

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
STANDISH, MAINE  
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020  
STANDISH MUNICIPAL CENTER  
THE TOWN COUNCIL WILL ATTEND THIS MEETING REMOTELY USING ZOOM  
6:00 PM**

*Virtual meetings are allowed using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online. Members of the public can attend the meeting at the Town Council Chambers. A recording of the meeting will be available at a later date.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Libby called the meeting to order. This meeting was held as virtual meeting using Zoom. The Town Council, Town Manager and Finance Director attended the meeting remotely. The Town Clerk attend the meeting in the Town Council Chambers using Zoom. There were no members of the public in attendance.

**ROLL CALL**

Councilors present: Gaba, LeClerc, Libby, Nesbitt, Paul and Pomerleau.  
Councilor Delcourt was excused.

**REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

There was no report at this meeting.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

The Clerk explained that consent calendar items are read by title only and voted on collectively.

**28-20 Establish Voter Registration Hours prior to the July 14, 2020 Elections [Libby]**

ORDERED that the Registrar of Voters will hold office hours from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Town Clerk's Office on July 7<sup>th</sup> through July 9<sup>th</sup>, and

FURTHER ORDERED that the registration enrollment period prior to the July 14, 2020 elections will be Monday, July 13, 2020 at 4:30 p.m., and

FURTHER ORDERED that the Town Clerk's Office will remain open until 7:00 pm on Thursday, July 9, 2020 for absentee voting and voter registration prior to the July 14, 2020 elections.

**29-20 Town Council Appointment of Election/Ballot Clerks and Election Warden for the July 14, 2020 Elections [Gaba]**

ORDERED that the following individuals are appointed to serve as election/ballot clerks at the July 14, 2020 elections:

<b>Democratic Election/Ballot Clerk</b>	<b>Republican Election/Ballot Clerk</b>
Joanne Beaudoin	Sandra Osterrieder

ORDERED that Cheryl Allen is appointed to serve as election warden, and

FURTHER ORDERED that the Town Clerk is authorized to select additional ballot clerks as necessary to provide adequate staffing.

**VOTE ON CONSENT CALENDAR: 6 YEARS**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **30-20 Call for Annual Municipal and Town Meeting Referendum Vote, Place Referendum Questions on the Ballot, Authorize Warrant and Schedule Public Hearing on Referendum Questions all as Relates to July 14, 2020 Municipal Election and Referendum Vote [Libby]**

ORDERED, that the Annual Municipal Election and Town Meeting Referendum Vote initially scheduled for June 9, 2020 be postponed to July 14, 2020 and that the attached Notice of Postponement of municipal election and referendum vote be executed by the Chair of the Town Council and thereafter posted in conspicuous places in the Town; and

FURTHER ORDERED, that the Annual Municipal Election and Town Meeting Referendum Vote be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2020; and

FURTHER ORDERED, that referendum questions 1, 2, 3, and 4, copies of which are attached hereto, be placed on the ballot and that the financial statement included on the Warrant for the Annual Municipal Election and Town Meeting Referendum Vote issued as of the date hereof be printed as a separate document and made available to voters at said Annual Municipal Election and Town Meeting Referendum Vote; and

FURTHER ORDERED, that the attached warrant be approved and that the required public hearing on these referendum questions be held on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 during the regularly scheduled monthly Town Council meeting, which meeting begins at 6:00 pm.

Chair Libby called for discussion on this order, hearing none, he called for the vote.

## **VOTE: 6 YEAS**

### **31-20 Countersign the MSAD 6 District Warrants for the Upcoming July 14, 2020 Elections [Libby]**

WHEREAS MSAD 6 has notified the Town of Standish that the warrants and other election materials will be delivered to the Town Clerk's Office after the April Town Council meeting, and

WHEREAS by law the warrants must be counter-signed by the municipal officers where the election is held, now be it

ORDERED that the Town Council will sign the MSAD 6 warrants for the July 14, 2020 District Elections, as soon as possible, after they are received by the Town Clerk.

Note: Polls will be held at the Standish Municipal Center on July 14, 2020 from 6:00 am until 8:00 pm.

Chair Libby called for discussion on this order, hearing none, he called for the vote.

## **VOTE: 6 YEAS**

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### *FY 2021 Budget Discussion*

Mr. Giroux explained at a recent Finance Committee meeting there was interest in having a limited focus budget discussion. He said that the budget could change by reducing both the revenue projections and the operating budget. He said that he would prefer the flexibility to freeze spending early in the year or until we see how the revenues are coming in. He noted if necessary, some items may be put off for the entire year.

Chair Libby called for questions or comments.

Councilor Leclerc questioned what other thought about taxes not going up at all or a minimal amount at this scary time? He said that reducing the mil rate would alleviate the pressure that some people are experiencing. He said that the recalls some items in the budget may be items that we'd like to have, but might not be necessary.

Councilor Nesbitt said that this is a very unique situation that most of us have not been through. We really don't know what the outcome will be, will it just be slow for a few months and then pick up. He said that he'd like to think that will be the case, however it might be a slower return. He explained that the Finance Committee discussed the matter. He said that he'd like the staff to consider the new state revenue projections are going to be, and what amount does that do to our bottom line. He said that Bill suggested freezing spending. Councilor Nesbitt said that there are items in the budget that can be put off, noting that we still need to move forward with some of the projects. He noted we need add to the staff and the update the Comprehensive Plan. Any decision that is made will not be a wrong decision, it will be a group decision. He reiterated that departments need to review their budget to react if needed.

