

TOWN OF BROWNVILLE
BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, December 19, 2023 ~ 6:00p.m.
American Legion Post #92 ~ 67 Railroad Ave. Brownville

1. **Board of Selectpersons Meeting Call to Order** – Meeting called to order at 6:01PM by Chairman Byron Weymouth

- a. **Selectpersons Present:** Byron Weymouth, Shelly Ekholm & Kevin Emery
- b. **Employees Present:** Felice Lyford, Alicia Harmon, Kevin Black & Shawn Mitchell
- c. **Residents/Others Present:** Manuel Suarez & Robert Berg

2. **Approval of prior meeting minutes from November 14, 2023 -**

Motion to approve the minutes from 11/14/23 as presented

Motion: Kevin Emery Second: Shelly Ekholm Vote: Unanimous

3. **Review of the Treasurer’s Warrants (Payroll, Accounts Payable, Water/Sewer) –** Warrants were signed by members present.

4. **Liquor License Application Renewal – Wildwoods Trailside Cabins LLC –**

Motion to approve the liquor license application renewal for Wildwoods Trailside Cabins LLC located at 125 Russell Rd.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

5. **Tax Abatements/Supplements** – There is one supplement for a tree growth penalty to remove 1 acre of land for Manuel Suarez, M5 L19, Acct#989 for \$1,890.40. This is at the owner’s request, as they are selling 1 acre to the RR for a radio tower.

Motion to approve tax supplement for a tree growth penalty to remove 1 acre of land for Manuel Suarez, M5 L19, Acct#989 for the amount of \$1,890.40.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

6. **Building Permit Applications - None**

7. **2021 Tax Lien Foreclosures** - Foreclosures took place on 12/6/2023 for outstanding 2021 taxes. We ended up with nine properties. It has been the Board’s practice to offer the property back to the home owner with all outstanding taxes owed, plus water/sewer (if applicable) and an admin fee.

Motion to offer sale of properties back to previous owners for amounts no less than the total owed to the Town for all taxes and water/sewer fees with an additional administrative fee of \$500 with the requirement to receive payment no later than 2/9/2024 (or whatever date the Board would like to set).

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

8. Department Head Updates –

ADMINISTRATION –

- Budget was updated and enclosed for review.
- The County Budget was voted on this past Tuesday. I believe our final number for 2024 is \$129,354, approximately a \$9,000 increase. In 2023 we had a \$12,000 increase. Felice attended most of the budget committee meetings and that group decreased the amount of “grants” they give to area agencies; however, the commissioners ultimately voted double the amount the committee recommended otherwise we would have come in at \$125,931, approximately a \$6,000 increase. It doesn’t seem like a lot when you look at the whole picture, but in my opinion the grants are funds that are unnecessary to run county government.
- Safety Works corrective action report was submitted 12/12/2023 outlining how we rectified the safety concerns noted from the 10/16/2023 voluntary inspection.
- While Uncle Buck was here last week insulating Lorna’s office window, he got us a quote to replace the remaining old windows at the Town Office (the large one by the entrance, two large ones facing Rt 11, two regular size ones facing employee parking lot and the other basement window that wasn’t as critical as the one we just did) for a cost of \$6,673.16. He is giving us the windows at his cost. Kevin also asked him to give us a quote on the metal roof for the overhangs at the office as the grooved style gets ice caught up on it and backs up large amounts that could injure anyone walking in (and the metal curls up as well). He would replace it with a new smooth metal roof and also add steel support posts under each one as there is nothing holding them up at this time for a total cost of \$1,983.79. The window work wouldn’t be done until spring. I’m not sure if he would do the roofs now or wait until spring as well. Asking if the Board wants to proceed with either project, and if so, should we include it in the “property maintenance” line in the 2024 budget or have a separate vote to use funds from Town Owned Property Reserve or some other source?

Motion to accept Uncle Buck's estimate, up to \$9,000 for replacement of windows and over hang to come from Town Owned Property Reserve.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm Second: Kevin Emery Vote: Unanimous

- We received our audit package to start assembling information for 2023 Audit, both for the Town and PSWC. The Board has agreed to move ahead with the Auditor that we have been using.

