and a proposed draft of a proclamation regarding plastic pollution drafted by the Friends of Sears Island. Doug asked James to look into it.
Harlan McLaughlin addressed the continued issues with the town website. He was assured it is actively being worked on. James shared that the Mass Communications Committee is meeting regularly and working on updates. Harlan also inquired about the status of Kidder Point and was given a copy of the letter from the DEP regarding their recent site visit. He invited the Select Board to an informational meeting being held on February 25th at 7:00 pm at the Mermaid Plaza. The meeting is sponsored by Friends of Sears Island and will discuss it's future.
8. Old Business:
 - a. Information Center Lease . There is not yet a formal lease agreement but the cost has been agreed on at \$100.00 a month. Mark made a motion to approve the expense of \$100.00 per month and leave the details of the lease agreement to the Town Manager to finalize with the land owner. Steve seconded the motion. He inquired if the lease could be held off on until all the repairs are completed. James explained the lease and payments need to begin before the construction. Vote: 4-0-0
 - b. Set Interest Rate on Taxes: The state set the limit at 7.5%. James proposed keeping the rate at 7.0%. Steve made the motion to set the rate at 7.5% for the 2025 taxes, seconded by Sandra. Vote: 5-0-0.
 - c. Set Tax Due Date: James proposed setting the dates at September 5th and October 10th. Steve made a motion to set the tax due date of September 5, 2025 with the interest rate of 7% due on any unpaid taxes set at October 10, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mark. Vote: 4-0-0
 - d. Approve Article 17 Use of Surplus: The 2024 surplus number will not be available for Town meeting. The auditors have not yet returned to finalize the 2023 audit. James is proposing the maximum amount of money that is possible, set at \$600,000.00 to offset taxes.

The surplus figure is used to run the town for the first three months of each year in anticipation of collected taxes. The intent is to lighten the tax burden. The tax assessment adjustment which will be completed by April, 2025 will help with the Homestead Exemption. The board will vote on the actual amount when it is known what the available amount is. Steve made a motion that warrant article 17 read as follows: To see if the Town will authorize the Selectboard to appropriate up to \$600,000.00 from surplus to fund items within the 2025 municipal budget that would otherwise be raised by taxes. Seconded by Doug
Voted: 4-0-0

- e. Approve the 2025 Warrant: Mark made a motion to accept the warrant articles for the March 8, 2025 town meeting as proposed, seconded by Doug Vote: 4-0-0

- 9. 11th Hour: MMPA is looking into replacing the wood chips in the playground area. They are decomposing and need to be removed and replaced. The Park is looking to split the cost evenly with the town. Each would pay \$2,635.00. The chips would be provided by N.C. Hunt in Jefferson. Jim Rose, President of the Park Association outlined the details of the project. Mark made a motion to appropriate from the recreation and highway reserve accounts up to \$2,700.00 to replace the woodchips in the playground area at Mosman Memorial Park. The motion was seconded by Steve. Vote: 4-0-0

10. Correspondence:

- a. A letter from MMA that explains where the dues and fees the town pays are allocated/
- b. A letter from Until who has purchased Bangor natural Gas
- c. 2 letters from Charter Communications about programming updates
- d. A letter from Penobscot Energy Recovery Company letting the town know the the bypass will continue with Juniper Ridge Landfill
- e. A letter from the Swan Lake Association thanking the town for the 2024 donation
- f. A letter from DM&J Waste regarding a rate increase for construction debris
- g. A letter from Belfast Fire and Ambulance notifying the town of a rate increase for paramedic intercepts from \$200.00 to \$350.00
- h. A letter from the State regarding the upcoming Brown Tail Moth season.
- i. A flyer from Efficiency Maine regarding a training class about saving money on home heating.
- j. A document regarding the Hiawatha painting done by Dolly Smtih which resides at Carver Memorial Library.
- k. A letter from Nicholas Hodgkins, DEP regarding a recent inspection at GAC.

11. Treasurer's Warrant. Mark made a motion to accept the Treasurer's warrant pending signatures by the Select Board. Seconded by Sandra Vote 4-0-0

12. Town Manager's Report: James read his report into the record. Mark made a motion to accept the report as read, seconded by Steve. Vote: 4-0-0

13. Select Board Report:

Mark reported that folks are telling him how pleased they are with the new downtown area.

Sandra reminded everyone of the Chocolate Festival and Lasagna Dinner being held on Saturday the 8th at the First Congregational Church at 11:30.

Steve reported on the excellent work being done in committees and mentioned the Climate Resiliency Meeting at Union Hall on Tuesday at 6:00. Wednesday will be a Cruise Ship Committee meeting at 6:00 in Union Hall and a Mass Communications Committee meeting will be held on Thursday at 4:00 pm . He also mentioned the Carver Library's Craft Stash sale this Saturday.

Doug had no report.

14. Public Comment and the Viewing Public Comment: Kim Yesis thanked James for the effort he has made to keep taxpayers informed of where taxes stand for this year.

15. Executive Session M.R.S.A. 1 § 405 (6) (F) Confidential – (General Assistance Matters and Poverty abatement requests) Mark made a motion at 6:40 pm to leave regular session and enter into executive session under M.R.S.A 1 § 405 (6) (F) Confidential – (General Assistance Matters and Poverty Abatement requests). Seconded by Doug. Vote: 4-0-0.

Mark made a motion at 6:58 to exit executive session and enter back into regular session , seconded by Doug Vote: 4-0-0

16. Decisions from Executive Session : Mark made a motion to approve the following cases to be funded from the Jenny Lawrence Fund:

WP 25-02: Up to \$620.00 for Fuel and Electricity

WP 25-03: \$754.00 for Rent/Housing

WP 25-04: Up to \$550.00 for Fuel Oil

WP 25-05: Up to \$620.00 for Frozen Sewer/Septic Tank Pump

WP 25-06: Up to \$605.00 for Fuel Oil

WP 25-07: Up to \$500.00 for LP Fuel and Electricity

WP 25-08: Up to \$1,000.00 to construct a Handicap Ramp

WP 25-09: Up to \$1,500.00 for Rent/Housing

Motion was seconded by Doug Vote: 4-0-0

WP 25-10: Mark made a motion to approve spending from the Jenny Lawrence Fund up to \$1,000.00 contingent on need for Rent/Housing/ for Fire Victims. Seconded by Doug Vote: 4-0-0

17. Adjournment: Mark made a motion to adjourn at 7:01 pm. Seconded by Sandra Vote: 4-0-0

Respectfully Submitted

Janine F. Laveway
Board Recorder

APPROVED: 2-18-2025