

**TOWN OF BROWNVILLE**  
**BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 6:00pm**  
American Legion Post #92 ~ 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville

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**1. Called to order by Byron Weymouth at 6:01 p.m.**

- a. Selectpersons Present: Byron Weymouth, Shelly Ekholm, Gary Chapman & Kevin Emery (Absent: James Hartin)
- b. Employees Present: Felice Lyford, Alicia Harmon, Kevin Black, Rick Gallagher, Phil Cook, Shawn Mitchell & Crystal Cail
- c. Residents/Others Present: Emily Cook, Paula Copeland, Jess Atkinson, Dawn McLaughlin & Trevor Saunders

**2. Action on prior meeting minutes from May 14, 2024**

Motion to approve the minutes from 5/14/24 as presented.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm                      Second: Kevin Emery                      Vote: Unanimous

**3. Treasurer's Warrants (Payroll, Accounts Payable, Water/Sewer) were reviewed and signed by Board members present.**

**4. Building Permit Applications (if needed) – None**

**5. Water/Sewer Truck Bid Review/Award – We received four bids and the highest bidder was Mark Ladd.**

Motion to award the Water/Sewer Truck Bid to Mark Ladd for the amount of \$1,500.00.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm                      Second: Kevin Emery                      Vote: Unanimous

**6. Grant Application(s)**

**Water Reservoir Generator Project** - We applied for the BRIC grant back in January for 90% coverage of the generator project for both water reservoirs leaving us with in-kind match of 10% for doing groundwork and making a gravel pad. Total project estimated at \$31,252 (if prices stay as estimated) translating to \$28,126.80 Federal and \$3,125.20 In-kind match. That particular grant is more of a long shot, but we do have several opportunities coming up to get funding through HMPG for 75% Federal (\$23,439) with a 25% match (\$7,813) and most projects submitted are approved. Town Manager would need authority to sign a match commitment letter for the \$7,813 which, once you take the \$3,125.20 in-kind work equates to almost \$4,800 that we would have to come up with to get the project done. If approved we can explore all the options, but do not need to make that decision tonight.

Motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign a match commitment letter and apply for HMPG grants requiring a 25% match for the Water Reservoir Generator Project.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm                      Second: Kevin Emery                      Vote: Unanimous.

**Community Resilience Partnership** – Community Action Grants related to Climate Change – We have been working with Laurie Osher from Eastern Maine Development Corporation (she is paid through a grant program to assist communities with grants) since we established our Community Action Advisory Committee back in August 2022. Shawn is going to spearhead getting this project moving forward to complete what's necessary to qualify for these grants, which will involve some public participation. More info to come at a later date.

## 7. Department Updates

### Administration:

#### ▪ Tax Acquired Properties Updates:

- Mr. Fortin (3 Whitten Rd) was unable to get funding to help pay his taxes. He is working with his church to come up with the money prior to his 7/1 deadline.
- We should be able to move forward with removal of the mobile home in the park on Main Rd. To dispose of the demo debris, we needed to re-activate our account with Juniper Ridge as we currently take only household trash there through our MRC membership, on bypass from the former PERC. Demo debris is not under a contract, so we will be paying around \$105/ton vs what we pay for regular municipal solid waste, which is around \$85/ton. This also relates to the discussion about the mattresses located on Pleasant Street being addressed through code enforcement.
- The status of the other properties remains at a standstill until we have more time to focus on them. Alicia and Felice did attend a Zoom training on legislative updates that gave us a bit more perspective. This is not going to be an easy process and tax acquired properties will not be resolved easily moving forward.
- A question was brought up to see if we should/could maintain the properties that we have foreclosed on. Maintain them as in mow the lawn and slight upkeep on the property. If this is something that will be done, the Town will document time and supplies used per property as those expenses qualify for reimbursement if excess funds available at time of sale.
- There is a new property manager for the trailer park and Shawn has a meeting scheduled with them next week to talk about code issues and any other questions that may come up.

- **Underpass Project** – The test pit was dug on 5/20. That sparked a change in the construction plan which was worked out and agreed upon by the contractor, railroad and engineer. The changes equate to an increased cost of \$81,975 and is mainly due to elimination of the connected storm drain catch basins. Felice gave the Board the Change Order and Contingency Plan that indicates further details. There is plenty of funding in the grant, and we knew changes were very likely since we weren't able to do a test dig prior to putting the job out to bid. The contractor will not be removing the wall directly under the tracks. Concrete will come up to the sidewalk and there will be a railing.

