



Town of Buxton 185 Portland Road, Buxton, ME 04093
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Board of Selectmen Minutes 06/03/2015

Town of Buxton Minutes for June 3, 2015 Selectmen's Meeting

Prepared by: Beverly Gammon

Members Present: Clifford L. Emery, Jean C. Harmon, Peter E. W. Burns, Penny J. Booker, Dennis P. Santolucito

Others Present: David Harmon, Mike Grovo, Dan Collomy, Olive Collomy, Arthur Payeur, Andy Lord, Sara Melto, Daniel G. Lakatos, Patrick Hanna, Melinda Garand, Bradley Garand, Charisse Keach, Andy Ward, Michael Crockett, William Fernstrom, Sherri MacDonald, Merlyn McLaughlin

Selectmen's Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order**

Selectman Emery called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

- **Pledge of Allegiance**

Selectman Emery led the Pledge.

- **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

*Selectmen Meeting Minutes May 27, 2015
Approved 4-0-1*

- **Discussion held between 4:00 & 7:00 p.m.**

At 4:00 Chief Grovo gave the Board an update on some equipment in the Police Department that is not working. The Board had received a proposal on the equipment but did not include it in any budget item this year. Selectman Harmon said the Board will have to talk about how they are going to replace it and pay for it. The Board also talked with Chief Grovo about his Administrative Assistant's position and how he is going to handle that in the upcoming months. They discussed hiring a

new Animal Control Officer, and criminal mischief that is happening in some areas of Buxton. For the last three weeks there have been numerous reports of damage to mailboxes, signs, and spray painting vehicles. The police are going to double up on some shifts to see if they can prevent this from happening.

Chief Grovo talked with the Selectmen about work on an interior wall between the intake area and the Chief's office to make that more sound proof.

At 4:40 PM the Board went into an Executive Session, per 1 M.R.S.A. 405 (6) (A), on a personnel matter. The Board came out of Executive Session at 4:45 PM.

Shortly after that our Treasurer, Charisse Keach, met with the Board. She went over the Delta Dental Plan that the Town will be switching to, and wanted to get the Board's feedback on who the Administrator of that should be.

At 5:00 PM the Board had a group of residents who came in with concerns about things they were hearing about the Police Department. Selectman Emery explained that back in the early part of the year during the budget process the Board was watching what was going on at the State House. There was a lot of concern that Revenue Sharing was going away this year, that the Homestead Exemption was going away for people under the age of 65, and that the school funding was going to be changed. There were a lot of things that were going to affect this community, and every other community in the State of Maine, financially. Because of that, the Selectmen decided to look at some of the things we do in this community. The first thing they looked at was how we are handling solid waste disposal. They looked into a new program for curbside recycling. At first it appeared that there could be some savings but after it was determined that they would have to add another truck it wound up costing us about \$225,000 more than what we pay now per year. In addition to that they were going to be taking all our recyclables which would mean a loss of \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year in revenue that the town currently receives from our recycling program at the Transfer Station. That was not what the Board was looking for so that program went away.

The Board was also looking at the Police Department. The Town of Standish was doing a program with Cumberland County that they (the Board) had looked into. The Selectmen have had people asking them over the years to look into it. Selectman Emery said the Board thought we were okay where we were but with the cuts that were coming from the State they made the decision to look at a lot of things. After Chief Grovo presented his budget to the Budget Committee, Selectman Emery spoke and talked openly about what the Board was going to do so that everyone would know right up front and there would not be stories going around.

As of right now the Board is waiting for a proposal from York County. Selectman Emery said the Board is not advocating for the Police Department to go away at all; that is not their intent. What they do will depend on the proposals they get. The Board does not advocate for getting away from 24/7 coverage 365 days a year and Selectman Emery said no matter what the Board does that coverage will still be in effect in this community. Selectman Emery said the Board is also waiting for a proposal from Scarborough PD and if the Board was to bring a proposal forward, it would go to the people; the Selectman could not make the decision for the department to go away. The Buxton Police Department was formed by a vote of the people and it will either stay or go the same way, if a proposal even comes to them (the people). If what is proposed does not make sense to the Board; if there isn't a savings or the philosophy part of it does not make sense to the Board, Selectman Emery said that proposal will die just like the curbside recycling proposal did. The Board needs to know what it could get in order to make that decision. Selectman Emery said if the Police Department goes to vote Dispatch would go as well. Selectman Emery said the Board is not saying the Police Department is going anywhere but the Selectmen feel that the reason they are elected to their position is to look out for the financial well-being of this community and with what was happening in Augusta they felt it was prudent to do this.

