

Readfield Select Board
Regular Meeting Minutes – Monday March 14, 2022 – *Approved*

Select Board Members Present: Carol Doorenbos, Ralph Eno, Sean Keegan, Dennis Price and Kathryn Woodsum

Others Attending: William Starrett (Channel 7), Eric Dyer (Town Manager), Anjelica Pittman (Board Secretary), Kristin Favreau, Hannah Flannery, Martin Hanish, Bruce Hunter (via Zoom)

Board of Assessors (6:00 pm):

Dennis called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Regular Meeting Items (5 Min):

- **22-104 - Minutes:** Select Board Meeting minutes of February 15, 2022
 - **Motion** made by Sean to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of February 15, 2022 as presented, **second** by Kathryn. **Vote** 5-0 in favor.
- **22-105 – Warrants: #36-37 (FY22)**
 - Carol reviewed Warrants #36-37 in the amounts of \$366,999.60 and \$21,005.20, respectively.
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn to approve warrants #36 & 37 in the amount of \$388,004.80, **second** by Sean. **Vote** 5-0 in favor.

Communications (25 min):

- **Select Board Communications (5 min)**

Sean thanked the volunteers for a successful Youth Derby March 5, 2022, \$470 raised. Dennis requested a motion to approve an abatement from the Board of Assessors requesting the Select Board approve the homestead exemption back tax credit for years 2019/2020 (\$391.00) and 2020/2021(\$439.25) for a total of \$830.25; Kathryn **motioned** to approve, Ralph **seconded**, **Vote** 5-0 in favor.
- **Town Staff Reports (10 min)**
 - **Treasurers Report – February 2022**

Reconciliation for February is good, little activity for this month, completed all field work, awaiting audit draft reports from RHR Smith in a couple of weeks, will be ready by April. Wrapping up the town budget for the Municipal Budget Meeting coming up March 24, 2022, 8-10% budget increase expected.
 - **Town Manager’s Report**

Street light agreement has been signed, waiting installation date, would like to consider a few more streetlights per year in the coming years if the desire is there from residents. Kathryn suggested adding 3-5 streetlights per year in a Warrant Article to budget for the future. Town Plowing contract RFPs open for pre bid, Eric has received 4 applications already. Heavy load limits on town roads have been posted. The Readfield Transfer Station is now accepting debit and credit card payments from residents. Looking forward to spring programs, Eric has already reached out to the YMCA about swim lessons at the beach, is unsure if this year the YMCA will have the staffing to offer swim lessons.
- **Board, Committees, Commissions & Departments (5 min)**
 - **Appeals Board Minutes**

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- January 12, 2022
- February 3, 2022
- Broadband Internet Committee Minutes
 - January 26, 2022
 - February 16, 2022
 - February 21, 2022
- Budget Committee Minutes
 - February 3, 2022
- Cemetery Committee Minutes
 - December 20, 2021
- Comprehensive Plan Committee Minutes
 - December 15, 2021
- Conservation Committee Minutes
 - December 14, 2021
 - January 11, 2022
 - February 8, 2022
- Library Board Minutes
 - February 2, 2022
- Recreation Board Minutes
 - November 16, 2021
 - December 21, 2021
 - January 6, 2022
- Trails Committee Minutes
 - October 27, 2021
 - December 7, 2021
- Solid Waste and Recycling Committee Minutes
 - January 12, 2022

Ralph suggested Board Meeting minutes be uploaded to the Town Website for easy access, Kathryn added that each Board that already has a page on the Town Website, have access to upload minutes to their page. Eric said that is definitely something we can work towards, Dennis added that it should be the responsibility of the Chair of each Board, once in effect.

- **Public Communications - *Members of the public may address the Select Board (5 min)***
 - Kristin Favreau attended with safety concerns regarding the South Rd., requested more signage and enforcement of speed limits in regards to the school zone. Eric responded that he has purchased signs (which can be installed in about a month) and met with the superintendent of schools, together they have a plan in place that will be enforced by the Sherriff's office. Eric also spoke with the Elementary school Principal, Jeff Boston, to propose an additional 20-30 spot parking lot be added next to the ball field. Kathryn requested an installation date for the parking lot project to ensure timely completion. Ralph suggested the speed monitor machine be placed on the South Rd to slow down traffic, Eric stated that as soon as the weather warms up the machine can certainly be used in the school zone. Kristin stated that after contact, law enforcement has increased patrol in the area. Kathryn mentioned the effectiveness of flashing school zone signs near Fayette Central and also suggested a crossing guard may help, and there may be volunteers from the Age Friendly Committee who would be willing to assist in this issue.

