

TOWN OF MONSON

"A town where friendliness is more than just a word"

January 24, 2019 – Select Board Meeting

Present select board members: Buddy Martin, Eric Vainio, Brita Cronkite Town Manager, Daniel Swain.

Townspople – Brian and Cindy Turner, Bobbi Crockett, Dee Adams, Tyler Adkins, John Adkins, Jim Greenleaf, Paul Desjardins

- 1) Meeting opened at 7:00 PM
- 2) Select board reviews warrants and unapproved meeting minutes.
- 3) Buddy Martin officially opens meeting to public comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

TOWN COMMITTEE REPORTS

Recreation Committee –The cheerleading competition was canceled and will not be rescheduled however, the cheerleaders will be performing at the gym on Friday 2/16/19 during the Snow Roller basketball game. Pickle ball started on 1/23 and about 9 – 10 people showed up. Tarren John will put out a donation bucket and all proceeds will go to the town in lieu of gym rental.

Festival Committee – Dee Adams stated that everything is moving forward for Snow roller. She has been speaking to Katahdin Fitzgerald, who is interested in doing some events for Snow roller. He is suggesting Oversized Curling and a (lit) costume contest. He will judge the events and provide prizes. He would also like to burn a wooden moose structure on the ice if the fire department will assist. This event will not be called "Burning Moose". Katahdin has also suggested a gourmet hot chocolate tent. Buddy Martin questioned where the curling contest will be held, and Dee said that it will possibly be held in front of the Lake Shore House, but it is still in the discussion stage. Buddy then questioned the condition of the ice and Dee stated that Katahdin will be responsible for his own events so if the ice can't be made to be adequate then it is an event that will not happen. She also noted that Greenville will be having radar runs and chocolate festival that weekend so it may draw in more people. Jim Greenleaf wondered if the kick sled races would be happening and he was told yes.

Bicentennial Committee – No report

OLD BUSINESS

Special Town Meeting Warrant: Daniel stated that he has prepared the warrant to change the fiscal year to July 1 – June 31, and to change to Town Meeting date from the 3rd Monday in March to the 2nd Thursday in June. He explained that the first year, tax bills would be much higher than normal, considering they would cover an 18 month period. There was some discussion about splitting up the tax bills so the entire amount wouldn't be due at once. Daniel also stated that he had spoken to Hamlin Associates and Josh told him that, in his experience, people get angry about a higher tax bill, but they get more angry about 2 tax bills. Jim Greenleaf brought up the fact that people who have their taxes escrowed into their mortgage would experience a "screwed up" mortgage payment due to the fact that the amount would only be changing for one tax period. Discussion was then had about heavily advertising the tax billing and also sending letters to all property owners. Brita suggested also sending letters to mortgage holders to inform them as well. Paul Desjardins mentioned that on his previous tax bills, which were due twice per year, both due dates were listed on the bill. Brita suggested that it would be a good idea to include the due dates on the letters. Daniel stated that if the town decided to move forward with these changes a special town meeting will be held on February 14, 2019 to vote on the matter. Buddy Martin made a motion to hold the special town meeting, Brita seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Select board meeting times and policy change: It has been proposed to hold select board meetings once per month rather than twice per month. The matter has been on hold until all select board members could be present to discuss. If this change is made, accounts payable will be done once per month, except pass through accounts, state fees and the school bill. One selectman can sign the weekly payroll warrant. The new schedule would begin after the annual town meeting and meetings would then be held on the second Thursday of the month. A short discussion was had regarding possible late fees that may be incurred by not making payments on time to certain accounts. A suggestion was made to see if the due dates could be changed on these accounts, or if the bills could be paid online. It was decided that the town office staff will look into these options in order to avoid the issue of late fees. Buddy Martin motioned to change the meeting Schedule, Eric Vainio seconded. Motion was passed unanimously.

Personnel Policy: Daniel stated that the existing policy is outdated so he had made some changes. Brita, who works in the Human Resource Department at Bangor Savings, and MMA have both looked over the revised policy and both feel that it is acceptable and meets all legal requirements. Eric Vainio raised the following concerns:

P.6 Employee Classification – Previously, according to the existing policy, 40 hours was considered full time, the new policy would change it to 30 hours in order to be eligible for full

benefits. Part time, according to the new policy would be less than 30 hours, rather than less than 40. Whereas 30 hour employees have been offered full benefits, Eric asked Daniel if he had over ridden the previous policy without running it by the select board. Brita stated that the town has paid employee benefits for less than 40 hours for quite some time despite the fact that the existing policy had not been updated. She also stated that it is quite common for 30+ hours to be considered full time. No change will be made to the new policy.

