

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**DAMARISCOTTA TOWN OFFICE**  
**December 16, 2020 5:30 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

*(revised 01/13/2021: section VIII; 1 & 2)*

**Members:** Roberta Mayer, Chairperson; Louis Abbotoni, Mark Hagar, Daryl Fraser and Josh Pinkham

**Members Absent :** None

**Staff Present:** Matt Lutkus, Town Manager; Stan Waltz, Code Enforcement Officer; Lynda Letteney, recording secretary

**Others Present:** Haas Tobey; Ann Pinkham; Mick Devin; Melissa Britsch; Sarah Swett; Sarah Gladu; Heather Leslie; Sara Risley; and Evan Houk, Lincoln County News

**I. Pledge of Allegiance:** Chairperson Mayer led the Pledge of Allegiance at 5:30 p.m.

**II. Call to Order**

The Board of Selectmen's Meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. **by Chairperson Mayer**

**III. Minutes**

**On motion (Mayer/Fraser) to approve the minutes of December 2, 2020, as distributed.**

**Vote: 4-0-1**

**(Abbotoni abstaining)**

**IV. Financial Reports**

**1. On motion (Pinkham/Fraser) to approve Payroll Warrants #33 & #36** **Vote: 5-0-0**

**2. On motion (Pinkham/Fraser) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #35** **Vote: 5-0-0**

**On motion (Fraser/Abbotoni) to approve Accounts Payable Warrant #34** **Vote: 4-0-1**

**(Hagar abstaining)**

**3. Year-to-Date Revenues**

Real Estate revenues are up 0.5% (primarily due to taxes being paid on time with adjustments, as property taxes themselves were reduced this year).

Excise taxes are up 11.2% (budgeted 8% increase)

**V. Presentations: Update on Broad Reach Shellfish Resource Sustainability Study**

Presenters **Melissa Britsch and Sarah Risley** began their presentation reviewing the 2019 Study background, and introducing the 2020 Local Knowledge mapping study. In 2019 the study addressed 3 key questions: 1) What is the current state of shellfish populations in the Damariscotta River estuary (softshell clams, quahogs, and oysters)? 2) Are young shellfish (seed) recruiting to the estuary? And 3) Have shellfish populations in the estuary changed over time? The 2019 study showed that shellfish populations varied among locations and tidal height. Recruitment of young softshell clams varied with tidal height. Harvesters noted that shellfish populations have changed over the last 20 years in the estuary.

Because of the pandemic, developing a safe, socially distanced approach to continuing the study had to be undertaken. Field surveys were not possible. Therefore, the 2020 project goals and expected outcomes needed to change. In order to collect information on softshell clam abundance and wild shellfish diversity and how that has changed through time, talking with local experts was the established plan. Key was identifying the areas of importance for wild shellfisheries to inform future field work in 2021, as well as areas of shared importance for different river uses.

Knowledge mapping is using observations from those working on the river to identify the location and abundance of shellfish as well as identifying how the shellfish populations and activities on the river have changed. By gathering information about river use from a variety of participants, and information about shellfish populations from those who harvest, the study (though not complete yet) shows an aging trend in both users and harvesters. Using 8 different species with individual stickers for each, species, participants completed placing stickers on a river map to identify the species and frequency in various areas of the river. Once maps were completed by each participant, an interview was done. This produced two types of data-observational and narrative. Of relevance is the notation of other species found aside from the 8 identified. While this year's study is not yet completed, the mapping of individual species' activities will be ready by spring. Some predictive maps will come from the study. Alewives (species) were identified as well as hunting (activity). The activity mapping used 6 categories (fishing, sailing, aquaculture, tourism/sightseeing; kayaking; and, areas of significant change). Lobstering was identified on these pages as well. They are also doing the Medomak River and have received good references from the Shellfish Committee on who to contact.

**Chairperson Mayer** expressed her commendation for keeping the study going during the Covid-19 pandemic. She commented that she loved the map on the last page. **Mark Hagar** asked how many packets were sent out and how many were returned. Response: 16/18 with a return so far of 15/7. They are still working on getting all inventories/questionnaires back. When the researchers asked how the Town thought they could use the information, in the short term the Board felt it was good information for informing the harvesters about populations and locations. Additionally it shows where there are decreasing populations. In the long term, these can be predictive models and will be a less labor intensive way to get information. They show how uses overlap which can lead to a decrease in conflicts among users. **Robin Mayer** asked if they felt these studies would be replicable every 3-5 years. **Heather** said it was hoped it could be replicated in other places as well. **Sarah** said it also could be a new way to do it – large map projections for interested stakeholders. **Robin** reiterated that if this was done every few years, over time it would become a longitudinal study.