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- Martin Hanish appeared before the Board to shed light on the staffing shortage of ambulance and EMT staffing here in our town as well as across the State, which is hindering emergency response times. Marty having been employed with and familiar with MMA already reached out to them to gather information and direction in the matter. Marty is requesting the Board acknowledge the problem and to facilitate a statewide project to get information out, more people trained in these fields, and garner support from surrounding municipalities. Eric suggested this being written as a Select Board Resolution that the Select Board appoint a contact person, and share with other municipalities. Kathryn suggested a copy of the Resolution be sent to the State Representative to get things moving along and Eric responded that he will meet with Martin to get things going on this project.

Appointments, Reappointments & Resignations (5 min):

- **22-106** – Consider the appointment of Elaine Katz to the Age Friendly Committee
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn **seconded** by Carol **Vote** 5-0 in favor
- **22-107**-Consider the appointment of Elaine Katz to the Comprehensive Plan Committee (As a liaison representative of the Age Friendly Committee)
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn **seconded** by Carol **Vote** 5-0 in favor
- **22-108**-Consider the appointment of Ed Sims to the Age Friendly Committee
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn **seconded** by Sean **Vote** 5-0 in favor
- **22-109**-Consider the re-appointment of Jerry Bley to the Conservation Commission Committee
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn **seconded** by Sean **Vote** 5-0 in favor

Old Business – 55 min

- **22-022** – Consider COVID-19 protocols and meeting policy – 5 min
As life returns to normal, pandemic policies that will remain in place are virtual access to town meetings and senior hours at the transfer station. Vaccinated individuals can now visit the Town Hall mask free. Eric would like to see more people coming to Board Meetings in person again if they do not have a medical reason not to.
 - Kathryn **motioned** for a vote to show the Select Board supports these statements, Carol **seconded**, **vote** 5-0 in favor.
- **22-101**-Consider pending real estate foreclosures – 5 min
One property did foreclose due to nonpayment of property taxes. Eric and the Board expressed concern over residents being taken advantage of by property flippers. Kathryn mentioned a State policy that protects senior citizens from selling their foreclosure properties to low ball offers, recommends that be instituted for all residents regardless of age. Ralph encouraged that the language of the policy be clear and concise and that the policy be upgraded to a Resolution.
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn to direct Eric to contact the owner of the home under foreclosure immediately, Carol **seconded**, **vote** 5-0 in favor.
- **22-062**- Discuss the Fairgrounds Multi-use Enhancement Project status and next steps – 10 min
Hannah Flannery attended to brief the Board, she stated that the concept plan from the architect was complete, presented to the capital manager, the 500K placeholder was still the goal, still planning to apply for the Alford Grant, estimated cost of proposal will hopefully be lower than budgeted for but still awaiting total dollar quote. Kathryn inquired if there will be a refined amount before the project goes to

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print, Eric stated that may not happen however the details are in work for such a materials heavy project, but the project is at a good point overall. There was mention of the Conservation Commission Committee's interest in planting a pollinator's flower garden to promote bees and butterflies in the Fairgrounds project, Carol asked who will maintain the garden which Martin responded should not be a problem, members of the Committee would be willing to oversee that. Carol suggested trying to link up with Longfellow's to see what they can offer for information/advice/donations.

- **21-068-** Hear an update and consider next steps for broadband internet – 10 min
Residents in town appear to be in support of the Broadband project thus far. There have been 5 RFP proposals, one of which is preferred vendor, Axiom Technologies, subject to voter approval. Ralph queried if the project is still on budget of the original proposal, Eric replied that absolutely it is, as it is a progressive cost. Kathryn referenced Article 2 from the November 2, 2021 Special Town Meeting/Secret Ballot Vote Warrant Articles and Notes on page 85 of the Select Board meeting packet that the town already voted in favor of the Broadband project, now is the time to give voters a chance to authorize spending the money planned.
 - Kathryn **motioned** for a vote to direct Eric to enter into contract negotiations with Axiom Technologies, Carol **seconded**. **Vote 5-0** in favor.

