

**Readfield Select Board**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes – Monday, January 24, 2023 – *Approved***

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**Select Board Members Present:** Dennis Price (Chair), Kathryn Woodsum, Sean Keegan, Steve DeAngelis (arrived late), Carol Doorenbos

**Excused Absent:**

**Others Attending:** Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary), Jackie Drouin, Linnea Koons, Robert Harris, Grace Keene, Elaine Katz, Hannah Flannery, Ben Rodrigues, Bruce Hunter, Jerry Bley, Chip Stephens (CEO), Rebecca Lambert, Michael Skolnick (Archipelago), Simon Thorne (Consolidated Communications)

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Regular Meeting Items - 5 min.**

23-070 – Minutes: Select Board meeting minutes of January 9, 2023

- Kathryn **motioned** to approve, Sean **seconded**, **4-0 vote** in favor

23-071 – Warrants: #29-30

- Warrant #29 & 30 – Kathryn **motioned** to approve, Sean **seconded**, **4-0 vote** in favor

**Communications - 15 min.**

Select Board Communications – 5 min.

- Kathryn thanked Ben and Matt for a great job keeping the sidewalks clean this winter
- Carol asked if the town has a way to advertise the Comp Plan Survey locally, like on the Fire Departments sign, as an example. She also asked if the Comp Plan Survey could be added to the main page of the Town Website to make it easier for people to locate.

Boards, Committees, Commissions & Departments – 5 min.

- Board and Committee Minutes – Age Friendly & Conservation Commission

Public Communication – Members of the Public may address the Select Board – 5 min.

- Bob Harris attended to ask about metal detecting policies on the Fairgrounds because he received a request from someone, Eric responded that the town does ask for folks who are metal detecting on public lands in Readfield to turn in items of significant value. Eric also thinks it would be a good idea to establish a policy going forward as a part of the Open Space plan update currently in work.

**Appointments, Reappointments, and Resignations – 5 min.**

23-072 – Consider the appointment of Robert Bittar to the Age Friendly Committee

While Carol was initially open to the idea, and believes in welcoming anyone who is interested in volunteering, Dennis did note that Bob’s application was incomplete and not thorough, and Eric noted that Bob

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has been arrested on three occasions now for harassment and breaking his restraining order against Eric, as well, as Town Manager, Eric needs to be able to communicate openly and effectively with all boards and their members at all times. This could not occur with this committee as Bob's conditions of bail stipulate he cannot have contact with nor be within 15 feet of Eric.

- Kathryn **motioned** to not approve the appointment of Robert Bittar to the Age Friendly Committee, Sean **seconded**, **4-0 vote** in favor

**Public Hearing – Open Space Planning – 30 min.**

Conduct a Public Hearing on Open Space in Readfield – 30 min.

- Eric Dyer - The Open Space Plan was last updated in 2006; there are now over 1000 acres of Open Space in Readfield. There are many dedicated committees and boards invested in the Open Space plan update. The community has had a growing interest in actively managing public Open Space especially since the Covid Pandemic.
- Ben Rodriguez, Readfield Sexton – Discussed the option of adding conservation burial grounds similar to the Baldwin Hill Conservation Cemetery in Fayette, to remember those before us in town, especially as some of our current cemeteries have less and less plots available over time.
- Linnea Koons, Conservation Commission – Concerned about the scenic vistas as their management is currently left up to land owners, and also discussed the importance of ecological diversity, most of the Open Space we currently have is woodlands, and Linnea would like to see more grasslands and mixed brush, either by acquiring more different types of properties or altering what the town already owns.
- Hannah Flannery, Recreation Board – Hannah would like to see some Open Space used for developing more athletic fields for the kids in town to use.
- Bob Harris, Historical Society – Bob will consider ways to keep History in Readfield alive through Open Spaces.
- Jerry Bley, Conservation Commission, but speaking as a resident – Discussed the importance of inventorying the information (such as soils quality) at hand and review the previous Open Space plan as well as look through the recommendations that have been made over the years to improve the current Open Space Plan. What is and is not effective. Eric asked Jerry if he thinks there could be value in professional counseling support for updating the plan. Jerry does believe it would be helpful as the folks working on the Plan are volunteers and have limited time and resources, it is a multifaceted effort. As well, Jerry mentioned that is is key to have some GIS support.

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- Jackie Drouin, Trails Committee – The Trails Committee wants Open Space wherever they are needed and wanted, but a lot of work does go into what we already have.
- Elaine Katz, Age Friendly Committee – Appreciates the Age Friendly Committee being involved in the process and just requests that accessibility is kept in mind for Open Space uses and recreation so as to allow seniors and disabled residents easy access to enjoy Open Spaces.
- Chip Stephens, Code Enforcement – discussed the importance of accessibility, there are different parts/chapters in the Comp Plan that also may involve or consider Open Spaces and affect how the town develops. He also mentioned there is a good amount of property available on Sturtevant Hill and Carlton Pond which are both used for snowmobile trails, find a way to utilize those resources could encourage a lot of traffic and lead them to where you want them to be. Identify the Open Space, find access to it and find a way to get people there and that will help out a lot.
- Kathryn, Select Board – Policy updates and reviews are the responsibility of the Select Board, it is important to have updates on a schedule. Open Space is one of the older policies, the Fairgrounds Plan is another that is part of this and was last updated in 1995. Jesse Lee Church has 4 acres of Open Space that was not on the radar until a few years ago when the Kents Hill Methodist Church brought it to the town’s attention. It is an old Muster Ground, not listed as a town property or owned by the church, so there is legality to this property to change the status to conservation. Open Space plan updating will not be completed until after the Comp Plan update in the spring. July will be time to work on Open Space, but recommends getting it in the works ahead of time to give board, commission, and committee members time to review the current plan and come up with ideas to improve it.
- Sean Keegan, Select Board – Mentioned how the pandemic affected the importance of outside activity and recreation for residents, which really highlights the importance of the Open Space Planning.
- Carol Doorenbos, Select Board – Open Space history started with a grant from LL Bean, she looked into how much acreage the Town has, there were about 23 recreational and open spaces in the town. A lot of families have also donated their property to the town. After totaling the acreage through the towns website, there were 2400 out of 19,800 acres protected (not including the eight Readfield cemeteries). Carols concern is that tax payers dollars are going towards the properties, and feels that we are already blessed to have what we have. She would like to be budget neutral and thinks the increase from \$20k a year to \$50k a year for Open Spaces is too much. Carol also mentioned that the