Selectman Emery said the Board has not received anything back yet. He expects the Board will get some information this month. He said this is a long process and it will take a lot of time. The Board has been up front with the Police Chief and the same with the Fire Chief regarding Dispatch. Selectman Emery said if the Board has information they are going to bring to the people then everyone will know about it. As of right now, they have no information to share; they are just waiting for the proposals to come in. Selectman Emery said that is all there is to say about this this and the Board will wait until later in the meeting to take questions and comments.

At 6:00 PM the Board dedicated the Town Report to Mia Dodge who is very active in our community and runs the children's Christmas program (Buxton Toy Box) which she has done for the past 20 years.

Selectman Burns reported that the Board spent some time discussing LD 1082. The Bill came out of the House indefinitely postponed and will go to the Senate tomorrow for their action. The Board is still fighting that and Selectman Booker is ready to go tomorrow if necessary. Selectman Burns explained that Frye Island wants to secede from the District and if they

cannot do that, they want to go to a system where land counts for half their assessment and the number of students they have counts for the other half. Frye Island has no students because they do not have any year-round residents. That would reduce their taxes by over \$600,000 which would mean Buxton would pick up over \$400,000 of the \$600,000 Frye Island would not pay. The Selectmen have been fighting the Bill as vehemently as they can and thank our representatives, Don Marean, Jonathan Kinney, Amy Volk, Linda Valentino and Bill Diamond for going to bat for us on this.

- **Review of Correspondence**

- Legislative Bulletin No. 20 from Maine Municipal Association
- Two Email messages from Dave Francoeur, Deputy Director, York County EMA – Re: Hazard Mitigation Grant Application Period Open and 2015 Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook
- Email from Representative Don Marean – Re: LD 1082
- Maine Health Alert – Re: Maine Animal Rabies Update
- Email from Marian Alexandre, Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission Annual Meeting

- **Review of Projects and Issues**

Selectman Burns reported that he has been in, keeping up with mail and activity on LD 1082. He talked about the District Budget Meeting last Thursday night and said out of a district with 3780 students, there were only 43 registered voters from the towns at that meeting. Buxton had 16 voters. He said the turnout was pathetic. This is a \$47,000,000.00 budget. Buxton is going to be paying almost \$7,000,000.00 in taxes for the school and our cost is increasing by \$280,000.00 over the current budget. Selectman Burns said if there were six more voters from Buxton the group could have lowered that budget to anything they wanted and it would have passed. Every vote counts. More voters come to the Buxton Town Meeting to vote on a \$5,000,000 budget than there were there to vote on a \$47,000,000.00 budget. Selectman Burns said the amount will not even show up on the ballot. All Voters will see is the question, "Do you approve the school budget that was voted on May 28 and you will have to answer "yes" or "no". The increase to Buxton is going to be +4.7%.

Selectman Booker also mentioned the school budget meeting and said there were no questions and the meeting went very fast.

Selectman Booker shared more detail about activity on LD 1082 and the role our representatives have played in getting the bill killed in the House today. She said tomorrow will be just as important as it goes to the Senate.

Selectman Santolucito mentioned the District Budget Meeting. He talked about the time spent working on the budget by the Budget Advisory Committee and the School Board and said we will still have to wrestle with a diminishing number of students and increasing expenses which has been the trend over the last 10 years; more money being spent and fewer students.

Selectman Harmon reported that she has been gearing up for Town Meeting on June 13, and working on a Homestead Exemption issue. She thanked Selectman Booker for all the time she put into the LD 1082, corresponding with Representative Don Marean and updating the Board on information they might not have otherwise had on the issue had she not been on her cell phone monitoring. Selectman Harmon also mentioned attending the District School Budget Meeting. She said of the 16 voters from Buxton there were four Selectmen and two other elected officials from the Town there.