PUBLIC SAFETY –

- In November we responded to 46 calls, 29 were EMS, 17 were Fire. So far this year we have responded to 500 calls. A Board Member asked how that compared to in years past and in 2022 there were 213 calls and in 2021 (No EMS response) there were 92 calls.
- We received the Gloria C McKenzie grant for \$23,910 to purchase a Lucas Mechanical CPR Device for Fire/EMS.

- We will be receiving some funds under the EMS Stabilization Grant that is being streamlined through the State. First round (applied for 12/15/2023 estimates to give us around \$20k and hopefully more through the second round. The purpose of these funds is to keep EMS services going. We will need to discuss some options for how the Board would like to use those funds, and of course, there are some restrictions with it (i.e. cannot be used for current indebtedness etc). Some options may be to use funds to help offset some wages or set aside for expanding the department's training to higher levels of care or recruitment of additional basic level responders. The Chief may have some other options to consider as well.
- New desktop computer needed for the Jct Fire Station. Recommend purchasing outside of our IT contract as that computer is not connected to our server (and we don't want it to be). Recommend to authorize purchase out of ARPA funds for an amount not to exceed \$1,000.

Motion to approve purchase of a new desktop computer with monitor and Microsoft Office for an amount not to exceed \$1,000 from ARPA funds.

Motion: Shelly Ekholm

Second: Kevin Emery

Vote: Unanimous

- Chief Mitchell spoke about the rain/wind storm. The Department was hit pretty hard over the last 24 hours with lines/tress down, flooded roads and flooded basements; the Department responded to 27 calls that equated to 258 man hours. There were 18 calls in Brownville, 7 in the Unorganized Territories, 1 Mutual Aid call in Milo and 1 Mutual Aid call in Dover-Foxcroft. We also requested Mutual Aid from Milo Fire to help with a flooded road and possible evacuation of residents who were unable to get out. The shelter was opened last night and there were five people that took advantage of it. We will see if we can get any reimbursement from FEMA. Chief asked the Railroad to stop all train traffic over trestle as the water was reaching the bottom of the trestle. Just like Graves, Robinsons is great to work with, Chief was in contact with them to make sure we had enough fuel for all generators and trucks. Chief mentioned that he needs to work with the Town Manager to get a plan in place for operation the shelter. It's too much for the Fire Department to handle when they are responding to emergencies. The Horseshoe Pond Road has only the bridge existing.
- We have four members starting an EMT course. This will take place in Bangor on Mondays, Wednesdays and a few Saturdays. We also have one member taking an advanced EMT course that will be held in Lewiston. There is a grant to pay for tuition, we will be responsible for paying for text books.
- Ambulance coverage is becoming an issue. We understand that Three Rivers Ambulance Service (TRAS) is advertising for positions, which is a good thing. Mayo has been told not to respond to Brownville if they only have one truck left in Dover. Millinocket has sent a letter to the Town Manager requesting a meeting with her and the Fire Chief about their ambulance responding to Brownville. Howland will not respond unless it's absolutely necessary. Chief Mitchell has let the Board know that we need to think about the future and the ambulance service. There will be a leadership change at TRAS starting January 1st and we should sit

down and talk with them about coverage. Our department is not a transporting service and we will not be a transporting service. Although we do not have a contract with TRAS, they cover our service area. It makes it a bit tough budgeting an EMS line without having a contract. If TRAS goes down or isn't staffed other ambulances do NOT have to respond to us. Chief Mitchell believes that area Fire Chiefs and Town Managers need to get together with the County to talk about Ambulance services/coverage for our area.

- There have been a few residents being vocal about our department going to cover Dover-Foxcroft before a closer town gets toned to cover. There was also some grumbling about us going to Millinocket. We have been asked to go to Millinocket three times, twice for station coverage while they were out on a structure fire and once for an ice rescue. We have requested Millinocket to come to Brownville nine times.
- The Junction Fire Station bathroom is still on the list of things to get done. We are having a hard time getting quotes for a remodel. Chief Mitchell will continue to try and get some quotes.