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Old Comp Plan had a portion of protection for the Jesse Lee Church, she thinks the parking there is dangerous and could be improved. Carol asked that until the Comp Plan updating is complete that no tax dollars be spent on Open Space until it can be brought to a vote.

**Old Business – 5 min.**

23-062 – Consider a revised Community Action Grant Select Board Resolution – 5 min.

- Kathryn **motioned** to approve, Sean **seconded**
- Carol was concerned about a portion of the resolution, the fourth statement in the resolution “WHEREAS, the Town of Readfield experiences intense windstorms and rainstorms, blizzards and ice storms, periodic drought conditions, and other natural hazards and seeks to better prepare for future conditions;...” and felt it was a broad statement and that it was possibly an unnecessary inclusion to the resolution. Eric responded that he did pull out some of the more indirect pieces, but what is here is in support of the project areas at the top of the list. As an example he mentioned the damage caused by a rainstorm the day before Christmas that caused \$38k in damage.
- Kathryn mentioned a small grammatical error in the document that needed editing.
- Steve responded to Carol about the weather related portion of the resolution that the things listed are happening in other areas of the country and that these weather events especially cannot be planned, and we should build in protections for the things we have.
- Sean agreed with Steve and mentioned how winter rain does not go into our wells but rather into the lakes.
- Dennis mentioned that it is important that we are as prepared as possible, even if that particular portion does not apply currently, it could down the road.
- Kathryn added to the discussion that the resolution is written in a way that adds flexibility
- Carol **motioned** to amend the resolution to remove the portion of the resolution “WHEREAS, the Town of Readfield experiences intense windstorms and rainstorms, blizzards and ice storms, periodic drought conditions, and other natural hazards and seeks to better prepare for future conditions;...” there was no second to the motion.
- The initial **motion** was then voted on, **4-1 vote** in favor, with Carol opposed.

**New Business – 55 min.**

23-073 – Consider a Consent Agreement for Map 140, Lot 071 – 10 min.

- Chip presented an ongoing issue with the Beliveau’s property they purchased and had been excessively cleared of trees and other vegetation, resulting in violations of the Land Use Ordinance.

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The consent agreement is an effort to bring the property back into compliance without the need for prosecution.

- Chip thanked Elliot Thayer, Joe Stephenson and Michael Skolnick for their efforts in correcting this issue.
- Kathryn **motioned** to approve the Consent Agreement, Carol **seconded**, **vote 5-0** in favor. Chip will leave a copy with Eric for Select Board members to sign, and return to Michael Skolnick.

23-074 – Consider a CMP Town Pole Permit – 5 min.

- Sean noted that the pole in question is in Mount Vernon; Eric said he will coordinate with Mount Vernon. Kathryn **motioned** to approve, Sean **seconded**, **5-0 vote** in favor.

23-075 – Consider a letter of support to investigate broadband internet with Fidium Fiber – 15 min.

- Simon Thorne of Consolidated Communications, INC. Fidium Fiber attended to present the opportunity. This broadband internet with Fidium Fiber would be shared by neighboring towns; Fidium Fiber would cover the cost to build the infrastructure required, no contract agreement and would be a partnership through a grant. The suggested contribution to secure the grant is \$21k-\$210k, not required and would only need to be paid if the town received the grant. The higher the contribution, the greater leverage Readfield would have in getting the grant. If the grant is awarded to Readfield, Fidium Fiber will be added to the ballot in June with an estimated build date sometime in 2024.
- Kathryn **motioned** to approve the letter of intent, **seconded** by Sean, **vote 5-0** in favor.
- Kathryn motioned to extend the meeting to 9pm, Sean seconded, vote 5-0 in favor

23-076 – Discuss Draft Select Board procedures – 10 min.

- Kathryn developed a Draft Select Board Procedures manual off of the town of Saco, similar to an employee handbook. Any changes to the document that members would like altered can be requested by Eric's email for inclusion.

23-077 – Consider a First Draft budget (first set of departments) – 15 min.

- Increasing costs in a number of areas such as fuel, electricity, and materials due to inflation. The RSU budget is projected to increase by 8-10%. There may be some money available in the capital expenditures and possibly some in reserves to make up the difference from inflation. Dennis thanked the Budget Committee for all they do in maintaining a healthy town budget. Projected wage increases for stipend positions are 10%, while hourly full time employee rates are projected to increase 8% and 5% increase for Town Manager and CEO. Legal fees were decreased due to a

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healthy reserve budget. Tech has increased due to TRIO licensing and software, Tech Support, some lines have been consolidated as well so there are some changes due to that restructure. Budget Committee Meetings are available to attend or listen to live while they are happening, meetings are not recorded.

**Other Business, Upcoming Meetings, and Future Agenda Items - 5 min.**

**Motion** to adjourn made by Sean at 9:00 PM **seconded** by Kathryn, **vote 5-0** in favor

**Adjournment**

*Minutes submitted by Anjelica Pittman, Board Secretary*