Selectman Harmon said when the Board talks about budgets and they hear from Augusta what the trickle-down effect is going to be they know it is going to have a huge impact on everyone in the community. The school budget will have an impact on every taxpayer in Buxton. The municipal budget that we will be voting on this year at Town Meeting is around \$5,500,000.00. Our budget increased by \$90,000. The amount the Board is offsetting by taking money out of Undesignated Surplus is \$90,000.00 which makes the municipal budget pretty much "flat funded". If a home is valued at \$180,000 the school budget will increase your taxes by \$68.00. Your taxes will be higher if your home is valued at more than \$180,000. If the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Homestead Exemption for everyone under the age of 65 goes through, the

exemption will increase to \$20,000 for

those over age 65. Those who lose the \$10,000 exemption, at a mill rate of \$12.70, will see \$127.00 added to their taxes. If you add the \$68.00 to that, your taxes will go up \$195.00, and the municipal budget has not cost anything. The Board is not adding any increase to the taxpayers. The Governor is proposing changes that will have serious financial impacts to all communities. Selectman Harmon said the Selectmen look at every number that is put in front of them and thinks of the impact it will have on each and every resident in this town. The Board sees the number of people who currently cannot pay their taxes; they see the number of people who have had their homes foreclosed on and ask themselves how do we help these people? How do we keep living in Buxton affordable for everyone? Selectman Harmon said it is not an easy job. How can they keep people in their homes and keep things affordable for people here in Buxton. She said again it is not an easy job; it is not always fun. She referred to the discussion about the Police Department and encouraged people to come straight to the source if they have questions. She said the Board has been talking about looking at the Police Department since they first mentioned it when the Police Chief presented his budget to the committee back toward the end of February. She said it is the Board's job to look at everything and she thinks they do a pretty good job keeping it affordable enough so people can stay in their homes in Buxton.

Selectman Emery was elected to the York County Budget Committee and has been going to those meetings for the last few weeks. Their budget is going up but the increase is very small. Selectman Emery spoke briefly about the number of people in the room. He said every opinion is valued and considered important and the Board would like to hear from each one. He (Selectman Emery) asked people to come to the Board to get facts before going to social media where there is often misinformation. By coming here tonight he said people will get the facts, and will know the reasons why the Board did what it did. He said the Board was pleased to see so many people and the Selectmen will answer any questions.

- **Old Business**

The old Town Garage was taken down last Wednesday (May 27) and cleaned up on Thursday.

Selectman Booker reminded everybody that next Tuesday is the Secret Ballot voting. She talked about the land on Route 202 and said it has been expressed by the Selectmen that they think it should stay Business Commercial. She asked Selectman Harmon to explain what a "yes" vote or a "no" vote means.

Selectman Harmon said she spoke with a resident yesterday who did not understand the question. She read Article 4 and explained that this was brought forward by the Board of Selectmen to preserve the commercial land which was zoned back in 1976 or 1977. The Board understands that there are homes that existed in that area and are allowed to stay there.

This article would prohibit anyone from developing houses on any land in the business commercial zone. By doing that it assures that business commercial land is preserved for commercial development. She said it is hard to attract commercial businesses if we do not have commercial land available for them to build on. She explained that a "yes" vote to this question would mean that houses would be restricted from being built in the Business Commercial District. A "no" vote would allow housing to be built as our current ordinance stands.

- **New Business**

Selectman Harmon said it is short notice but she was given information from the Recreation Department that there is a trip with the Hollis Recreation Department for tomorrow, June 4. to the Owl's Head Museum. Cost is \$15 for the bus and \$9 to get into the museum. Lunch is on your own and the trip is from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, leaving from the Hollis Community Building. If you are interested in going, you can go over to the Community Building before 7:00 AM.

The Transfer Station is now selling Compost Bins for \$48.00.

