

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Hope Board of Selectmen
Tuesday, March 20, 2018
6:30 PM
Hope Town Office

Board Members Present:

- Brian Powers Jr., Wendy Pelletier, Dick Crabtree, Mike Brown, and Sarah Ann Smith

Others Present:

- Samantha Mank, Paul Gibbons, Jim Guerra, Judith Pearse, Rick Manning, and Alan Hinsey

Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM by Brian.

Public Comment:

- None

Minutes:

- Mike made a motion to accept the 2/27/2018 minutes as written. It was seconded by Sarah.
Motion passed 5-0

Administrator's Report:

- Updated Selectmen about the final outcome of the Appeals case.
- Discussed the Ambulance Contract progress.
- Discussed disposition options with Selectmen regarding tax acquired property.
- Updated Selectmen on the Budget presentations.
- Informed Selectmen that Hope's oldest resident, Viola Fogg passed away.
- Informed Selectmen that the legal budget under Professional Services is over budget.
- Informed Selectmen of data entry error regarding interest payments on Real Estate Taxes. Instead of charging 7.0%, the figure entered when the tax liens were filed in 2017 was .07%. The discrepancy resulted in approx. \$800 not being collected.
- There are 863 outstanding 2018 tax real estate accounts totaling \$1,179,982.58
- There are 22 outstanding 2017 real estate accounts totaling \$43,205.93 with liens that will automatically foreclose in January 2019 if the accounts remain delinquent.

New Business:

- PERC/MRC Buy-Outs – Paul Gibbons: As a result of leaving the MRC and PERC the Town is entitled to receive money back. At Town Meeting last year, the voters agreed to exercise the Put Option which was the Town selling its equity share of PERC back to PERC. The Town is also entitled to additional money from MRC. Paul present the Municipal Withdrawal Agreement for Equity Charter Municipalities. By signing the agreement, the Town will receive the money due back. The signed agreement is due back to MRC by March 31st. Since each Town individually agreed to join MRC and go to PERC prior to the creation of Mid Coast Solid Waste, each Town will have to individually need to sign an agreement to withdraw from MRC and leave PERC. As the attorney for Mid Coast Solid Waste, Paul urged

the Selectmen to deposit the money from the withdrawal agreement into a reserve account designated for the closure fund at Mid Coast Solid Waste. Paul also distributed a sample proposed warrant article for the Selectmen to review and possibly have on the annual town meeting warrant.

- **Broadband Internet Presentation; Tidewater Telecom – Rick Manning & Alan Hinsey:** Alan gave a presentation and presented the possibility of the Town of Hope being eligible for a Connect Maine Grant in sections of town that are still using DSL. He said that it is hard to justify upgrading to fiber without a high population density. The goal is to increase internet speeds. This may be done through a Connect Maine Infrastructure Grant. What Lincolnville Communications, Inc. (LCI) needs is a letter of support from the Town indicating the desire to fiber optic throughout the Town. Dick wanted to know if fiber optic was placed in underserved part of the town, would current DSL users be forced to upgrade and purchase new internet plans, especially if they are satisfied with the low-cost plans. Rick said that no one will be forced to upgrade to a plan they didn't want. Brian wanted to know if there was currently any technology that would "strand" fiber optic like cell phones have stranded landline phones. Alan said that currently there is no technology that would out perform fiber. There was a lot of additional discussion about how fiber could get to more remote locations. Judith Pearse asked the Selectmen if they would be willing to sign a support letter for this project. Wendy said that she really wanted to know what the residents in town wanted. It was pointed out that in towns that have fiber optic, there was an increase of approximately 7% on property values. The Selectmen thanked the men for the presentation. This will be on the agenda for the next Selectmen's meeting.
- **Application for Committee Service; Appeals Board – Nancy Ford:** Sarah made a motion to appoint Nancy Ford to the Board of Appeals for a 5-year term beginning on March 20, 2018 and expiring on June 30, 2022. It was seconded by Wendy.
Motion passed 5-0
- **Mid Coast Solid Waste Bag Fees – Jim Guerra:**
 - Jim presented the Selectmen with 2 checks. The first one in the amount of \$5,440.51 is from the MRC security account. This money was never actually given to MRC. It has been held at MCSW in case the money for the backing was needed. This is simply a refund. The check in the amount of \$7,150.14 is the money from the Put-Option. The other 3 Towns (Camden, Rockport, and Lincolnville) all voted to have their share of the money go directly to the MCSW Closure Fund. That money will be put into a separate interest-bearing account.
 - In 2013, 5 years ago, bag fees for MCSW went up to \$2.00 per bag. Now Jim is proposing to raise bag fees to \$2.50 per bag. He sites increased payroll, increased employee benefits, decreased recycling market garnering lower recycling revenues, no longer receiving the quarterly money from PERC, and the hauling fees have increased as the reasons for needing to raise the bag fees. Jim said that he really doesn't like to rely on bag fees but did indicate that other towns have similar or higher bags fees. Belfast charges \$3.25 per bag and some towns in southern Maine are charging over \$4.00 per bag. The way the packaging will be handled to accommodate the new bag fees is: the large bags will be in a bundle of 4 for \$10.00 the small bags will be in a bundle of 10 for \$15.00. Jim did caution that if we go up to high on bag fees that people will get dumpsters and not use the bags at all which will result in the need for even higher fees. The Selectmen wanted to know why MCSW allows other towns to use the facility. Jim explained that regular household trash is only accepted from residents of the 4 towns. Because of the consent decree to fill the landfill as quickly as possible and close it, MCSW does accept demolition