PUBLIC WORKS –

- The new loader sustained some damage while clearing around the underpass last month due to the cracked concrete wall sticking out. One of the fenders got caught on it leaving scrapes and a bend to it. It will be fixed. Estimate is around \$1300 and will be paid out of the 2023 budget.
- The Underpass Project has some activity. Jim Lord and another Dirigo engineer, Kevin and I, and Wayne Duffett, Dave Thompson and Jonathan Marino from the RR met via Zoom on Thursday to discuss the plans as Jim presented at the Board Meeting. They decided they want to have a test pit dug on the south corner of the abutment sooner rather than later (like this coming week), to attempt to locate the footing of the abutment to get a better idea what they are dealing with. Although the Town had previously asked their permission to do this (and they didn't want us to), they now think it's a must before approving the project. The railroad also wants to know how they will get paid when they have people/supervisors in town.

PARKS & REC –

- Davis Field is flooded by yesterday's storm and the Snack Shack took a hard hit.

WATER/SEWER –

- The water reservoir in the Jct is abutted by Coover Logging on the south and west (if you are facing the reservoir standing on Van Horne it would be to the right and behind). They are accessing their land to do some cutting and hired out some legal research on the deeds to determine their property line. It is not completely clear exactly where our line ends and theirs begins, but there is a clear path/cleared woods road that has been used in the past by Paul Foulkes. Adam came to speak with Kevin and I this past week about the Town's thoughts on how to make this clearer now and for the future. We do not foresee any problems from the standpoint of our reservoir as the distance is adequate; however, we also feel it would be best to clarify in a deed any easements etc. Adam is willing to have his attorney draft a document to grant him a 30' easement on the west side (where the woods road currently is) to allow them to access and subsequently build out that

road further to the west on their own land. Adam is also going to grant the Town a 100' easement onto his land on the south side and plans to clear the trees in that area which will provide greater radio communication for us in that location (and without disturbing the reservoir). It won't be a lot of trouble for them to draft the document as they have done the research on the deeds already and have the wording needed. The Board would like to move forward and we will get a document drafted for the next meeting.

- We are still working on water meter readers and software for replacement. TRIO has been faltering on the work they would need to accomplish for us to use the less expensive system. Knowing we need to have a plan in place (because of the budget/rate increase AND because the old software may just stop running as updates occur), we met and collectively recommend going with the Census radio readers and software through EJ Prescott. Although initial costs are higher, it includes the cost to install all new readers which need to be replaced over the next several years anyway (and we would still incur those costs at approximately the same prices). We worked out a deal with EJP to "lease" them to us over several years. They have agreed to reduce the interest rate from 8.5% to 6% and provide us with the Command Link unit (\$600) for free. We also are contracted to purchase ALL of our supplies for water/sewer with EJP and are part of their "value added services" program that gives reduced rates (they buy in bulk) and provides us with assistance (like helping us repair the hydrant at the RR Yard that a contractor broke last week) at no cost above and beyond the parts that were needed. We are working on seeing if we could use half the funds (\$35k) from undesignated water funds to reduce the amount of interest we pay overtime and make the payments more affordable for the overall budget. We may need to add it as a town meeting vote (which we could do along with the annual town meeting warrant). The Board would like us to move forward with purchasing meters from EJP.
- Phil and Eric worked 30+ hours straight going to pump stations to pump down the sewer pump stations. The highway guys were called in at 1:00am to remove the sander from one of the trucks, add the sewer tank and remove the plow. The highway crew went in to help keep the pump stations pumped down.

9. **Open Session** - None

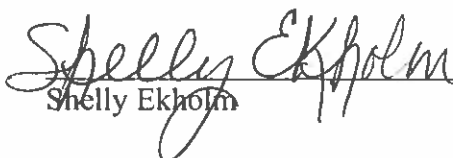
10. **Next Meeting** - Tuesday, January 16, 2024

11. **Adjournment** – Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia M. Harmon
Town Clerk


Byron Weymouth, Selectboard Chair


Shelly Ekholm


Kevin Emery


James Hartin