- **Executive Orders**

E.O. 141506003 – An order to approve the hire of Adele Jones as a part-time Animal Control Officer starting June 10, 2015, at a pay rate of \$15.23 per hour

Approved 5-0

E.O. 141506004 – An order to appoint Patricia L. Morrison, Meredith R. Small, Sally Nardi, Bette A. Robicheau, Darlene S. Ivy, Donna J. London, Olive I. Collomy, Helen J. Andronaco, Vincent A. Andronaco, Sandra P. Mergen, D. Ellen Angwin, and Sharleen Fields to the position of Ballot Clerk effective until the completion of the June 9, 2015 election.

Approved 5-0

E.O. 141506005 – An order to approve 7.25 hours of vacation time for Charisse Keach

Approved 5-0

E.O. 141506006 – An order to approve John Myers' attendance at the Maine Town & City Clerks Association Public Speaking Training Class

Approved 5-0

E.O. 141506007 – An order to approve 48 hours of vacation time for Thomas Kennie

Approved 5-0

- **Executive Orders by Initiative**

E.O. 141506008 – An order to enter into a Small Group Contract with Northeast Delta Dental for the Town's Dental Insurance benefits effective July 1, 2015

Approved 5-0

- **Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants**

E.O. 141506001 – An order approving expenditures as documented in the Accounts Payable Warrant #104

Approved 5-0

The amount was \$57,067.05

E.O. 141506002 – An order approving expenditures as documented in Payroll Warrant #103

Approved 5-0

The amount was \$49,847.73

- **Next Meeting of the Board**

Twelve Town Group Meeting Monday, June 8, 6:30 PM in Waterboro

Planning Board Meeting Monday, June 8 at 7:00 PM

Board of Selectmen Meeting Wednesday, June 10 at 7:00 PM

- **Other Business**

Annual Town Meeting Secret Ballot voting will take place on Tuesday, June 9. Polls will be open from 6:00 AM ~ 8:00 PM at the Buxton Town Hall

Annual Town Meeting continues on Saturday, June 13, starting at 9:00 AM. You must be present to vote, no absentee voting

- **Public Comments and Questions**

Mr. Maurice Morneault went to the podium and introduced himself saying that he has been a resident of Buxton since 1981. Mr. Morneault talked about spending and commented on expenditures that were just approved by the Board. He asked the Selectmen if they have

given any thought to cutting back and shared his thoughts on the number and cost of each of the police vehicles in the parking lot. He asked the Board why the Town is hiring a part-time Animal Control Officer and asked if we really need that.

Selectman Harmon responded that the Town is required by law to have an Animal Control Officer and explained that we do not have one now.

Mr. Morneault said it was not stated that Adam Ricci is a police officer now.

Selectman Harmon explained that Adam has been a police officer for the Town for more than a year and the previous Animal Control Officer left.

Mr. Morneault said he thinks people do not attend the Selectmen Meetings because they are intimidated and afraid of the Selectmen. He again talked about the money that was approved by the Board tonight and commented that people had no say in that.

Selectman Harmon clarified that the money the Board approved tonight was our Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants which is money that was approved by the voters last year at Town Meeting. She said this is money that the voters already agreed to spend in our departments and to pay our personnel and each person on the Board gets an opportunity to review the bills being paid each week and gets to review each person's time sheet to be sure we are paying them correctly.

Mr. Morneault responded that he does not see where people are trying to cut and complained about the number of people working at the Transfer Station and fees charged there.

Selectman Emery then addressed comments about people being intimidated by the Board. He said he has been on the Board for 21 years and said every year when new people are elected to the Board he sits down with them after Town Meeting and tells them when someone comes to the Selectmen's office or to a meeting whatever that person wants to talk about is the most important thing to them at that time. He tells the Selectmen they need to sit and listen and look at the person speaking to help them understand that the Board is listening to what they are saying. If the Selectmen can give an answer, they give it but if they need to research it they get back to that person as soon as they can. He said the Board does sit and listen and pays attention when people talk and in all the years he has been there he has never tried to intimidate anyone. Selectman Emery said he does not think that people feel intimidated because no one on the Board is that way.

Mr. Morneault pointed to the people in attendance and said people are afraid to speak.

One gentleman in the audience asked Mr. Morneault to speak for himself and some others agreed.

