

TOWN OF BROWNVILLE
BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 20, 2024 ~ 6:00p.m.
American Legion Post 92 - 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville

1. Called to order at 6:03 p.m.

- a. Selectpersons Present: Shelly Ekholm, Bryon Weymouth, Jimmy Hartin, Kevin Emery
- b. Employees Present: Felice Lyford, Jessica Wyman, Kevin Black, Shawn Mitchell
- c. Residents/Others Present: Andrea Witham, Michael Rentas, Ana Hernandez, Steve Tatko, Tom Duffus, Nichole

2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes from 1/16/2024, 1/25/2024 & 2/8/2024 and 2/13/2024 as presented.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm

Second: Kevin Emery

Vote: Unanimous

3. Treasurer's Payroll, Accounts Payable & Water/Sewer Warrants were reviewed and signed by board members present.

4. Appalachian Mountain Club Presentation – Barnard Forest – Steve Tatko, VP of Land, Research & Trails at AMC and Tom Duffus, VP of the Conservation Fund attended the meeting to give information on the Barnard Forest Land Acquisition and future plans for the property. They are hoping for a letter of support from the Board to acquire funding sources for their Legacy Project which will preserve the character of our region through a conservation easement and provide permanent protection and public access to the property and sustainable forest management. The Board fully supports the manager writing such a letter on their behalf.

5. Quit Claim Deeds & Tax Acquired Properties – We received payment on four of the foreclosed properties after the offer to buyback was given. We need to quit claim them back to the owners.

Motion to sign quit claim deeds for the following properties due to tax lien foreclosures on 12/6/2023, releasing the Town's interest, as they have been paid in full.

Durant, Roslin & McKeown, Linda, M18 L29, 12 Pine St, Tax Acct #794

Russell, George (heirs), M16 L43, 62 Stickney Hill Rd, Tax Acct #890

Sawlivich, Tina, M5 L1-19, 35 Russell Rd, Tax Acct #898

Searles, Ronald, M18 L66, 42 Henderson St, Tax Acct #881

Motion: Shelly Ekholm

Second: Kevin Emery

Vote: Unanimous

Discussion on the four remaining properties that we did not receive payment on by the 1/6/2024 deadline. The manager has put all four properties on liability insurance. She is still looking into what the next steps are for the town where there are various complicating factors with each one of them. Will try to have more information available next month.

6. Abatements/Supplements

Water abatement request from Judith Livingstone for property located at 68 Page Street. They had a water leak in the fourth quarter 2023 due to a broken pipe in the baseboard. The Fire Dept pumped out the cellar and the leak was fixed by McKusick Petroleum. Her application and the invoices from McKusick's were reviewed by the Board. Water abatement is recommended in the amount of \$524.48 as their average for the previous four quarters does not go over the minimum at \$88.18 and the bill for just water was \$612.66.

Motion to approve a water abatement for Judith Livingstone for property at 68 Page Street, Acct# 440, due to broken baseboard heating, that has been repaired, for the amount of \$524.48.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm

Second: Kevin Emery

Vote: Unanimous

7. Building Permit Applications – N/A – No permits for consideration currently.

8. ACO New Hire Recommendation

The Manager & Kevin interviewed and recommend for hire, Ben Guantt as ACO. If approved, we would plan to get Ben set up with the Maine ACO Certification course online, which he would need to complete within 6 months, and provide him with a handheld radio, animal traps, crates, collars, leashes and various protective equipment to prepare him to respond from his home in Milo.

Motion to approve the Manager's recommendation to hire and appoint Benjamin Gauntt as the new Animal Control Officer with a rate of pay set at \$20/hr.