Chair Libby supported the managers idea to move forward as it is and handle items as they come up and cut back on spending if needed.

Mr. Giroux explained that he met with select departments to review their budgets. He said that cuts could be made to the operating budget, but cuts to the revenue side of the budget would be made as well. He said that we may be able to find a small amount to shave off the budget, however, to get down to an amount like Greg was saying, the cuts would require losing some jobs. If we're going to lose jobs, he would look to the Council for direction on which jobs would be in question. He said that the departments with bigger budgets can choose items that can be postponed until the end of the year. He said for example, raises could be pushed off, the Comprehensive Plan could wait until later, monies earmarked for engineering of various intersections could wait another year, there is a vacancy that can wait to be filled and there are new positions that if approved can wait to be filled. He continued to explain that there may be some hits to state revenue funds that we receive, the drop in excise taxes received, increases in use of general assistance, the fact that we had to add in money the budget for the fund anticipation note, a potential hit in loss of revenue for building permits. So, there is a lot of revenues that equal the potential cut in expenditures. He said that depending on how fast the governor allows things to open back up again, things might come back quickly noting that the fiscal year does not start until July. If things start to come back, will have the flexibility to free some of the spending. He said that we've already laid someone off, we could consider furloughing staff if necessary. He recalled that during the last recession, in another municipality where he worked, they postponed projects, delayed hiring, raises were pushed back to get through the tough financial time.

Chair Libby said that we do not want to proceed with a knee jerk reaction to the matter.

Councilor Nesbitt said that the Finance Committee has just seen the financials for March and the excise tax drop was dramatic. Since the offices are closed, we're not getting the excise taxes as we normally would. As we move forward, we will have to have to look at the financial implications at that time. He mentioned that taxes are due in May and often paid by a mortgage company. He offered the suggestion to waive interest on late payments for a certain time.

Councilor LeClerc agreed that waiving late fees on taxes was a great idea. He then suggested that 5% be reduced from each department may provide enough of a decrease in the amount due to be easier on the taxpayers.

Bill Giroux said to have a zero tax increase the town would have to use money from the fund balance. He said that Standish has utilized its fund balance and it might not get built up in near

future under these conditions. He said to get down 50¢ on the mil rate we would have to cut a half-million dollars from the budget, but we still might not meet the excise tax and state revenue sharing projections. He continued to explain that we'd really have to cut \$750K, that's a deep cut, his voicing his opinion, he noted that the Town Council would have to meet in executive session to discuss staffing reductions.

Councilor LeClerc said that he was thinking more in the line of projects not people losing their jobs.

Chair Libby said that it is too early to make major decisions.

Councilor Nesbitt said that there is still time to make adjustments to the budget.

Bill Giroux said that the Annual Town Meeting is still scheduled for June 13. He said that there's not much time.

Councilor Nesbitt said that he agreed that we should follow Bill Giroux's suggestion to postpone large projects until the financials are better.

Chair Libby said he has confidence in the Town Managers recommendations.

Bill Giroux said that they could freeze spending in the operating budget and hold off on capital items. He said that they could hold off on several of capital items until the spring of 2021.

Finance Director, Scott Gesualdi said that due to timing the money would still be borrowed in November, unless they put off the borrowing until the spring.

Bill Giroux said to keep the mil rate down without a fund balance to rely on is very difficult. He reminded them that 15¢ was cut at the March 14 budget meeting. He noted to really get it lower it will take significant cuts.

Councilor Paul agreed with the Town Manager's recommendations, citing full confidence in his ability. He asked for clarification on the process of waiving interest on past due amounts.

Bill Giroux said that would be slippery slope, annually the Town Council sets the interest rate for the upcoming year. He said that we're bound by that now, but it could probably be amended. He said that the slippery slope is when people realize that the they won't be charged interest they will wait to pay their taxes. He said consider implications if everyone decided to wait to pay their taxes. He said that already since we have such a low fund balance, we have to borrow money twice a year, noting that is unusual – most towns only borrow once a year. He urged them to carefully consider the waiving of interest or fees.

Chair Libby said that we need to think carefully before dipping into the fund balance, we're already below where we should be.

Councilor Nesbitt said that we should investigate waiving interest for a short period of time. He said some may take advantage of the situation, but we're doing it for the people that really need the help.

Scott Gesualdi asked if they would be considering waiving interest for just this tax year? Or, for all tax years?

Councilor Nesbitt said for just this tax year for perhaps two months.

Scott Gesualdi said that he would have to talk to the computer vendor to see if the software could be programmed to make the change for this procedure.

Councilor LeClerc asked if a threshold could be established based on income for this interest waiving program.

Chair Libby said that that would be extremely hard to do.

Bill Giroux said that picking and choosing would not be allowed under state law. He said that the hit we would take on not charging interest may cause us to need to borrow additional funds. We would have to tax more to cover the cost on paying the interest.

Chair Libby said that we need to be careful and look at this month to month. He called for new comments, hearing none, he asked if the consensus was to take no action at this time? Council members agreed to take no action at this time.

Moved by Nesbitt seconded by Leclerc and voted to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Submitted by:  
Clerk/Secretary

Mary Clupe