

TOWN OF BROWNVILLE
PUBLIC HEARING &
BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 6:00pm
American Legion Post #92 ~ 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville

Public Hearing called to order at 6:00p.m. to hear public comment regarding an amendment to the Town of Brownville General Assistance Ordinance - Yearly Appendices. Felice explained that the state updates the GA financial guidelines annually for municipalities to approve. There were no questions or comments from the public. **Public Hearing was closed at 6:02p.m.**

1. Call Board of Selectpersons Meeting to Order at 6:03pm by Byron Weymouth

- a. **Selectpersons Present:** Byron Weymouth, Shelly Ekholm, Kevin Emery, Gary Chapman
- b. **Employees Present:** Felice Lyford, Jessica Wyman, Philip Cook, Richard Gallagher Shawn Mitchell, Crystal Cail, Roscoe Green, Justin Dominy, Richard Wyman, Martina Coburn, Jeff Witham, Eric Shaw
- c. **Residents/Others Present:** Steven Dean, Mary Farrar, Kathleen Lundin, Kelli Witham, Donna Jones, John Maynard, Carey Richard Harris, Andy Coburn

2. Action on prior meeting minutes from August 20th and September 5, 2024.

Motion to approve the minutes from 8/20/2024 and 9/5/2024 as presented.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

3. Review of the Treasurer's Warrants: Payroll, Accounts Payable, Water/Sewer warrants were reviewed and signed by board members present.

4. Amendment to General Assistance Ordinance for Yearly Updated Appendices.

Motion to adopt the updated (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025) General Assistance Ordinance Appendices as received from the state.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

5. Junkyard Permit Renewal Application – Donna Jones - There are no changes to this application.

Motion to approve the renewal of a junkyard permit for Donna Jones at 1215 Main Road.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

6. Appalachian Mountain Club Projects – Kristen Peet from AMC was there to talk about rebuilding roads that go through the land formerly owned by Quimby. They are also looking into a public parking lot/welcome center somewhere close to the railroad bed recreation trail. AMC has also been speaking with the town manager about offering a public boat launch into the Pleasant River. Kristen is here to get input and feedback on their projects and ensure they have the Board's support to go in this direction.

A possible site for the boat launch would be at Davis Field, likely down past the playground. This area is in wetland protection, so they will need to look into it a bit more, to make sure that it's an allowed use. Shawn stated that the land being used for recreation is a lot easier to work around than building a structure. The property once was an old dump site that was mostly cleaned up; however, there is likely additional work that needs to be done.

Crystal Cail has previously spoken to Andrew Walker at the YMCA and been told that we could have access to the Y's canoes and kayaks for the kids to use. We've never really had a place for this to be done safely, so a boat launch area would be a great benefit to the kids.

7. **Building Permit Applications:** Two applications have come in. They are both in the Wellhead Protection zone. Pearsall would like to build a 14x24 garage, and Farrar would like to build an 8x16 deck.

Motion to approve the building application for Martin Pearsall Sr. to build an attached 14x24 garage at 22 Pine St. Map 18 Lot 80.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Motion to approve the building permit application for Lance Farrar to build an 8x16 deck at 22 Meulendyk Ave. Map 19 Lot 21.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

8. **Tax Abatements/Supplements** – Lorna has received several abatement applications. She is working on all of them, and some are taking more time than others. These are the recommendations that she has as of today.

Motion to approve the Assessors' Agent recommendations: Albert Donnelly – Account 1083, Map 17 Lot 12 for overvaluation, tax abatement of \$128.10, Heather & Justin Murphy – Account 405, Map 1 Lot 58 for overvaluation, tax abatement of \$86.01, Sarah Watts – Account 70, Map 19 Lot 55 for overvaluation, tax abatement of \$126.27, Rebecca & Ronald Galuppo – Account 1288, Map 12 Lot 16-12 for error on tree growth value, tax abatement of \$1,712.88.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Walter & Deanna Farrar at 19 Kineo Ave, Map 17 Lot 24, requested to have their value reduced by \$10,000.00 due to "trash on abutting property". Lorna went out to check the conditions of the abutting property and found nothing that would impact the applicants valuation.

Motion to deny the request for abatement of property taxes for Walter & Deanna Farrar, Map 17 Lot 24 per the Assessors' Agent recommendation.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

9. **Water/Sewer Foreclosures** – Three properties were automatically foreclosed on Sept 3rd, Duquette – 16 Gill Road. Smith (heirs) – 23 Pleasant Street, were water foreclosures. And Schimpf – 43 Henderson Street for Sewer. Per the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, we give the prior owner an opportunity to purchase the property back, giving them 45 days. With new laws the town is only charge additional fees for actual documented costs with the property, which will be tracked separately.

Motion to offer the prior owners, Louis Duquette, 16 Gill Road, Milton Smith (Heirs), 23 Pleasant Street, Patricia Schimpf, 43 Henderson Street, the opportunity to purchase their property back if they pay all monies owed to the Town for water, sewer, taxes, interest, and costs giving them at least 45 days.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

10. **Appointments/New Hires/Open Positions** – The temporary public works worker recently resigned to pursue a different career path as an EMT. The Town is now advertising for a full and part time public works operator, with an application deadline of 9/25.

There have been no applications for the Recreation Director position. The one person who showed some interest has decided not to pursue an application as he is not certain he can dedicate the time needed to position and do the job well. Crystal is still looking to hand off the responsibilities. This may be a good time for the board to reconsider talking with Milo about collaboration, if they are still willing. Crystal added she believes it would be in the best interest for the kids in the area to work together and hopes there will be some conversations with the parents to see what their input would be as well.

Motion to reach out to Milo to see if they would still be willing to discuss collaboration on a Recreation Director position to cover both towns.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Felice has hired a temporary PT ACO, Aubrey Kela-O'Hara from Milo, last month. She has been responding along with Bryon on some calls and is still interested in taking the position. Felice had picked up a cell phone on their government Verizon account with no contract specifically for ACO which funds are available in the current budget. Where there has been such a turnover with this position this should make it easier for dispatch to reach whoever is taking call and cause less confusion. If this procedure doesn't work out, it can always be canceled Aubrey needs to be appointed by the Board to get signed up for her ACO certification course.

Motion to hire and appoint Aubrey Kela-O'Hara as ACO.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

11. Department/Projects Updates –

Underpass Project – We had a pre-construction meeting on the 16th with Sargent Corporation and our engineer. They are making good progress to get the project started. Sargent is waiting on the new wall to come in to set a start date, but plan to have it done before winter. Paving may or may not have to be done in the spring.

Lakeview Rd Culvert – The Nature Conservancy is going to put this back out to bid in the fall, to get done next summer. They are still committed to providing the funds to complete this project.

Spencer Road – Felice has gotten word from the DEP grant representative that the town will be able to extend the funding another year, which gives them the ability to do the project during the summer of 2025, with funds needing to be spent by March of 2026. We will plan to rebid well in advance of spring.

Admin – There is still \$17,309.65 unallocated ARPA funds that needs to be specifically designated (if not spent, then a contract or agreement in place) by December 31st 2024. Felice had gotten pricing for an electronic sign for out front of the office Last meeting Shawn had brought up buying a cell booster for the Junction station, with the ARPA funds, and he got an estimate of \$1,700.00. We were just notified by our electrician that the generator at the Junction station needs to be replaced as he is no longer able to get the parts that he needs to fix it. Right now, it's unreliable and if there is a power outage, and its not working the station doors are not able to open. They can be opened manually, however some of the department members may not be able to open them. For a new generator and to move it to the back side of the station it will cost approximately \$11,000.00.

Motion to approve purchasing a new generator and cell phone booster for the Junction Fire Station, not to exceed \$12,700.00 out of ARPA funds.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Public Safety – Our contract for Fire/EMS services with the County for the Unorganized Territories ran out in August, and there have been no significant changes in the past decade. The previous contract allows the County to be allotted 2 hours to be covered under the flat rate of the contract, with anything in excess of those 2 hours being charged at our billable rates (which we increased in 2023 for anything that wasn't under contract with the intent to increase upon renewal). With the proposed contract, it would cover the first hour, and anything that exceeds that would be charged accordingly under our new billable rates. This contract has included Milo, Sebec, and Brownville as we respond to the same fires in this area under mutual aid. The County is currently waiting for the other towns to provide further explanation on their proposed increased rates. Shawn met with the County Manager and provided the history of calls to support Brownville's numbers. If the County is unable to come to an agreement with the other towns involved, there is a possibility that Brownville could into their own agreement separate from them. Shawn is also working on the budget and contract renewal for Lakeview as well.

The air bags have arrived. There will be training on them before they are able to be put into service.

There has been a resident that brought concerns forward about others parking along Lake Ave. with trucks and trailers behind them, which is making it difficult for the residents (and other motorists) to safely travel on the road. Shawn is asking that the Board, Rick, and himself take a ride out to see what possibly can be done to make this better. The Board is certainly willing to do that.

Code – There is an increase of complaints related to the conditions of neighbor's properties, such as household trash, disposal of appliances, toys, mattresses, septic from a camper draining either on the ground or in a bucket next to them, various farm animals, (chickens, goats, pigs, etc.) attracting larger rodents (rats) in residential areas. Shawn states that he has done all that he can do at his level. We do not have the proper ordinances in place that would prevent this. Shawn and Felice have also been talking to representatives from the Maine CDC, the state liaison for Local Health Officers, other Code Enforcement Officers and other towns that have experienced this as well. The other towns have ordinances in place to back them up. Several times over the years, ordinances have been proposed at Town Meetings and they did not pass which makes leaves us relying solely on state statute. When pursuing dangerous buildings, junkyards etc, it gets to a point where your next option is taking offenders to court. Legal fees could cost upwards of \$10,000.00 per property. Shawn is asking the board to consider drafting some land use ordinances to help with this issue. Felice and Shawn also met with a pest control agent, and he is planning to come back next week, visit some of the problem areas and give us an estimate on costs, and what could possibly be done.