Motion: Kevin Emery

Second: Jimmy Hartin

Vote: 3 in favor; Shelly abstained

9. Department Head Updates – Admin -

- 2024 Budget presented for review.
- The Annual Town Meeting Warrant draft was forwarded on to our legal counsel for their review and recommendations.
- Auditors were here the week of January 29th. They were very pleased with how Alicia has organized everything this year as it helped get through things quickly. Although the audit is not yet complete, they should have necessary documents prepared in time for printing the town report.
- We will be transitioning to a different Administrator for Penquis Solid Waste. Eric Bailey was appointed to the position this week by the PSWC Board of Directors, and we are working with him on what is required. We agreed to do the work to complete 2023 audit and finish as Administrator at the end of March. Kevin is resigning from the PSWC Board in March. We hope to have the new PW Director sit on the Board in his place.

Public Safety –

- In January we responded to 31 calls, 25 were EMS, 6 were Fire.
- FEMA Storm Declaration – Shawn participated in a webinar put on by MEMA and gave an update on what it means for Brownville. Shawn stated that for the town to qualify for anything, one incident needed to amount to at least \$3,000, which only one could, and

that is the ballfield that is being claimed through our insurance. He also brought up for future incidents how important it is to get photos along with the GPS coordinates while on the scene.

- Additional information presented on the EMS proposal to upgrade permit level to Paramedic and the costs associated with it. Estimated initial cost, \$42,965. This includes the supplies/equipment, a used Cardiac Monitor, Modifications to 1422, Pharmaceuticals, and the License upgrade. One of the modifications that needs to be made to 1422, is a temperature-controlled compartment. The annual estimates increase to the departmental budget is 5,800. This could change depending on the number of calls that come in, and what supplies are used on the calls. The Town has applied for EMS Stabilization Funds which could be used for a portion of the startup costs (\$20,249.13). There was an article placed on the warrant asking voters if they support this upgrade and appropriating up to \$15,000 from unrestricted funds (surplus), with Brownville Fire Auxiliary pledging the remaining \$7,715.87. If for some reason any of these components fall through, we would search for other grants that we could qualify for, and the program is contingent on each one of the funding sources. Shawn also wants to make it very clear this is *NOT* proposing Brownville become an ambulance service.
- No Code Enforcement items to discuss this month.

Public Works –

- The Public Works Director position was posted internally until 1/26/2024 with no applications received during that period. It has subsequently been advertised and posted to the public with applications due 2/29/2024.
- Lots of activity occurring on all of the projects coming up: underpass, Spencer Rd Culvert & Lakeview Rd Culvert. We've been working with affected landowners that require temporary construction easements. Also, the railroad's requirement for extended liability insurance coverage is being reviewed by MMA insurance.
- Spring large item pick up, as long as we are still able to bring it to Juniper Ridge, we should be able to schedule this sometime in May.

Recreation –

- Crystal is looking into doing an Easter Egg Hunt or Cookie Decorating event in the coming months. Brownville Days Committee is hosting another BONCO night March 16th for a fundraiser. It was well received at the New Year event, and people were excited to have it again.
- We were able to send in the inventory list and damaged items for the flood insurance claim at the field. We'll wait to hear back from MMA on how to proceed and what they will cover.

Water/Sewer –

- Nick Henry is working on the water rate case, and we need to plan a public hearing no later than May 20th. We will look to plan the monthly Board meeting to coincide and have it on May 14th, since our regular schedule would fall on the 21st and that's too late.
- The new water/sewer truck should be done mid-March.

10. Open Session

Michael Rentas asked about the tax acquired properties. He was curious on how the sale process will work going forward. There is new legislation that may require the Town to sell

tax acquired properties through a broker. There are more details to look into before that process will even begin.

11. Next Meeting & Agenda Items – Set for Wednesday, March 6th at 6:00p.m. with Spencer Rd Culvert Project Construction Bid Review and Award on the agenda. The regular March meeting will take place immediately following the Annual Town Meeting on Monday, March 18th.

12. Adjournment at 7:13 p.m.

Motion: Kevin Emery Second: Jimmy Hartin Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Wyman
Deputy Clerk/Admin Asst


Byron Weymouth, Selectboard Chair


Shelly Ekholm


Kevin Emery


James Hartin