**Haas Tobey** stated that the study has limited data and small numbers. He stated that the researchers must have had some preconceived ideas, so did the study change how you thought or were you surprised at some of the findings? **Sarah** said there were many “aha” moments, one being more species identified than they thought were there. Many hypotheses were garnered from participants. One example is the number of “flat” oysters where they only expected to find “American”. Another example was where many of the clam populations were found. Instead of in the muddy flats, many were up in the rocky areas. **Haas** asked if she thought that indicated sea levels rising. **Heather** said she didn't know. **Matt Lutkus** commented on how these women have shown great leadership in this project, especially under this year's conditions. He thanked them for their hard work and time commitment.

#### **VI. Citizens Comments and General Correspondence - None**

#### **VII. Town Manager's Items**

##### **8. Property Maintenance Code**

**Stan Waltz** and **Matt Lutkus** will be proposing amendments to the property maintenance codes. It has become apparent that the Town needs to be more involved in these issues. For example, there is a building whose owner has had a permit since 2016 “under construction”. The permitting process needs revision so that major exterior and/or interior projects have an inspection process. There is no permit required for routine maintenance, but all others need permits. **Robin** said this goes along with the Historic District Ordinance. An example is a building just outside the historic district that changed owners and then changed exterior color, not in keeping with the intent of the ordinance. Drafts will be coming soon.

## **1. Capital Projects**

**A. Bristol Road** – Work is complete for this year. Baptist Church section was done on a temporary basis to meet ADA requirements. This is an 80% State/20% Town project. The Miles Street pedestrian light is a high priority as it is in a 35 mph zone. A strobe light that is pedestrian activated needs to be installed. Cost is about \$23K which can come from the grant if there is money left over.

**B. LED Conversion** – There was a kick-off meeting Monday (12/14/20). January 11<sup>th</sup> is the targeted start date (awaiting fixtures). Also RealTerm and CMP have different light fixtures identified and that needs to be resolved.

**C. Sewer Lines** – **Matt** produced a map showing existing lines, color coded for those lines completed (yellow) and those left to do (red). Many of the sewer lines before were made of clay and are deteriorating. West of Colby & Gale are already installed. Issues remain involving identifying Damariscotta Center/River Grill area and the line under Jim and John Gallagher's parking lot. Reny's and Damariscotta Center have lines lower than the new service line thus needs engineering. Wright-Pierce is doing this in conjunction with Chase Construction. The line to Water Street is a gravity feed line and is too close to the effluent line – this needs more engineering. After New Year's they can work thru the winter.

**D. Restroom** – Awaiting delivery of rebar. Project is on track for concrete to be installed after the first of the year. Actually this works out well so there is no construction in the way of holiday shoppers and parking. **Josh** asked if Chase Construction was within the scope of the bid with so many change orders. **Matt** said there was considerable savings in the piping in Taco Alley which should be an offset. **Robin** asked if Wright-Pierce will be putting a new map together for the Board. **Matt** said "Yes, You can expect a new version when the restroom is done." **Matt** said they've done a great job locating the lines on the 1986 map as far as collector lines and effluent lines. Service lines however are inaccurate. **Mark Hagar** asked "What will happen to the abandoned line that has a sag in it when the parking lot is re-done?" **Matt** said "It is a gravity line, and although it is abandoned, it could collapse." **Robin** asked if it could be filled in to prevent a collapse? **Matt** will check into it.

## **2. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Schedule**

At the last meeting the Board approved giving staff the day before New Year's off. In talking with staff, they preferred to have a half day Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, giving better coverage for citizens. **Matt** made the executive decision to do that.

## **3. Police Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Last collective bargaining agreement was three years ago. Daryl and **Matt** are on the negotiations team. **Robin** asked Board members to look at the last contract and give ideas to Daryl. The Police Department has three areas they want to address, pay schedule being one of them.