- **22-103-** Consider a revised Town Manager Contract – 5 min
Effective March 1st, 2022, as decided in the Executive Session held February 15, 2022. All board members in agreeance of the fairness of the Town Manager Contract, and are pleased with Eric as Town Manager and the work he has done for the town.
 - Kathryn **motioned** to approve the Town Manager Contract, Carol **seconded**, **vote 5-0** in favor.

- **22-089-** Discuss the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget – 20 min
Budget meets 3 points, still a few unknowns, but overall a sound budget.
 - Kathryn **motioned** to extend the meeting to 8:45 PM (15 minutes), Sean **seconded**, **5-0 vote**.
Eric returned to the fiscal budget, stating residents will be spending more on taxes in the coming year due to the Fairgrounds Ballpark project as well as the Broadband project, but that the tax increase may be offset by the lower monthly cost of broadband which is aimed at being an affordable option for all residents. While taxes are due to increase, they are still not too far above the Mil Rate of a couple of years ago. Without the projects referenced, there would be a lower Mil Rate; however, he is confident the increase will be manageable for residents. Ralph asked how much money is available in the undesignated fund for cushioning unpredictable circumstances. Eric responded that 170K will be pulled from the undesignated fund for RSU 38 to buffer the school budget increase; the total was 300K this year in the fund, 130K from usual draw down, Eric assured the budget is balancing well. RSU website breaks down their budget for the 4 towns and school start out budget. Carol inquired about the Library budget, specifically the 19.28% increase, while also posing a question regarding the Egress project. Eric responded that the RFP for the egress project at the library has not been made available yet, but money is allocated for the project sometime in the next 3 years. Of the library budget, 9% covers retirement program expenses. Carol inquired about the driveway pavement project planned for the library this year, and whether that project could be moved out a year to potentially offset costs for this year. Eric said that is possible, Ralph responded that the library budget percentage is not apples to apples, and Kathryn stated that there are potential benefits to paving that driveway.
 - Carol **motioned** to remove the 15K parking lot pavement project, there was **no second**.

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Kathryn deduced that the budget spending will equate to \$151/year increase for average households in Readfield based on the average home value of \$266K, as well, there are programs available at the Town Hall for residents experiencing financial hardship. Ralph pointed out that the increased Mil Rate is marginal and the projects being completed are building equity in the town.

New Business (25 min):

- **22-110** - Consider a draft Town Meeting Warrant – 25 min
The draft Warrant has not been sent to legal counsel for review, all budget numbers are in this Warrant, revisions to LUO & Board of Appeals, clarify and streamline applicants, nothing in the Warrant out of the ordinary, fairly standard. Dennis suggested Article 40 be removed from the warrant, Kathryn agreed to strike Article 40, Ralph also agreed on the basis that it does not change anything by removing the Article. Kathryn asked about Article 37, unassigned, and Article 36 at \$275K and \$25K overlay, Eric stated he will check, he believes it shows up somewhere else. Kathryn also asked if Article 38 LUO articles can be condensed down, and also noted that article 10 & 12 appropriate 500K to Fairgrounds project, confirmed the wording is accurate for all Boards involved. Sean asked if Article 17 is a duplicate of article 12 to raise and appropriate budget category all together, Eric said he would look into removing that line from article 17. Sean also suggested having the questions separated to make the articles more clear. Kathryn stated that article 10, Axiom Broadband Internet, 5 million municipal borrowing. Sean inquired about the length of time the town will contract with Axiom; Kathryn responded that after borrowing over a 20 year period, contract will be 9-12 years; however renegotiations with Axiom will occur after 3 years. Axiom services handles all the construction and install contractors, operational costs are separate, Article could use more clarification, but approval and revisions are not far off.

Other Business, Upcoming meetings, and Future Agenda Items – 5 mins

- Consider the appointment of Kristin Parks to the Office of Registrar
 - **Motion** made by Kathryn **seconded** by Ralph. **Vote 5-0** in favor

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:43 pm; **Vote:** Unanimous

Minutes submitted by Anjelica Pittman, Board Secretary