P.11 Attendance – The previous policy stated that an employee must call out 2 hours prior to the start of a shift. The new policy states that an employee must call by the start of the work day. Eric checked with MMA to see if this could be dictated by the select board. Brita suggested changing the wording to say that employees must call out as soon as is practical. Wording in the new policy will be changed.

P.9 Work Week – Eric noted that the previous policy stated that the work week would be Monday – Sunday. The new policy states that the work week will be Sunday – Saturday. He wondered if there was a reason for this change. Daniel said no. New policy will remain the same.

P.19 Holidays – The new policy states that the town will recognize all holidays recognized by the State of Maine offices and agencies. Eric would like the holidays to be listed out. This change will be made.

P.9 Comp Time – In the past, comp time could not be carried over from one year to the next. The new policy states that up to 40 hours of comp time may be carried over. Brita mentioned that in the past there had been an issue with an employee taking a large amount of comp time all at once which left the town short- handed for an extended period of time. There was a short discussion regarding the use of comp time within the same year. Change will be made to require comp time to be used by the fiscal year end.

P.9 Travel Reimbursement – The previous Personnel Policy included guidelines regarding set rates for travel and meals. Brita suggested that the new policy state that mileage will be reimbursed at the federal rate. Eric wants town manager approval prior to reimbursement, and documentation must be provided. Change will be made.

P.19 Earned Time – Previous policy states that sick time is earned at the rate of 1 day per month. Paid vacation time is offered at the rate of 1 week for the first year of employment, 2 weeks for the second – eighth year and 3 weeks for 9+ years, not including sick time. The proposed policy states that all future paid time off will include vacation and sick time combined, to be earned at the rate of 2 weeks for the first year and 3 weeks for the second – fifth year. Eric feels that this is a “big jump”. Daniel explained that the new policy actually provides LESS paid time off than the previous policy. Brita also stated that since the time off in new policy

includes sick time and vacation time, she does not feel that it is excessive at all. Buddy Martin stated that he was shocked when he read the proposed vacation/sick time policy as he has been self employed for many years and has never been able to take a week off, however, he also stated that he has the flexibility to take a day off if needed. He agreed with Eric that more years of service should be required for such an increase in earned time off. The new policy will be revised to state that paid time off be earned as follows:

- 1 – 4 years of service – 2 weeks total (80 hours)
- 5 – 8 years of service – 3 weeks total (120 hours)
- 9 – 12 years of service – 4 weeks total (160 hours)
- 13+ years of service – 5 weeks total (200 hours)

The new policy also proposed that part time employees (11 – 30 hours) earn paid time off at half the rate of full time employees and employees who work 10 hours receive 5 paid days off per year. Eric and Buddy feel that employees who work 10 hours or less per week should not receive any paid time off. Policy will be changed to state that employees who work 10 hours or less will not be eligible for paid time off.

P.21 Jury Duty – The new policy proposes to pay employees for time taken off for jury duty. Eric feels that employees should only be paid the difference between the jury duty pay and regular work pay. He also suggested that if employees are to be paid for this time off then they should sign their jury duty pay over to the town. Brita feels that this would be unreasonable, and Buddy doesn't want to "split hairs" over such a small amount of money. No change will be made.

P.21 Unpaid Leave – New policy states that employees may take a 1 year unpaid leave of absence, previous policy offered 60 days. Eric suggested 6 months, Buddy and Brita had no comment. Policy will be changed to 6 months.

P.20 Bereavement – New policy offers 5 days paid bereavement time for the death of a spouse or child whereas it has been 3 days in the past, and 3 days is what many other towns offer. Brita feels that 3 days is not long enough. Eric decided to remain neutral and the new policy will remain in effect.

P.18 Grievance Policy – New policy proposes that all non -supervisory employees bring their grievances to the town manager, all supervisory grievances be elevated to the select board. Eric feels that all grievances should be able to be brought to the select board. He would like the wording in the policy to be changed to ensure that all employees will have an avenue to speak to the selectmen regarding any grievances. Wording will be modified.

P.14 Layoffs – New policy states that if a laid off employee is re-hired within 2 years, they will retain all accrued benefits. Eric would like to change it to 6 months. Buddy and Brita agreed, so this change will be made. It was also suggested that additional wording be added in regards to returning any town property that may be in the employees possession at the time of the lay-off.

P.4 Town Manager – Eric feels that the town manger should report to the select board prior to dismissing any employee. Other towns have this policy in place. This policy will be added to the new handbook.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm