

TOWN OF BROWNVILLE
BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 6:00pm
American Legion Post #92 ~ 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Chairman Byron Weymouth
 - a. **Selectpersons Present:** Byron Weymouth, Kevin Emery, Gary Chapman & Shelly Ekholm
 - b. **Employees Present:** Felice Lyford, Alicia Harmon, Shawn Mitchell, Rick Gallagher, Jeff Witham & Chris Crockett
 - c. **Residents/Others Present:** Kelli Witham
2. **Action on prior meeting minutes including January 21, 2025 & January 28, 2025**
Motion to approve the minutes from 1/21/2025 and 1/28/2025 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. **Building Permit Applications** – No permits at this time.
5. **Tax Abatements/Supplements** - When we purchased the small piece of land beside the Village fire Station, we closed and transferred after 4/1/2023 so a tax bill generated when we did commitment because it was not considered tax exempt at that time. Since we own it, the auditors are recommending we abate that 2023 tax.

Motion to approve the 2023 tax abatement for David Spencer heirs c/o Town of Brownville located at 43 Church Street for Map 016 Lot 047 for \$79.92 due to transfer to Town ownership.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

6. **Foreclosures & Quit Claim Deeds** - Torrey McNally was foreclosed on December 2, 2024 for 2022 Real Estate Taxes. He has written a request for an extension to buy back the property to the Board asking he be allowed until 3/31/2025 to pay in full. Since it would be prior to the 4/1 assessment date, it would remain in his name and taxable for 2025 if the Board chooses to approve.

Motion to extend the due date to buyback for automatic foreclosure on Torrey McNally for 51 Railroad Avenue, M 018 L 041 until 3/31/2025 so long as all monies owed are paid in full to the Town.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Geoff Hamblen from Three Moons LLC reached out on 2/19 and left a message that he would like to pay the taxes for both their foreclosed properties (6 & 58 Stickney Hill Rd); however, the deadline that was given to buy back was 2/18. The Board agreed to extend the buyback deadline to 3/31/2025.

Motion to extend the due date to buyback for automatic foreclosure on Three Moons LLC for 6 Stickney Hill Rd, M 016 L 034 and 58 Stickney Hill Rd M 016 Lot 042 until 3/31/2025 so long as all monies owed are paid in full to the Town.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

7. **Appointments/New Hires/Open Positions** - We have one application for the Recreation Committee to bring forward to the Board: Mary (Lisa) Perkins. She served on the Rec Commission back in the 90's and has served on our Brownville Days Committee for several years. She comes highly recommended for appointment.

Motion to appoint Mary (Lisa) Perkins for a three-year term on the Penquis Recreation Committee.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

The Board of Assessment Review still has a vacancy to fill if anyone is interested. Other open positions have been posted.

Chris Crockett had a question on what the process was on internal applications related to open positions and why the Public Safety Officer wasn't internally posted when the Operations Director retired? Shelly replied to Chris that she believed the position was posted and filled internally by the Public Safety Director.

8. **Contracts & Agreements** – Our legal counsel reviewed the Recreation Collaboration Agreement and the manager has not had a chance to review their recommendations, but looks like we may need to work through some things with Milo and this Board. No action is needed as we will defer this until next month.

The proposed mutual aid agreement with the Central Maine Highlands Fire & EMS District #1 (CMHFED1) was briefly discussed with the Board agreeing to sign the contract. Residents need to keep in mind that this agreement does not replace our primary ambulance services that respond, it is simply a back up Mutual Aid agreement and CMHFED1 will only come to Brownville if they are requested by our Fire/EMS service because no other ambulances are available in the region.

Motion to accept Mutual Aid Agreement with the Central Maine Highlands Fire & EMS District #1.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

9. Department/Project Updates

UNDERPASS PROJECT – The attorney was scheduled to attend this meeting during executive session; however, this is being pushed off until next month, when we have more information on the surety claim status.

LAKE VIEW RD PROJECT – Will have more info after the bid opening on Friday 2/28/2025.

SPENCER RD PROJECT – Not much new to report. All expenses and reimbursements related to this project are processed and received to date. We are kind of at a standstill on

this project and plan to talk to some local contractors to see if they are able to help with the larger items we don't have equipment for.

JCT FIRE STATION EXPANSION PROJECT – The estimate and preliminary drawings prepared by Dirigo Engineering for this project were given to the Board prior to the meeting. The applications for Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) have not come out yet. They anticipate possibly mid-March or April. Regardless, we should probably have a discussion now that preliminary numbers are in to solidify the Board's approval with moving forward with an application for grant funding.

Motion to authorize the Town Manager and Fire Chief to apply for the CDS Grant.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

ADMINISTRATION –

- 2025 Budget report was reviewed. No comments questions at this time.
- Auditors were in the office 2/4 – 2/6. No major issues that we were made aware of. We should have figures for the carry-over accounts and any that need to be ratified for the town meeting warrant by the end of February.
- Our hope is to have Town Reports ready to print by the first of March. We do still need to address the funding for the match for the Lakeview Rd Project of \$5,000 to get the \$200,000 from DOT. Also, NOAA's award of \$826,860 requires a \$5,000 match.

Motion to add the following articles to the annual town meeting warrant:

To see if the Town of Brownville will vote to appropriate \$5,000 from the Undesignated/Unrestricted (Surplus) funds for the purpose of an in-kind match for the Town to receive a \$826,860 subaward by The Nature Conservancy and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to complete the Lakeview Rd Culvert/Bridge Project in 2025.

