

**MINUTES
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
STANDISH MUNICIPAL CENTER
175 NORTHEAST ROAD
STANDISH, MAINE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024
6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Deakin and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Deakin, Gaba, Gardner, LeClerc, Macri and Watson.

Councilor Pomerleau was excused.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (S)

Moved by Watson seconded by LeClerc and voted to approve the minutes from the February 13th Standish Town Council meeting. (Unanimous)

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Andrew Walton, a Standish resident and secretary of the Mountain Division Alliance was joined by Doug Smith of Windham, the president of the Mountain Division Alliance to provide an update on Mountains Division Trail.

Doug Smith explained that he has been involved with the Mountain Division Alliance which was established in 1993 for about two years. Since the Mountain Division Alliance's establishment, they have been trying to acquire the rights to the rail line from Westbrook to Fryeburg for use by various groups. They highlighted recent legislation regarding the Mountain Division Trail. A feasibility study will be conducted which will contain a phased development plan/estimates of the construction costs.

Andrew Walton noted that a study has been conducted regarding the section of the rail that abuts the Portland Water District property; and of individual sections of the trail for purchase as money becomes available. The feasibility study will contain a phased development plan and estimates of the construction costs. After the completion of the study public meetings will be held to present the findings. He noted that they are seeking representatives from towns along the trail to weigh in on the expectations/needs of their community.

Elmer Farley, resident - questioned if there was truth to the rumor that the Portland Water District is requiring a detour around their property along the rail that is close to the water?

Doug Smith said that there is truth to that, noting that snowmobilers and ice fisherman use the PWD section of the trail.

Mr. Farley noted that snowmobilers can, however ice fisherman cannot use the trail.

Mr. Smith said that he recently sent a lengthy memo to the Department of Transportation regarding this matter. He continued to explain that the study is a phased plan and they are

negotiating with the Portland Water District regarding the portion of the rail bed owned by them.

Chair Deakin said as we move forward with the Comprehensive Plan it's important to include the trail in the Comprehensive Plan discussions.

Andrew Walton noted that the trail will go through both Sebago Lake and Steep Falls Villages which could be an economic boost.

Councilor LeClerc recalled a meeting where both he and Mr. Walton attended where there was discussion of a strip of land at the boat landing area that the Water District was concerned about. He said that his opinion/argument was that more people in the area would have a policing effect.

Andrew Walton said that the feasibility study is needed to figure it all out. He noted that the public process will be very important for everyone.

Councilor Gaba asked when do they expect to have the results of the feasibility study?

Doug Smith anticipated the results will be available in late summer/fall.

Councilor Gaba questioned the Town Manager, if when it's available, can the study be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan?

Tashia Pinkham said yes it could be. She noted that staff have met with the Portland Water District regarding various matters.

Chair Deakin said that if you take all the people and state representatives that live along the trail, it would be a significant body of the legislature. He suggested that the Town Manager contact the Greater Portland Councilor of Governments regarding this matter if she already hasn't.

Dough Smith noted that another ally is the Southern Maine Planning and Development Corp which is GPCOG's counterpart in the western part of the state.

Chair Deakin said that they looked forward to hearing from them in the future.

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Tashia Pinkham reported on the following:

Fire/Rescue- Out of 201 reporting town/agency's, we ranked 19th busiest in the state. Chief working with contractors for the roof leak/mold. Still down staff.

HR/GA- Working with the state for a GA review, working with staff for mandatory training and budget books together.

PW- Thanks for help with voting, 4 trucks for plowing passed. PW received a \$200K stream grant, working with the state on improving policies.

Rec- Working through several grants, Mill Street playground and Johnson Field. Looking for summer camp staff, registration open. Standish Spectacular 8/3.

Finance- Working on budgets and dealing with town software Munis with upgrades and issues.

Clerk- voting yesterday, about 1300, 300 of those absentees.

Code- working with fire on sprinkler systems in new neighborhood development, mindful of the grown ordinance that says 88 homes per year. Issued 460 building permits to date.

Assessing- staff looking at personal property, working with attorneys on Brookfield dam and requests for reduction in taxes.

Planning- 114/35 intersection to start after PWD gets ok from DEP for drainage approval. Had a meeting for comp plan, picked board member and met with NorthStar on timeline. Napa was approved as was storage and solar.

TM- Staffs been great juggling many projects and helping others.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

**** FY 25 Fiscal Year Budget****

Chair Deakin opened the public hearing and the Finance Director, Scott Gesualdi, announced that the mil rate will be lower than last year's rate at \$13.78/1,000. He noted that the budget meetings are scheduled to start this Saturday, he said that the meetings will be televised. He offered to answer any questions.

Councilor LeClerc noted that if the rate is lower this year that would be the third year in a row that the rate was lower than the year before.

Tashia Pinkham noted that a reduction in the mil rate does not mean that taxes will be lower.

Chair Deakin called for comments from the public, hearing none, he called for additional council comments, hearing none, he said that it was his opinion that government should strive to do more with less since we are using the people's money. He asked what had been done to think outside the box to get things done? He asked that we think about ways to join efforts with other towns such as for insurance.