- **Spencer Rd Project** – The contract and change orders have been executed and there will be a preconstruction conference a week or two before the contractor plans to break ground (which should be after the Underpass Project is complete).

- **Updated job descriptions** – Drafts presented for Board review/approval for Public Safety Director, Public Works Operator, Public Works Laborer, Recreation Director, Water/Sewer Chief Operator, Water/Sewer Superintendent and Water/Sewer Operator/Laborer.

Motion to approve the presented job descriptions for Public Safety Director, Public Works Operator, Public Works Laborer, Recreation Director, Water/Sewer Chief Operator, Water/Sewer Superintendent and Water/Sewer Operator/Laborer.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm                      Second: Kevin Emery                      Vote: Unanimous.

- **Public Comment and Board Meetings** – After the May Board meeting it was suggested by a member that maybe we establish some guidelines or policy related to how public comment is handled. The manager included guidance documents from MMA and some samples from other municipalities in Maine for consideration. The Board decided to table this discussion until next month.
- **ARPA** – A breakdown of what is left and what's been allocated to projects was presented. We are required to have all monies allocated to a specific project by the end of this year and if the money hasn't been spent, we need some sort of documentation (i.e. contract to provide a product or service) in place to indicate where we plan to spend it. At this time, Brownville had allocated \$17,000 to expand Broadband. It was recently determined that Brownville is not considered "underserved" and was not included with some other area towns for expansion. At this time, it would be wise of the Town to earmark the broadband money to something different. Below are a couple of projects that we would like to have the Board consider depending on what's left.
  - **Electronic Sign at Town Office** – Felice had given some information on an electronic sign previously and is bringing it back around. She also provided printed copies of some of the options that were collected.
  - **Phone System at Town Office** –The phones we have are a bit ancient (Felice used them when she worked here years ago!) and we do not have voicemail and other basic capabilities with them. Felice included what she has so far for quotes/information, but for now, it's still a work in progress.

Motion to withdraw the \$17,000 broadband allocation of ARPA funds to be earmarked elsewhere.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm                      Second: Kevin Emery                      Vote: Unanimous

Motion to approve the purchase of Grand Stream phone system for approximately \$4,000 to be paid from ARPA funds

Motion: Shelly Ekholm                      Second: Kevin Emery                      Vote: Unanimous

- **Town Office Plow, old flag pole and shrubs** – The old V-Plow with the new "Town of Brownville" lettering will be done in the coming weeks. The base paint was paid for in last year's budget after it was sandblasted, and this year's budget will only see minimal amounts for the detail paint and veneer to protect it. Rick has a plan in place to tidy up the area out front where it will live and we may remove the rosebushes that are there and

replace with something more appealing. The other bushes/shrubs will be trimmed up and the old flag pole will be removed. We are hoping to have time to make the kiosk look nicer before we have Brownville Days.

- **Shawn's Employment Agreement** – A draft was sent to legal on 5/23 and it was received back just before the meeting. It has been executed.

#### **Public Safety:**

- **Fire/EMS**

- There was a total of 29 calls in May; 15 Fire 14 EMS.
- All trucks have completed & passed annual maintenance & inspections – costs were less than last year.
- All necessary agreements are now in place for Paramedic upgrade, awaiting on inspection from the state at this point.
- Participated in joint EMS meeting regarding status of EMS in Piscataquis County. Great conversation, and another meeting scheduled for next month with area stakeholders.
- Junction Fire Station bathroom – This has been a topic of discussion for some time now. We have received a couple of quotes, but they were quite high. We did receive one quote from a local contractor on doing the bathroom renovation, except for the plumbing, a licensed plumber will be hired to complete the plumbing side of things. The Board approved for Dennis Carver to complete the carpenter work for his quoted price of \$3,025.45. LaPointe Plumbing will be completing the plumbing side of the project for the amount of \$1,500. The Fire Auxiliary voted to pay half of the invoice(s) for the bathroom renovation.

