

WISCASSET SELECTBOARD,
TAX ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
MARCH 7, 2023
IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM

Preliminary Minutes

Present: James Andretta, Terry Heller, Vice Chair Dusty Jones, Bill Maloney, Chair Sarah Whitfield, and Town Manager Dennis Simmons

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Treasurer's Warrants

- a. **Terry Heller moved to approve the payroll warrants of February 24 and March 3, 2023. Vote 5-0-0.**
- b. **Terry Heller moved to approve the accounts payable warrants of February 28 and March 7, 2023. Vote 5-0-0.**

3. Approval of Minutes

Terry Heller moved to approve the minutes of February 21, 2023. Vote 5-0-0.

4. Special Presentations or Awards – none

5. Committee Appointments

- a. **Terry Heller moved to appoint Steven Christiansen to the Wiscasset Cemetery Committee. Vote 5-0-0.**
- b. **Terry Heller moved to appoint Cecilia Ludwig and Stephen Ludwig to the Appearance of the Town Committee. Vote 5-0-0.**

6. Public Hearings

a. New Liquor License: Maine Tasting Center, 506 Bath Road. **Bill Maloney moved to open the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.** There was no discussion. **Bill Maloney moved to close the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.** **Bill Maloney moved to approve the liquor license for Maine Tasting Center, 506 Bath Road. Vote 5-0-0.**

7. Public Comment – none

8. Department head or committee chair

Broadband Committee update: Carla Dickstein said the next Consolidated grant round would take place in August with the application deadline in June. In order to be competitive with other applications,

Wiscasset's contribution would be \$183,500. Evan Goodkowsky gave a breakdown of the cost (at \$150 per premise) which would include \$183,500 from the town, \$100,000 from the county, \$75,000 from ARPA funds and a contribution of \$7500 from the Island Institute. If the town's contribution is on the June ballot, discussion on funds for the broadband contract will be included in the public hearing scheduled for the June ballot items. The matter will be discussed at the board's budget meeting on March 15 or on the following budget meeting.

9. Unfinished Business – none

10. New Business

a. Fred Brewer FY 21 audit: Brewer said the audit had found no fraud or intentional misstatement. According to the handout provided covering the past six years, the town had \$1,700,000 in cash in 2016 and now has just short of \$500,000. He reviewed the taxes received over the years which had decreased due to Covid and the number of the town's tax acquired properties. On the whole, the town is doing well and has almost the two months' cash available as recommended. Brewer said the town was in good shape.

b. Water District Charter Change: Dennis Simmons said he had met with representatives of DEP, USDA, and other federal agencies regarding conditions at the wastewater treatment plant, and indications are that funding may not be forthcoming for the plant at its present location. There are options, however, and Simmons cited a letter from the director of the Maine Rural Water Association regarding a possible charter change at the Wiscasset Water District. The district is working with neighboring utilities to prepare for future growth, climate adaptation and preservation of public drinking water supply. It will be submitting a charter change to the Maine legislature. The change would provide options for the Town of Wiscasset to contract with the District for various services, the authority for the Water District to own/operate the assets of the Sewer Department following the approval of a local referendum, or any combination. The Water District has asked for the town's support. There would be no obligation on the part of Wiscasset. **Bill Maloney moved to ask the Water District to include the word change in its charter. Vote 5-0-0.**

c. Abatement Request: In a memo Rob Lalli, Superintendent of the Wiscasset Sewer Department, outlined the conditions regarding the abatement request from the owner of a house on Flood Avenue because of unusually high water consumption during certain weeks when guests were using the house. The plumbing in the house was inspected and/or replaced, the water meter was checked for correct function, the ground checked for puddles or mushy areas, and the walls and ceilings were checked for water stains. Lalli said it is unclear why the usage is so high; however, since it appears only when guests are using the house, and no leakage was found, he recommended against granting the abatement. **Dusty Jones moved to reject the abatement request. Vote 5-0-0.**

11. Assessors Business – none

12. Town Manager's Report – covered above.

13. Other Board Business

a. Executive Session for discussion of labor negotiations. At 6:31 p.m., **Bill Maloney moved to enter executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D). Vote 5-0-0.** At 7:02 p.m. **Bill Maloney moved to**

leave executive session. Vote 5-0-0. Bill Maloney moved to approve the support staff union contract. Vote 5-0-0.

14. Adjournment

Bill Maloney moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Vote 5-0-0.