debris. MCSW needs to bring in a daily quota amount in order to financially break even. Once the word is out that there will be fewer bags per bundle and that the prices are going up, he expects that residents may purchase a larger number of bags than usual. Therefore, he is asking that bag fee increase go into effect on July 1, 2018 or when the current bundles of bags are gone, whichever comes first. Dick made a motion based on the financial state and the budget of MCSW, we see no other choice but to accept the proposal to increase the bag fees: large bags will cost \$10 for 4 bags, small bags will cost \$15 for 10 bags and weighted trash will increase from \$133/ton to \$166/ton rather than raising taxes." It was seconded by Mike.

Motion passed 5-0

Old Business:

- Mid Coast Solid Waste Update(s) – Mike B./Wendy P.: Mike updated the Selectmen about the MCSW. He said that the MCSW Board has decided to go the route of single sort recycling. The cost of recycling is starting to outweigh any revenue it was once getting. It is labor intensive. He also shared the plans for the facility re-design. There was some discussion about the actual need for such a re-design and if enough data has been collected in order to make a good decision. Dick stated that he thinks that this is moving way to rapidly. The facility is actually working fine as it is so why are we in a hurry to change it? He questions why the hot-top needs to be redone because it appears ok right now. There are concerns about transportation costs as well. Right now, we are hauling to eco-Maine, but have we considered or made any provision for hauling to a different location? Based on the plans for the redesign, the analysis uses the revenues for year 2 all the way to year 27, he doesn't believe that it is predictable or feasible to not calculate any change for 27 years. The is not good analysis because it doesn't take into account any changes. If we do make any changes for example haul to a different location, we could potentially lose all of our "realized savings". Sarah wondered why we couldn't use large dumpsters to collect recyclables and not spend so much money. It appears that the facility re-design may cost upwards of \$2 million.
- North East Mobile Health Contract Update(s): Samantha, Dick, and Sarah have been meeting with the Ambulance Review Committee. The 4 towns have decided to change the way the contract is written and to pursue a performance-based contract. Samantha has met with the managers of the other 3 towns and have an outline of a contract. Dick, Sarah, and Samantha will have a workshop on Friday to review the performance-based proposal.

Other Business:

- Discussion on what to do with money received from MCSW this evening: After some discussion, Sarah made a motion to create a Solid Waste Reserve Account and to put the \$5,440.51 and \$7150.14 checks totaling \$12,590.65 into that newly created reserve account. It was seconded by Mike.

Motion passed 5-0

Review and Sign Warrants:

- The Selectmen reviewed the warrants. Wendy made a motion to approve and sign warrant #'s 65, 66, 67, and 68. It was seconded by Sarah.

Motion passed 5-0

Adjournment:

- Sarah made a motion to adjourn at 9:36 PM. It was seconded by Mike.

Motion passed 5-0