One resident spoke up and said that a previous town that they lived in would charge every time there was trash on the owner's property.

Kathy has brought up that she has caught two rats on her property recently. One of them was infested with a bot fly (which she brought to the meeting in a jar). She has been talking to someone at the University of NH, and they have previously done studies about bot flies up here in Piscataquis County. She is waiting for them to call her back with more information.

Steven Dean is worried that if one of the rats has soars on it that it could be something more serious, and more of a health issue.

ACO – The dog issue on Center Street has improved. The owner was in court last week and found guilty and fined for the dogs running at large. The Town should see some proceeds from the fine. This court appearance was for incidents in March & April, so there are still many more summons/violations to be addressed at future court dates. The owner has also put up an eight-foot fence around his property to contain the dogs, which seems to be working better.

Public Works – Rick has done some work on the garbage truck, and the International. They have not been running the 1 ton as it smokes when its running. Chris has helped him get at least 5 quotes on a replacement truck with fleet pricing, all varying in size from F-350 to F-600. We've also inquired about municipal lease options, and the manufacturer's rate is 7.89%. Androscoggin Bank has a lower rate at 5.49%. The prices all vary between gas and diesel with the lowest at \$68,000 and the high end at \$96,000. Rick had not had enough time to look through the details of each truck to make a recommendation to the Board. Kevin Emery offered to look through all the specs of the trucks and we will plan to bring something forward for the October meeting.

Parks and Rec – The flood damage work is almost all done. Dennis Carver has ordered a sink and replacement countertop that were damaged. They have not come in yet, but that would finish the work that was needed. The old mower that was in the shed that was used for dragging the fields has been replaced with a brand-new riding mower as it was not repairable.

Travel Soccer has started. There were only enough kids for a 3 and 4 team. All of the kids for the 5 and 6 team are playing on the Middle School team. The goals have been purchased and delivered. Just need to have them put together. Soccer is going to last through mid-October.

Crystal is planning to have the Table or Treat for Halloween at the Legion Hall.

Water/Sewer – Phil has still been working hard to get all the meters changed out. with around 140 more to put in and hopefully they will be all in by the next meeting. Fourth quarter readings were done, and Phil says the new system is easy to use and worked wonderful.

The sewer tests are complete for the year, and there are only a couple more for water. He is currently looking for a new sewer pump to have on hand as one recently broke down and needed to be replaced. He believes that it should be somewhere around \$3500. To \$4000. If we didn't have to purchase risers for the manholes due to the paving project on Route 11, we would have enough in this budget, but we will plan to make it through the rest of the year and add it to the 2025 budget.

PSWC – Felice is going to help Aubrey with a draft for their 2025 budget as she has not done one in the past. They have hired a few new employees to fill in as attendants. The next monthly meeting is Wednesday, October 9th at 4 pm at the Milo Town Hall.

12. **Open Session** – Kathy Lundin provided photos on her phone of the rats that she has caught on her property. This is the first time this has ever been a problem. She understands that they could possibly be coming from where the culvert was replaced over at Simple Sacks, but also stated that the renters have moved out next door, and they always had trash outside, and now that the food source is gone, they are moving towards her. When she walks her property, she has noticed that the neighbor house has burrows all through the yard. The house across the road has a newish compost pile as well, and that property owner said that she has snakes on her property, and Kathy stated that rats do not like snakes, so that could be why they are coming across the road. She has reached out to various state agencies, and they all say to come to the Town. She understands the Town needs to have ordinances in place to take further action, and she encouraged everyone in attendance to support any ordinances brought forward that could prevent rodent infestations.

13. **Next Meeting – Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 6:00pm**

14. **Adjournment**

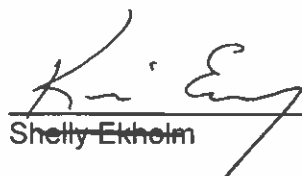
Motion to adjourn at 8:36pm.


Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

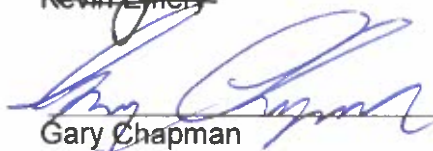
Jessica Wyman
Deputy Clerk/Admin Asst


Byron Weymouth, Selectboard Chair


Shelly Ekholm


Kevin Emery


James Hartin


Gary Chapman