Scott Gesualdi explained that we belong to MMA for our casualty insurance, which is a pool of Towns.

Tashia Pinkham noted that both Public Safety and Public Works work with neighboring towns.

Councilor LeClerc noted that we work with GPCOG when purchasing winter sand, paving and other commodities. He also noted grant opportunities that have been obtained. Chair Deakin mentioned that some accounts appear to have significant increases.

Scott Gesualdi said the conversations regarding that can be discussed on Saturday.

Chair Deakin voiced his opinion that in this digital age there should be more access to laptop computers for the Town Council to use, he said that could be a benefit for the town.

Mr. Gesualdi agreed that it would be a benefit, but it would come with a cost.

Chair Deakin said that he has suggested to the Town Manager that the town's domain name be changed from a .org to a .gov for security purposes.

Mr. Gesualdi said that he agreed with that, however, in an effort to save money he was waiting until our domain name expires, he noted that we're about 7-years into the 10-year term.

Chair Deakin called for additional comments, hearing none, he closed the public hearing.

9-24 Amendments to the Standish Town Code, Repeal Chapter 4, Political Action Committees [Deakin]

Moved by Gaba seconded by Leclerc and voted to dispense with the reading of the ordinance. (Unanimous)

The Clerk noted that that the provisions of PAC reporting for municipalities are now provided under state statutes and the local ordinance is no longer needed.

Chair Deakin opened the public hearing and called for public comments, hearing none, he called for Council comments, hearing none, he called for the roll call vote and the hearing was closed

The Town of Standish hereby ordains the following amendments to the Standish Town Code by Repealing Chapter 4 Political Action Committees, effective immediately upon adoption (additions are underlined and deletions are struck out):

AMENDMENTS TO STANDISH TOWN CODE, CHAPTER 4, Political Action Committees

CHAPTER 4 – [RESERVED] Political Action Committees

Article I – PAC Reporting During Municipal Referenda

§ 4-1 PAC reporting required.

- A. ~~The Town of Standish chooses to be governed by M.R.S.A. Title 21-A, Chapter 13, Subchapter IV (§§ 1051 to 1063) as it may be amended and only as it relates to referenda or initiated petitions.~~
- B. ~~In addition to other registrations and reports as may be required by statute, the registrations and reports of all Political Action Committees that make monetary expenditures in excess of \$1,500 in an attempt to initiate, advance, promote, defeat or influence in any way a municipal referendum or initiated petition must be filed with the Municipal Clerk in accordance with M.R.S.A. Title 21-A, Chapter 13, Subchapter IV (§§ 1051 to 1063), as it may be amended.~~

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor LeClerc – Appointments Committee – an appointments order is on the agenda tonight regarding the Comprehensive Plan Committee

Councilor Watson – Finance Committee – announced that the budget meetings will start this coming Saturday.

Chair Deakin - Ordinance Committee – no report.

Councilor Gaba – Economic Development Committee – did not meet last month. The committee anticipates additional meetings once the Comprehensive Plan Committee begins meeting.

Councilor Macri – Capital Improvements Committee – met earlier tonight to review bids submitted for the Mill Street Park playground equipment.

Councilor Gardner – Personnel Committee – no report.

CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no Consent Calendar Items on this Agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

19-24 Amendments to the Standish Town Code, Chapter 146, Floodplain Management (First Reading) [Deakin]

Moved by Macri seconded by Gardner and voted to dispense with the reading of the ordinance. (Unanimous)

Zachary Mosher, the Director of Planning explained that these are changes required by the FEMA/state. One of the updates will provide eligibility for flood insurance for those residents that qualify.

Chair Deakin opened the public hearing and called for public comments, hearing none, he called for Council comments, he asked that a link to the maps/and materials are available on the Town's website.

Chair Deakin called for additional Council comments, hearing none, he called for the roll call vote to move this ordinance to public hearing at the April 9, 2024 Town Council meeting.

VOTE: 6 Yeas

NEW BUSINESS

27-24 Award Bid and Authorize Contract for Mill Street Park Playground Equipment [Macri]

Moved by Macri seconded by Leclerc amend the order as follows:

ORDERED that the attached bid from Game Time of _____, Maine for construction of playground equipment at the Mills Street Park, as described in bid specifications, is here by accepted, with a cost not to exceed \$85,000 for the project, and the (Unanimous)

Moved by Gaba seconded by LeCLerc and voted to amend the order as follows:

ORDERED that the attached bid from Game Time of _____, Maine for construction of playground equipment at the Mills Street Park, as described in bid specifications, is here by accepted, with a cost not to exceed \$85,000 for the project, and the (Unanimous)

The Director of Parks and Recreation, Matt Duplisea, explained that they received five very good bids. He said that they selected a bid that is geared for two-to-five-year-olds and it will complement the existing equipment which is geared for five-to-twelve-year-olds.

Councilor Marci noted that the funding was through a grant.

Mr. Duplisea said that he was familiar with this company and they hoped to do a community build for the construction of the new equipment under the helping hand of a supervisor from Game Time.