To see if the Town of Brownville will vote to appropriate \$5,000 from the Undesignated/Unrestricted (Surplus) funds for the purpose of an in-kind match for the Town to receive a \$200,000 award by The State of Maine Municipal Stream Crossing Program Grant to complete the Lakeview Rd Culvert/Bridge Project in 2025.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

- School referendum took place 2/12 to vote to dissolve the AOS.
- We received the legal bill from our first tax abatement appeal and part of the second, for just over \$8,000. We anticipate an additional invoice of \$5,000 to finish up with the second appeal.
- Emergency egress for the Jct. - Joe Higgins with the State Dept of Conservation stopped by while he was in the area to discuss where we are looking to have a road. I have sent him a map of our tentative proposed route. He thinks we can work on coming to an agreement of some kind to make an emergency egress happen. Adam Coover, the other landowner, was also in, and he is working with the observatory on the road at the other end where we would exit into Williamsburg. They are going to be doing some upgrades to that road/trail along with the AMC as well.

PUBLIC SAFETY –
Fire/EMS/EMA

- There was a total of 56 calls in January: 15 Fire, 41 EMS.
- There is an outstanding invoice for Valley Brook Electric from 2024 that was above and beyond the estimate to install the new generator at the Jct Fire Station. \$11,000 was paid out of ARPA for the generator itself, the remainder is still unpaid as there was no allocation/budget for it. The electrician discovered work that was previously not done to code and had to correct it when completing the other work. The remaining amount due is \$ 7,842.99. Invoices were reviewed by the Board.

Motion to have the treasurer pay the remaining balance due of \$7,842.99 to Valley Brook Electric from the Town Owned Property Reserve account.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

- The Fire Association is holding their annual Sportsman Auction & Dinner 5/10 4-8pm and are applying for a BYOB Permit that requires Board approval.

Motion to approve the BYOB Permit Application for Brownville Fire Association for 5/10/25 for a Sportsman Auction & Dinner.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

- There has been a couple of incidents at the Jct Fire Station resulting in damage to the ceiling and the overhead doors. Our deductible is \$5,000, and the work that needs to be done to correct the problems is mainly cosmetic and will not meet that threshold.
- Radio Communications – Our local system was formerly located on Bailey Hill in Williamsburg on property currently owned by Donna Jones, with the onsite building and tower owned by CPKC Rail. Radio and equipment were moved to a site recently purchased by CPKC specifically for radio communications purposes, just off Schoodic Lk Rd, as the previous owner of Bailey Hill had said they would not renew the lease for the tower/bldg. CPKC does not charge us anything for lease/rental of the tower. Since moving though, we have lost a large portion of our coverage area, and the communications are horrible. CPKC had planned to demo the building and tower at Bailey Hill; however, they are willing to transfer ownership to a government entity (vs private owner). Donna is willing to do a long-term lease of the building and tower to the Town if we agree to transfer ownership to her, and charge a minimal fee, much like she does with our salt shed area off the pit. Eventually, the idea would be to have the county take over the lease as part of the county communications upgrade project but that will take some time. There will be some costs associated with moving the equipment back as we will need our own batteries and charger, although we don't know those numbers yet. We need to know if the Board is willing to take ownership of the building and tower on Bailey Hill from CPKC and transfer ownership to Donna shortly after and enter into a long-term lease agreement with her before we move forward.

Motion to take ownership of the building and tower on Bailey Hill from CPKC and transfer ownership to Donna Jones shortly after and enter into a long-term lease agreement with her.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Code/Health –

- CEO has reached out to the map designer to get the shoreland zoning maps corrected as several errors were discovered. Some of the areas around smaller water bodies were

colored as resource protection when in fact their zone did not change from the prior version of the map. We didn't catch it when we reviewed the draft, so we need to correct it.

Animal Control – Fairly quiet.

PUBLIC WORKS – There was some damage sustained to a couple of panels on one of the public works garage doors as it was backed into before it was all the way up. The costs do not meet the threshold for the deductible. They got a door company to inspect it and make sure everything was safe to operate once they were able to get it closed and some repairs were done. Rick let the Board know that the holder is back up and running. They've been working on the sidewalk on Railroad Ave by the railyard moving snow and chasing the running water and opening drains. There are a couple of frozen culverts that the crew will be working to fix. Polar flex edges were put on three of the plows and those should be good for a year or two. The two bottom panels of the garage door will still need to be replaced.

RECREATION – We have had some progress on the possible Davis Field Boat Launch Project. Our preliminary environmental assessment was completed. We are working with PCEDC and the state to see about funding for a Phase II assessment to see if the old dump site requires additional clean-up.

WATER/SEWER – The truck went in for repair over a week ago and still is not back yet, which is causing a hiccup in our plowing abilities, but the crew is getting by. Phil prepared a written report that the Board reviewed. No questions.

10. Open Session – Chris circled back around to his question about open positions. He had found Board meeting minutes from April 2024 that talked about the Operations Director retiring and the plans to fill those openings and read them to the Board. He does not believe the Public Safety Officer was internally advertised. The Board and Public Safety Director recalled that it had been.

11. Executive Session – Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A 405(6)(A) - Personnel Matters

Motion to go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(A) for personnel matters at 7:50pm

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Motion to come out of executive session at 8:23pm

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Motion to authorize Felice to renegotiate the employment agreement with Shawn Mitchell and require any future changes to come back before the Board of Selectpersons.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

12. **Set Next Meeting** – Tentative meetings set for Thursday, March 6th at 6pm and/or Wednesday, March 12th at 6pm, if needed to address Lakeview Rd Project bid, surety claim and public hearing related to corrections of the shoreland zoning map depending on the status of each of those items. Otherwise, the next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 17th immediately following the annual town meeting.

13. Motion to adjourn at 8:31PM

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Alicia M. Harmon
Town Clerk


Byron Weymouth, Selectboard Chair


Shelly Ekholm


Kevin Emery


James Hartin


Gary Chapman