## **4. Meeting with State Legislators**

**Mr. Crafts** and **Ms. Maxim** will be at the January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. **Matt** said the Mid-coast managers met with MMA and revised the legislative agenda which will be published in the December issue of the MMA magazine. Basically the message is to "protect the core" if the State decreases funding to municipalities. Homestead Exemption position is to hold the line at 70% refund. Revenue sharing has gone from 2% with Gov. LePage to 3.5% with Gov. Mills. Proposal is to go to 5% and continue with increases until it gets back to where it was previously. The Service Center Coalition has also designated "protect the core" as its position.

## **5. Transfer Station Annual Meeting**

The meeting will be held December 29<sup>th</sup> in Nobleboro. **Matt** will be going. Damariscotta does not have a vote as they are not a member, but they use the facility and pay a fee.

## **6. Information Bureau Building Update**

The State officials that needed to, got together and agreed that the State can sell the ground the current building is on to the Town. No price has been set. The Chamber of Commerce can use fundraising to help fund the purchase. The property will be transferred to the Town. The only conditions put forth were that the entrance has to be on Main Street and the exit has to be on Vine Street, so as to not bottleneck the Main Street entrance way. This is the first step with regards to the future of the building.

## **7. Solar Array Energy Production**

**Matt** provided a spreadsheet showing the electric generation for August, September, October and November. In the 4 months it has been operational, there is an excess of 24,883 KWH in the "bank." When finished, the restrooms will be included in the array. The traffic light is on the account, but street lights cannot be added. However the electric rate for the street lights was negotiated for a reduced rate.

## **VIII. Official Action Items**

**1. & 2. On motion (Abbotoni /Hagar) to approve the corrective cemetery deed transfers for J. Ewing Walker, Jr to Kate W. Curran; J. Ewing Walker, Jr. to Kate W. Curran, Jonathan McCall, Jr. and Alston W. Nelson (correction of lot #'s 204-205-206) and the cemetery deed and perpetual care & maintenance contract for Ronald W. and Carolyn E. West, (lots numbered 1072 & 1073).**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

The signing of the deeds requires a notary; Matt will set a date to stop in when the notary is available. Warrants will be signed at the same time.

**3. On motion (Mayer/Abbotoni) to accept the resignation of Elizabeth Printy as an alternate on the Planning Board.**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Robin Mayer** asked the Board to put out a verbal call for a replacement. Anyone who wishes to volunteer should contact Matt Lutkus.

## **IX. Selectmen's Discussion Items**

**Daryl Fraser** – Stay warm. He would like the citizenry to keep the Board up to date on any needs for general assistance.

**Josh Pinkham** – Happy Holidays. Glad to see Lou is back. Stay safe.

**Lou Abbotoni** – He is wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. He particularly wanted to cite Matt and the office staff for the tremendous job they've done during this time of crisis. Additional thanks to the Police, Fire and Ambulance staff. He gives the Town's response to the pandemic 5 stars. Robin agrees.

**Mark Hagar** – Lou said it all. He agrees totally. Thank you Matt for the lights on the walkway. Much safer.

**Robin Mayer** – echoes everyone's thoughts. Stay safe; celebrate safely. Happy Holidays; Snow tomorrow.

**Matt Lutkus** – all three office staff took home their laptops and will be working from home tomorrow in anticipation of the storm.

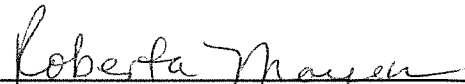
## **X. Adjournment**

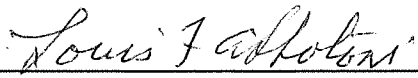
**On motion (Fraser/Pinkham) to adjourn the Board of Selectmen's meeting at 6:46**      **Vote: 5-0-0**

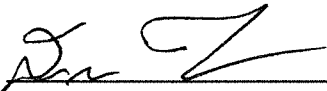
Respectfully submitted,

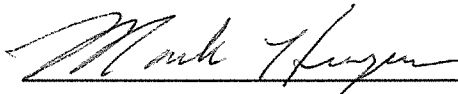
Lynda L. Letteney  
Recording Secretary

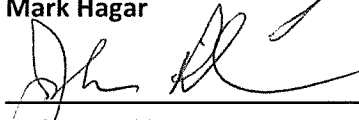
We, the undersigned, do hereby approve as written, or with corrections as noted, the minutes of the above-designated Board of Selectmen meeting on December 16, 2020.

  
Roberta Mayer, Chairperson

  
Louis Abbotoni

  
Daryl Fraser

  
Mark Hagar

  
Joshua Pinkham

Town of Damariscotta, Board of Selectmen, signed this date: 2-26-2021