Councilor Gardner questioned if warranties would be covered if it was a community build?

Mr. Duplisea said that it would be.

Chair Deakin suggested that they contact many groups for all to come and help with the building of the playground. He went on to mention that there are guidelines for having this type of equipment compliant for people with disabilities.

Mr. Duplisea explained that the equipment does have ADA components.

Chair Deakin called for the roll call vote.

WHEREAS a bid process has been conducted for the addition of playground structures/equipment to be added to the Mill Street Park, in accordance with section 302 (f) of the Standish Charter, now be it

ORDERED that the attached bid from Game Time of _____, Maine for construction of playground equipment at the Mills Street Park, as described in bid specifications, is here by accepted, with a cost not to exceed \$85,000 for the project, and the (Unanimous)

FURTHER ORDERED that the Town Manager is authorized on behalf of the Town to execute related contract documents.

VOTE ON ORDER AS AMENDED: 6 Yeas

28-24 Town Council Appointments to the Comprehensive Plan Committee [LeClerc]

Councilor Leclerc noted that they received twenty plus applications. He explained that each applicant provided detailed information regarding their background and expertise. He thanked all that applied to serve on this committee.

Councilor Gaba said that she has been on the Appointments Committee the entire time she's been on the Council noting that the response for the Comprehensive Plan has been wonderful. She echoed Councilor LeClerc's comments regarding the expertise that the members will bring to the committee. She thanked all the applicants that came forward for this committee.

Chair Deakin called for public comments, hearing none, he called for additional Council comments, noting for those who were not appointed are encouraged to attend the meetings and participate in the process. Chair Deakin called for the roll call vote.

WHEREAS Order 99-23 established the process for the composition of the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee by soliciting membership from all segments of the community to create Committee comprised of a cross section of the Town of Standish, and

WHEREAS Order 99-23 recommended that Town Boards are represented on this Committee, now be it

ORDERED that the following Town Councilor is appointed to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Brandon Watson

ORDERED that the following Planning Board members are appointed to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Charles Brown Andrew Walton

ORDERED that the following citizens are appointed to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Update Committee:

Bill Cassidy	Sara Dominicus
Isabel Higgins	Jeff Cutler
Alyssa Littlefield	Robert McFerren

FURTHER ORDERED that the terms of the Committee Members will expire when the updated Comprehensive Plan approved by the State of Maine and adopted by the Standish Town Council.

VOTE: 6 Yeas

29-24 Authorize the Maine Department of Transportation to Exceed the Allowed Weight Limit on Certain Roads During the Road Construction Project (HMA Overlay-Project No. 2511710) on Route 25 [Deakin]

Chair Deakin noted that the next two orders are related and suggested that they are discussed collectively.

Moved by Watson seconded by LeClerc and voted to discuss orders 29-24 and 30-24 collectively. (Unanimous)

Public Works Director, John Cross explained that both these projects are being done by the state.

30-24 Authorize the Maine Department of Transportation to Exceed the Allowed Weight Limit on Certain Roads During the Road Construction Project (Cold In-Place Recycling-Project No. 2511700) on Route 25 [Deakin]

Chair Deakin called for public comments, hearing none, he called for Council comments.

Councilor Macri questioned if the Town of Standish was paying for this work?

John Cross noted it was paid by the state.

Chair Deakin noted that posted weight limits are to save wear and tear on the roads. He questioned if there would be any safety measures initiated for this project?

John Cross noted that the projects are located on Route 25 where there are weight restrictions.

Chair Deakin called for the roll call vote on orders 29-24 and 30-24 collectively.

29-24 Authorize the Maine Department of Transportation to Exceed the Allowed Weight Limit on Certain Roads During the Road Construction Project (HMA Overlay-Project No. 2511710) on Route 25 [Deakin]

ORDERED that the Standish Town Council grants approval for the Maine Department of Transportation and its contractors to haul loads in excess of the limits specified in Title 29, M.R.S.A § 2382(7), on certain roads in Standish during the road construction project, the section of highway under construction in Standish is:

Construction Areas located in the Town of Standish have been established by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) in accordance with provisions of 29-A § 2382 Maine Revised Statutes Annotated (MRSA).

The section of highway under construction in Cumberland County:

Project 2511710 is located on Route 25 in Standish beginning 0.12 of a mile west of Route 113 and extending west 1.87 miles. Beginning 0.09 of a mile west of Saco Road and extending west 1.00 mile.

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The section of highway under construction in Cumberland County:

Project 2511700 is located on Route 25 in Standish beginning 0.12 of a mile west of Route 113 and extending west 1.87 miles. Beginning 0.09 of a mile west of Saco Road and extending west 1.00 mile.

VOTE ON ORDERS 29-24 and 30-24 COLLECTIVELY: 6 Yeas

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anthony Folson, resident – offered his services to make posters to get the word out about the playground build project.

Chair Deakin thanked all that participated in the election. He encouraged all that can participate to do so in future elections.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

An executive session was not held at this meeting.

Moved by Watson, second by Gaba and voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Submitted by: Mary Crisp
Clerk/secretary