- **Code**

- Continue to work on property cleanup and dangerous buildings.
  - To address the property on Pleasant Street discussed last month, we have re-established our account with Juniper Ridge as it has been more than 10 years since we have used it. Since we are on "bypass" from the former PERC (through our contract with the Municipal Review Committee), we can technically only haul regular household waste under our agreement. Any bulky waste or demo debris is different and will need to be billed directly from Juniper Ridge at their established rate (currently \$105/ton). One thing we were told is that we cannot take a full load of mattresses and stuffed furniture to their landfill. We will need to explore some other possible options.
- Significant updates to E911 mapping as well as assigning address to municipal properties. Katahdin Storage is one of the addresses that is being changed. There are multiple buildings going up, which constitutes a street name. The new street name is Noyes Lane. Also, renaming of Gerrish Hill Rd to Hiram Hill Rd (off Church Street) due to a conflicting road named Gerrish Street in the Junction that runs between Center and Meulendyk. There were no assigned addresses on the renamed road to date, so it was the ideal time to make a change before anyone needs to change mail or other documentation.
- Continued interest in building on off the grid roads.

- **Public Safety Officer**
  - Annual Confined Space Entry Training completed for Water/Sewer and Public Works Departments. This was a great program, kudos to the crew on the training and resources.
- **Animal Control**
  - Shawn and Felice interviewed a couple candidates for the open position and have a recommendation to bring forward later on in the agenda.
  - We took our first dog to the animal shelter for 2024, the dog was found on Van Horne Ave.
  - We are going to need to update and/or make changes to the kennel behind the public works garage as it sits on gravel, making it possible for a dog to dig under the fence. It is also in direct sunlight in the afternoon and can get extremely hot, with no roof over it. There is a small dog house available in it though. We will explore some possible solutions/options.

**Public Works:**

- **Cemetery Well House** – Rick and Phil have worked on a plan to rebuild the cemetery well house, within the current budget.
- **Cemetery Maintenance & Damaged Stones** – Felice gave the Board some info from MMA about cemetery trust funds and a list of maintenance/repair companies in our region. She spoke to the auditor about repairs and we have about \$59,000 available in the portion of cemetery funds that are accessible. If we wanted to move forward, we would need to get quotes, scope of work and have a special town meeting to spend the funds (per the auditor). There are some stones that need to be raised as they're sinking into the ground. It would be nice to fix the already tipped over stones as well as the ones that are starting to fall over. The Board would like us to get quotes on repairs/maintenance to stones.

**Parks & Rec:**

- Travel sports are getting ready to wrap up. Brownville will be hosting the All-Star game at Davis Field on Sunday, July 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Still working on the insurance claim from the flood.
- Swim program through the YMCA will be starting in July and running for seven weeks. The bus transportation has been approved and will be picking kids up in Brownville and Milo.

**Water/Sewer**

- **Meters/Radio Readers Project** - We have been preparing for the changeout of meter readers. This project has become a great deal more complicated than originally presented. As discussed previously, our vendor changed their product line and the old quote we received is not even available to us. The new product line offers a meter that has a radio reader installed within it. The additional cost to replace is about \$20,000 if we go with Kamstrup's new meter that includes that radio reader in it. Although more expensive right now, it is so much cheaper in the long run. The meters will be good for at least 20 years without the requirement to test them (other meters require testing every 7 years).

*Motion to: Allow Town Manager to execute lease with Androscoggin Bank and move \$23,600 from water reserve into the new equipment budget line within the 2024 budget.*

**Penquis Solid Waste**

- **New Site Manager** – During the monthly June meeting Mike Conley was re-hired as Site Manager.
- **New Administrator** – During the monthly June meeting Aubrey O'Hara was hired as the Administrator. Felice and Jessi will be working with her over the coming weeks to take over the admin duties. In the meantime, the Town is billing PSWC hourly for our time spent doing the administrative duties, and will continue to bill throughout the transition period.
- **Eagle Point Energy** – Representatives from Eagle Point Energy attended the meeting via Zoom to give an introduction/update. This is the company that bought the PERC plant in Orrington. They are working with DEP on transferring permits to their organization and are not accepting waste right now. They are looking ahead 12-14 months just to get the bulk of the handling equipment needed to open. They plan to check in with PSWC every few months to let them know how things are coming along. In the meantime, PSWC is also on bypass to Juniper Ridge.

**8. Open Session**

- **SPIRIT OF AMERICA RESOLVE** A draft was presented to the Board for review, as the nomination for Graves Service Station was previously approved.