Selectman Emery said the Board encourages people to come to their meetings. He said most people are intimidated not by the Board but by speaking in front of the cameras and microphone which is why the Board has office hours starting at 4

o'clock every Wednesday. Most people do not want everyone to know their business and don't feel comfortable speaking on TV. The Board encourages people who don't want to speak on television to come into their office, and they will make time for whatever people want to talk about, whether the Board agrees or disagrees with them.

Mr. Morneau said he spoke his peace and Selectman Emery thanked him for coming in.

Michael Crockett went to the podium and introduced himself. He mentioned that the Board knows who his father is and they do not listen. He said he is not afraid of the microphone and is here to address some respect issues with the Police Department and the social media hype and said they are not addressing crime.

Selectman Emery thanked him.

Sherri MacDonald went to the podium. She told the Board that she does not feel intimidated and asked about the Police Department. She said she sent several email messages and did not get an answer until the last one she sent. She apologized and said that it was mentioned at a town meeting on March 25. She asked the Board if there is anything the public can do if it is taken to a vote to make sure it goes on a Secret Ballot.

Selectman Emery said our Charter says anything that was voted in by Secret Ballot has to be changed by Secret Ballot.

Selectman Harmon used the example of some zoning ordinance changes that are on the Secret Ballot for next Tuesday. She reiterated that if any vote is taken on our Police Department it will go on a Secret Ballot.

Sherri MacDonald said her mailbox has been beaten up too and said if it goes to Scarborough it takes 35 minutes for Scarborough to get to the Warren Road.

Selectman Emery explained that that is not what the Board is looking at. They are looking at having officers dedicated to this town 7 days a week, 24 hours per day, for 365 days a year and it will be as if they were in the Town of Buxton.

Sherri MacDonald said you get treated the way you treat them. She said her son is 21 years old. He is on the Fire Department and has the greatest respect for every one of them. She had no other comments.

Selectman Emery thanked Ms. MacDonald..

Brad Garand went to the podium and introduced himself saying he has been in Buxton about two years and was a police and fire dispatcher for about five years. He said when he was at Old Orchard their dispatch services were talked about as being outsourced to York County

and then going to Scarborough where it is now. He said he left Old Orchard because of that consolidation and because he wanted to have something that was more job secure. He went to South Portland and two or three years later they were talking about getting rid of that and going to Portland. He shared with the Board that when he was working at Old Orchard and there was talk about going somewhere else and even getting rid of dispatch, there was always a sense of pride for the community he worked for. He feels that is something that does not get addressed by the people that are making the decisions about their future. He said he understands the financial impact of this but asked what kind of metrics will be used to compare that sense of pride in their community. He believes that sense of pride is not there when you are working with other communities and he questioned the Board on how they plan to wrap in the sense of pride in the community.

Selectman Emery said what people fail to put into perspective is that there are five Selectmen that have the same sense of pride in the Police Department as everyone else does. The Selectmen do not dislike our Police Department and they do not really want it to go away but they are elected to look into everything that goes on in this community. Selectman Emery said there is no one in this town that has more pride in their community than the five selectmen. He said three of the first pieces of land given by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to the people in this town was given to three Emery Brothers. He comes from this town and said there is no one with any more sense of pride in the Town of Buxton than he has and he has that same sense of pride in Mike Grovo and the Department and in all the people in this community who give to the community not just in the Police Department but the Fire Department, Little League, Umpires, softball coaches are all a piece of this community and the pride is in everyone; not in just one group. In their shoes as Selectmen, he said, that emotion has to be set aside and they have to consider what makes the most sense for the community. What can we afford and how can we keep people in their homes. Selectman Emery said the Board is not saying that anyone is going anywhere but they felt that with everything that was going at the State House and the lost revenue, they have to look at everything to see if we can do things as

closely as possible to what we do more economically.

Mr. Garand asked the Board if they are going to just look at the financial aspect of potentially outsourcing the PD and how are they going to weigh that service that they offer and the lack of service that another community would offer coming into Buxton.

