

WISCASSET SELECT BOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
MINUTES, OCTOBER 18, 2021

Present: Kim Andersson, Pam Dunning, Terry Heller, Vice Chair Dusty Jones, Chair Sarah Whitfield and Town Manager Dennis Simmons

Chair Sarah Whitfield called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants
 - a. **Terry Heller moved to approve the payroll warrants of October 8 and October 15, 2021. Vote 5-0-0.**
 - b. **Terry Heller moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of October 12 and October 19, 2021. Vote 5-0-0.**
3. Approval of Minutes

Terry Heller moved to approve the minutes of October 5, 2021, as amended. Vote 5-0-0.

4. Special Presentations or Awards – none
5. Committee Appointments – none
6. Public Hearings
 - a. Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Terry Heller moved to open the public hearing at 6:10 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.

Article 2: Ed Polewarczyk spoke in favor taking funds from the capital reserve account for the police cruiser which, he said, was necessary to replace one of the current vehicles.

Article 3: Peter Wells spoke in favor of spending up to \$50,000 on an archway and stone entrance to the ancient cemetery as a sign of respect. He said the funds would come from the sale of cemetery lots, not taxes. James Kochan, member of the former Historic Preservation Committee, opposed spending the funds on a gateway and fence he called incompatible with the ancient cemetery. He recommended replacing in kind, which would be less costly. Becky Applin and Richard Litz also spoke in favor of the archway and fence.

Article 4: Carrie Hadley, Manager of the Wiscasset Art Gallery, spoke in favor of the proposed 20-year lease to the Maine Art Gallery which would enable the gallery to pursue grants and other funding for the upkeep of and necessary improvements to the building. Richard Reese, Daniel Pope, and Wendy Ross Eichler spoke in favor of the lease to the art gallery as a vote of confidence in the gallery management. Ed Polewarczyk suggested that the rent to be received from the gallery at least equal the amount of

taxes the town would receive if the building were sold, and the voters should have the opportunity to vote on the agreement itself. He recommended a no vote.

Article 5: Ed Polewarczyk cautioned against approving the net billing credit agreement for 20 years without a clear understanding of what was involved, who the parties to the agreement were and how expensive energy could be sold at a low cost. He recommended voting against the article.

Article 6: Ed Polewarczyk confirmed that the proposed solar ordinance would not apply to the three solar projects planned for Wiscasset. He said it was an acceptable ordinance and thanked the Planning Board and Ordinance Review Committee.

Pam Dunning moved to close the public hearing at 6:56 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.

7. Public Comment- none

8. Department Head or Committee Chair

Department heads were thanked for their work. Duane Goud was congratulated on his successful September.

9. Unfinished Business

- a. Airport Solar Project Land Lease, MSD Wiscasset, LLC: **Terry Heller moved to approve the lease.** Dusty Jones said he had examined the lease, was in favor of the project and was ready to negotiate the lease but had concerns and could not vote that evening. His concerns included among other issues the source of the panels, the lack of participation by the board in the negotiations, the fact that the project would not be governed by the proposed solar ordinance, and the amount of the bond for decommissioning. Dennis Simmons responding to concerns about decommissioning said that he had negotiated a bond of \$150,000 which would be reevaluated after ten years. Terry Heller said Jones' questions had been answered by the project representatives. She added that she had researched the rents of other solar installations and found that the rent proposed was above what most of the plants were paying. It had been negotiated from \$1000 to \$1400. Kim Andersson said the project would be a good deal for the town.

Ed Polewarczyk said the board was given the authority to negotiate the lease, although it appeared the board had not participated in the negotiations. He asked about the term of the lease, how much energy it would provide, who would buy the energy, the cost of the project, whether a new company has ability to perform the contract, and how it is funded. He said people should know the terms of the contract.

Dusty Jones asked that the vote be delayed. Terry Heller said she was satisfied with the terms that the town manager had negotiated. Sarah Whitfield said that many of the questions had been answered and information was available to the public. **Vote 3-2-0 (Jones and Whitfield opposed.)**

10. New Business

- a. Bid Opening Ancient Cemetery Fence – no bids were received.

b. Larrabee Fund Request – Wiscasset Middle-High School: The school requested \$20,645 from the Larrabee Fund for band instruments. **Sarah Whitfield moved to approve the request. Vote 5-0-0.**

c. Monthly Financials

d. Farmer’s Market request for location change: Claudia Sortwell said the current location of the farmer’s market was not working and asked to change the location to town-owned land at the intersection of Route 27 and Churchill Street. She said parking should not be a problem. Dennis Simmons said there were concerns about traffic at that location and suggested the property behind the town office. Several other locations were suggested, and discussion on the matter was deferred until the next workshop.

e. Correspondence – Jim Smith and the Rines family: A letter of thanks was received for the Fire Department’s help following the death of Peter Rines.

11. Town Manager’s Report – none

12. Other Board Business

a. Assessors’ Abatement: **Pam Dunning moved to approve the abatements for Brian Pendleton (Map U07, Lot 11) in the amount of \$502 and the Personal Property Abatement for D. S. Technical Services, Inc. in the amount of \$275.09 as recommended by Assessors’ Agent Ellery G. Bane. Vote 5-0-0.**

b. Executive Session to discuss economic development: **Pam Dunning moved to enter executive session pursuant to 12 M.R.S.A. §405 (6) (C). Vote 5-0-0. At 8:27 p.m. Pam Dunning moved to leave executive session. Vote 5-0-0.**

13. Adjournment

Terry Heller moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.