**9. Appointments/New Hires/Open Positions (Possible Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(a))**

- **Fire/EMS Department** – We had one resignation in the FD – Corbin Cyr this past month and two new applicants that are being recommended for hire: Shawn Emery who is in Firefighter School right now, and Crowell Garland, who is already Firefighter certified. Also, for Kevin's retirement purposes, he needs to get done on the FD 6/28. We would like to have the Board approve Kevin being re-hired/appointed as Assistant Fire Chief effective July 1, 2024. Yesterday we received an application from an EMT that we plan to interview and hope to hire shortly thereafter. The applicant would only serve as an EMT as they are not Firefighter qualified and wouldn't need turnout gear. We can discuss further in Executive Session.
- **Full-Time Public Works Operator** – We interviewed two individuals for this position and it was a tough choice. We wanted to hold off a little bit due to the possibility of one of our PW staff applying for the PT Water/Sewer position. The person we are recommending for FT PW Oper is Brian Bourque who was interviewed quite some time ago for the part-time opening we advertised and he was ultimately offered that position contingent upon board approval. He came in last Thursday and started his departmental and safety training, filled out his paperwork and spent the afternoon with the crew as a temporary hire. We are recommending he be hired for the full-time position at \$17.50/hr.
- **Part-Time Water/Sewer Operator**- we are recommending Chris Crockett be hired for this position and he will split his time with public works, which opens up part-time (20 hrs/wk) in the PW dept to fill.

- **Local Health Officer** – As part of Shawn’s new duties he needs to be appointed as the Local Health Officer, and the appointment sheet was presented.

Motion to appoint Shawn Mitchell as the Local Health Officer, hire Shawn Emery and Crowell Garland to the Fire/EMS Department, move Brian Bourque from temporary to permanent Full-Time Public Works Operator, and Chris Crockett as Part-Time Water/Sewer Operator (effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, remaining full-time hours split with public works).

Motion: Shelly    Second: Gary    Vote: 3 yes votes, 1 abstained.

Motion to re-hire and appoint Kevin Black as Assistant Fire Chief effective July 1, 2024.

Motion: Shelly    Second: Gary    Vote: 3 yes votes, 1 abstained.

- **Recreation Director** – This position was advertised internally with no applications received. The Milo Town Manager approached Felice to discuss a possible collaboration and proposed the possibility of sharing a full-time Rec. Director. That conversation took place while the position was posted internally, therefore, it was not advertised externally pending feedback from the Board on how to proceed. Paula Copeland, Chairman of Milo’s Board of Selectpersons, was in attendance to confirm that yes, their Board is open to combining the position and discussing further. They believe there could be some cost savings. She stated that it would be good to have the two Town Managers, a Board representative from each town and the Recreation Directors get together for a discussion and see what the barriers may be as well as other opportunities. The Milo Rec Director and Dawn McLaughlin, who oversees the Bearcats K-5 After School Program, were present and asked if they supported this idea. They favor collaboration but aren’t 100% on board with having 1 full-time director shared between the two towns as it obviously would eliminate them from consideration since they are full-time teachers. Currently Milo has about 80 kids participating in their summer camp program.
- **Animal Control Officer** – Applicants to be discussed in executive session.

- Motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A) at 8:07pm.

Motion: Shelly    Second: Kevin    Vote: Unanimous

- Motion to exit Executive Session at 8:41pm.

Motion: Shelly    Second: Kevin    Vote: Unanimous

- Motion to keep the Recreation Director position as it is and decline the collaboration with Milo at this time.

Motion: Shelly    Second: Kevin    Vote: Unanimous

- Motion to offer the ACO position to the candidate that lives in town with a starting wage of \$20/hr. If they decline, the same offer can be proposed to the second recommended applicant.

Motion: Shelly                      Second: Kevin                      Vote: Unanimous

- Motion to authorize the Town Manager to hire the EMT candidate discussed in Executive Session if recommended pending the interview.

Motion: Shelly                      Second: Gary                      Vote: Unanimous

- Motion to sign a Quit Claim Deed for Paul Thibodeau to clear up some old liens that were not appropriately discharged or discharged long after foreclosure.

Motion: Shelly                      Second: Gary                      Vote: Unanimous

10. Set Next Meeting – Regular Schedule falls on Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>  
AGENDA ITEMS: Work on plan for Pleasant Street code issues.

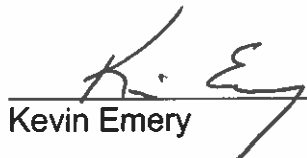
11. Motion to adjourn at 8:47p.m.

Motion: Shelly                      Second: Kevin                      Vote: Unanimous


Respectfully submitted,  
Alicia M. Harmon  
Town Clerk

  
Byron Weymouth, Selectboard Chair

  
Shelly Ekholm

  
Kevin Emery

  
James Hartin

  
Gary Chapman