Selectman Emery said it will have to make sense and meet the expectations that the Board has. Money will also be an issue and sometimes hard decisions have to be made but it is going to have to be the right fit for what the five Selectmen feel is needed in this community to make the community safe before anyone will vote on anything. If the Board determines that a proposal does not meet the needs we have, financially wise or philosophically, the people will never see it but if the Board gets a proposal they feel will benefit the community in ways they would like to see, then people may see that proposal and be voting on it. The Board is not saying that you will but you may.

Mr. Garand said he found out about this through social media and is glad of that but he thinks there is a sense of mistrust among some people in Buxton about how the Board is going about outsourcing the PD. He asked the Selectmen why they feel there is that sense.

Selectman Harmon said all it takes is one person making a statement that everyone takes as truth. She has been a Selectman for 13 years. The Board has been talking about this particular issue on camera as transparent as they possibly can be since the end of February. It has not been mentioned every week but it has been mentioned several times at Board meetings. She said she has no idea where the mistrust comes from. The Selectmen do not hold secret meetings and they do not have any "slush fund" which they have been accused of having. She said the Selectmen are here and their door is absolutely open. If they have to close the door, it is because the Board has gone into Executive Session and they are required by law to close the door. She said the Selectmen do not call each other up to make decisions. They do call each other to discuss issues which she gave examples of. She said all it takes is one person saying "did you hear, the Selectmen are getting rid of the Police Department".

Selectman Santolucito spoke about the issue of mistrust. He said he has been on the Budget Committee for a few years and before he was a Selectman, he observed that the Selectmen's door is always open and it really is an open process but people have to participate. He went on to speak about the issue with the police department and said when the Board first discussed anything, it was a tough decision to decide whether to look. He said he has had a good experience with the Buxton Police Department, good response, quality service so when the decision came up it was largely driven by a potential 100% loss of Revenue Sharing that could still be on the table. He said the Board has to look at every opportunity to make sure people who are perhaps senior citizens and people who have limited incomes or might be disabled can still afford to pay their taxes and said when he thinks about cutting. He watched the budget process from the Budget Committee and as a Selectman and people on this Board look at every penny everywhere to try to find ways to save and create value for the dollar and he does not think you can find a better value for the dollar when you look at what you get here. There are always ways to do things better, and that is what the Board is looking to do; how to best fit the taxpayers' money to deliver the best service. He said it is a tough challenge but they always struggle to find the most efficient way to do it.

Selectman Harmon spoke to the issue of sense of pride and said the Board was asked what the town pays for employees' health care. She said there are ways to cut that; they could require employees to pay more. She said the Board values our employees. In tough economic times, it is not only tough for the town but it is tough for the employees as well. She personally would hate to take away a benefit the town offers the employees and ask them to pay more when the value for the service we get is exceptional and the Board tries to give employees raises every year but those raises don't meet the increase in their expenses. She said she will personally fight for the benefits for town employees because she values the employees. She knows some of them struggle and she would hate to impose more hardship on them because when employees are not doing well, they don't perform well at work. She is proud of the fact that we can offer good benefits to our employees and that we retain them.

William Fernstrom went to the podium and introduced himself. He expressed why he thinks there is mistrust in the town and talked about the police stopping him while he was walking down the street late at night, and other experiences he has had with the police. He commented on the Police Department's Facebook page, and said he does not think we need to outsource that but there are always going to be people who have issues with "cops". He gave other personal experiences and said he thinks there is mistrust because there is no respect from the department and people are intimidated by the room the meeting is in because they think their thoughts and feelings go out the door when they leave. He left the podium.

At that time Charisse Keach, our Treasurer, went to the podium and asked to speak as a Buxton employee. She asked the

Board to explain what happens if the people vote no on the school budget question which is a yes or no question with no monies attached to it.

Selectman Burns explained that the district would continue to operate on this current year's budget. They will go back and the School Board will put together another, reduced budget and have another meeting for the Warrant articles and that would go to a secret ballot vote to the towns of SAD 6. If that fails, the school would still be operating under this current year's limits and they would go and reduce the budget again and then put it back to the voters.

There were no other comments or questions.

- **Executive Session**

None

- **Adjournment**

Motion made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 PM

Approved 5-0

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